2023

Evaluations of Nominations of Cultural and Mixed Properties

ICOMOS report for the World Heritage Committee
Extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee / Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia / 10-25 September 2023

WHC-23/45.COM/INF.8B1
UNESCO
World Heritage Convention
World Heritage Committee

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Part I
World Heritage List Nominations 2022
Nominations evaluated by ICOMOS for the World Heritage List 2022
I Introduction

ICOMOS Analysis of nominations

In 2022, ICOMOS was called on to evaluate 32 nominations.

They consisted of:

- 19 new nominations
- 1 extension
- 2 deferred nominations
- 1 referred back nomination
- 2 nominations submitted under an emergency basis
- 7 minor modifications/creations of buffer zone

The geographical spread is as follows:

**Africa**
Total: 2 nominations, 2 countries
- 1 new nomination
- 1 extension
  (2 cultural properties)

**Arab States**
Total: 5 nominations, 4 countries
- 2 nominations submitted under an emergency basis
- 3 minor modifications/creations of buffer zone
  (5 cultural properties)

**Asia-Pacific**
Total: 9 nominations, 11 countries
- 8 new nominations
- 1 referred back nomination
  (7 cultural properties, 2 mixed properties)

**Europe and North America**
Total: 14 nominations, 13 countries
- 9 new nominations
- 2 deferred nominations
- 3 minor modifications/creations of buffer zone
  (14 cultural properties)

**Latin America and the Caribbean**
Total: 2 nominations, 2 countries
- 1 new nomination
- 1 minor modification/creation of buffer zone
  (2 cultural properties)

ICOMOS notes the weak representation of certain Regions in the submissions, particularly Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Arab States.

General remarks

The 2022 cycle was challenging in view of the exceptional circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thanks to the great efforts and the cooperation between the Evaluation Unit, the ICOMOS mission experts and the nominating States Parties, 19 technical evaluation missions were carried out. However, 3 missions were not undertaken due to COVID-19 pandemic. ICOMOS expresses its gratitude to all the experts involved in the Evaluation Process as well as to the nominating States Parties for the efforts made in this difficult period.

ICOMOS draws the attention of the World Heritage Committee on the fact that a growing number of missions (4) from the two last cycles were not carried out due to security or sanitary issues and the relevant nominations remain pending.

1. Quality and complexity of nomination dossiers

Generally speaking, ICOMOS notes that nominations are increasingly complex, sometimes to the detriment of the dossiers' clarity and coherence.

Certain nominations would benefit if more time were taken in preparation. For example, completing the legal protection process, finalising a management plan or undertaking additional research.

ICOMOS recalls the Resource Manual *Preparing World Heritage Nominations*. An electronic version is available on its website and on the World Heritage Centre website. The Manual is an invaluable resource in helping States Parties prepare effective nomination dossiers. Thanks to the World Heritage Capacity-Building programme, the manual is available in several languages (Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish).

When evaluating the Comparative Analysis included in nomination dossiers, ICOMOS examines the methodology used by the State Party and the relevance of the examples against a set of parameters. Comparisons with the nominated property should be drawn with sites expressing the same values, and within a defined geo-cultural area. Therefore, the values need to be clearly defined and the geo-cultural framework should be determined.
according to those values. Comparisons should be
drawn with similar properties already inscribed on the
World Heritage List and with other examples at
national and international level within the defined
geo-cultural area.

On this basis, ICOMOS indicates whether or not the
Comparative Analysis is complete; and whether or
not, the analysis justifies consideration of the
property for the World Heritage List.

If the nomination is considered incomplete or
insufficient according to the parameters indicated
above, ICOMOS takes several actions. It requests
additional information from the State Party; checks
relevant ICOMOS thematic studies; examines the
wealth of information available about properties
already evaluated and/or inscribed on the World
Heritage List, and on the Tentative Lists; and,
consults international experts (belonging or not to
the ICOMOS network) to improve its understanding of
the nomination.

ICOMOS wishes to point out that its role is to
evaluate the properties based on the information
provided in the nominations (i.e. the dossiers), and
on the basis of field visits and assessments by
ICOMOS experts as well as additional international
studies. Similarly, ICOMOS evaluates the protection,
conservation and management of the property at the
time of the nomination and not at some unspecified
time in the future after the adoption of proposed laws
and management plans. It is thus the duty of
ICOMOS to indicate to the World Heritage
Committee if adequate protection and management
are in place prior to inscription.

2. ICOMOS evaluations

The objective of ICOMOS is the conservation and
long-term protection and presentation of cultural
heritage, based on whether or not it is of Outstanding
Universal Value. In formulating its recommendations,
ICOMOS seeks to be as helpful as possible to States
Parties, whatever the final recommendation being
proposed.

Despite sometimes being under considerable
pressure, ICOMOS remains rigorous and scientific,
and its first duty remains the conservation of
properties.

ICOMOS also notes that the dialogue developed with
States Parties during the evaluation process is often
very helpful to solve issues and difficulties. In many
cases, it contributes to the adoption of the final
recommendations made by ICOMOS. However, the
current timeframe does not provide enough time for
dialogue when the issues are complex.

3. “Referred back” nominations – “Deferred”
nominations

ICOMOS wishes to once again express its concerns
about the difficulties raised when a “deferred”
recommendation is changed into a “referred back”
recommendation. This action does not allow the
Advisory Bodies to carry out an appropriate
evaluation of nominations which are in many cases
“resubmitted” as entirely new ones. The changes to
the Operational Guidelines adopted in 2021 to clarify
these concepts might assist on how they are used.

In its recommendations, ICOMOS clearly
distinguishes between nominations which are
recommended to be referred back and those which
are deferred. For referred nominations, criteria have
been justified, and conditions of authenticity and
integrity have been met to the satisfaction of
ICOMOS. Supplementary information must be
supplied to satisfy other requirements of the
Operational Guidelines, but no further technical
evaluation mission will be required. For deferred
nominations, the very nature of the information
requested (e.g., a more thorough study, major
reconsideration of boundaries, a request for a
substantial revision, or serious gaps in regard to
management and conservation issues) means that a
new mission as well as consideration by the full
ICOMOS World Heritage Panel are required. Time is
thus needed to reconstitute the nomination, to
evaluate that nomination again, and to ensure that it
has the consideration needed to advance the
nomination further.

4. “Minor” modifications to boundaries

These requests originate either from monitoring,
the retrospective inventory or Periodic Reporting.

ICOMOS notes that all modifications to the
boundaries of a property and its buffer zone are
proposed as “minor” modifications, even when they
constitute, in fact, substantial modifications to the
property, or even in some cases an extension of the
property.

According to the Operational Guidelines, proposals
for major modifications, whether extensions or
reductions, constitute a new nomination (paragraph
165). ICOMOS recommends to the World Heritage
Committee that this provision should be consistently
and rigorously applied.

ICOMOS suggests moreover that an extension of the
calendar for the evaluation of such requests, above
all when they are dealing with creation of buffer zone,
should be considered, in order to bring it into line with
the calendar in force for new nominations, which
would open up the possibility of dialogue and exchange of information with the States Parties.

5. Serial nominations and extensions

ICOMOS recalls that the Operational Guidelines of November 2011 (paragraph 137) validated a change in the approach to serial properties. Serial nominations should not consist merely of a catalogue of sites, but should instead concern a collection or ensemble of sites with specific cultural, social or functional links over time, in which each site contributes substantially to the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial property as a whole.

ICOMOS wishes to encourage States Parties to give consideration to the implications of this change when preparing serial nominations.

This year, ICOMOS has examined 10 serial nominations, including 130 monuments, ensembles and sites. These nominations require a more substantial investment in terms of human and financial resources at all levels of evaluation of the properties. The increase in the number of serial nominations needs to be taken into account in the budgets and contracts. Furthermore, ICOMOS notes that there are also enormous pressures on keeping the statutory calendar, which arise from the heavier task of evaluating these large and complex serial nominations.

6. Development projects

ICOMOS points out that its Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for cultural World Heritage properties can be consulted on its website. This Guidance has been translated into several languages and ICOMOS urges States Parties to make use of it. In addition, research work has been undertaken in order to better understand Heritage Impact Assessments. ICOMOS encourages States Parties to incorporate a Heritage Impact Assessment approach into the management system of their nominated properties. This will ensure that any programme, project or legislation regarding the property be assessed in terms of its consequences on the Outstanding Universal Value and its supporting attributes.

Based on recent experiences where information had not been shared in an adequate manner, ICOMOS reiterates its concerns related to the need of identifying development projects within World Heritage properties during the evaluation cycle, and to bring to ICOMOS’ attention any development projects that are planned within the nominated property or in its vicinity, to ensure that comprehensive information is received concerning these potential projects. ICOMOS once again suggests that during the nomination evaluation procedure the World Heritage Committee should apply provisions similar to those stipulated in paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, inviting the States Parties to inform the Committee of “their intention to undertake or to authorize in an area protected under the Convention major restorations or new constructions which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property […]”.

7. Connecting Practice

As a joint initiative between ICOMOS and IUCN, the Connecting Practice project provides opportunities for exploring new methods and practical strategies for learning and developing new approaches to better recognise and understand the interconnection of natural and cultural values in significant heritage landscapes and seascapes under the World Heritage Convention.

Beginning in 2013, the project has completed three phases, with a Phase IV currently in the planning process. Each phase has contributed to increasing awareness among heritage management actors about the close interrelations and integration of natural and cultural dimensions of heritage properties, and the importance of joint protection and management approaches.

As part of phase III, a new resource for the heritage field entitled A Commentary on Nature-Culture Keywords was published and is intended to serve as a basis for the common understanding of relevant terms among cultural and natural heritage professionals. The phase IV of the project is currently underway and focuses on applying resilience thinking to the planning and management of World Heritage properties.

8. Transnational serial nominations

ICOMOS wishes to congratulate the States Parties on the efforts made to prepare transnational serial nominations. ICOMOS sees in the themes and challenges considered, a return to the fundamentals of the World Heritage Convention.

The monitoring of the state of conservation of properties of this type is a considerable challenge, which could enable experimentation with specific tools adapted to such properties.

ICOMOS wishes to stress the importance of involving the Advisory Bodies in the upstream processes for the preparation of nominations of this type. ICOMOS is available for upstream involvement at strategic
development level for these vast and complex transnational serial nominations.

9. Historic Urban Landscape (HUL)

ICOMOS noted the increasing use of the notion of Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) in the draft statements of Outstanding Universal Value. While acknowledging the importance of the UNESCO Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscapes as being “an additional tool to integrate policies and practices of conservation of the built environment into the wider goals of urban development in respect of the inherited values and traditions of different cultural contexts”, there is an agreement that the notion of HUL should be seen as a useful methodological approach that can sustain and strengthen management. But, it cannot be understood as a category of heritage and should not be mentioned as such in justifications for inscription of nominated properties.

10. Cultural landscapes

ICOMOS notes some new challenges and trends emerging in some recent nominations. One example is what is called an ‘evolving landscape’ where the idea of an organically ‘evolved landscape’ has been merged with that of a ‘continuing landscape’. This merging is leading to nominations of properties where it is suggested that more or less everything in the property could continue to evolve over time in the future. While it is clearly desirable that continuing cultural landscapes play an active role in contemporary society, in order for this to happen in a way that sustains Outstanding Universal Value, there does need to be a clear understanding of which parts of the evolutionary process may evolve. and how, and what aspects should be maintained as a ‘golden thread’ linking what is there now to the way the landscape has evolved over time.

11. Buffer zones

In recent years, discussions on properties at the World Heritage Committee as part of the State of Conservation process have focused on many developments within buffer zones. Such discussions bring sharply into focus the nature and specificities of buffer zones and how precisely they are meant to support their properties. In order to ensure there is a clear understanding of the purpose and scope of individual buffer zones, and how they operate, as requested by the Operational Guidelines, ICOMOS through its evaluations has tried to assess in a systematic way the rationale for the boundaries of a buffer zone. This approach includes examining the role of the buffer zone in supporting Outstanding Universal Value and its relationship to attributes of Outstanding Universal Value; how the buffer zone relates to the broader setting and what, if anything, needs protecting in the broader setting as well as how the buffer zone is managed and protected.

12. Upstream process

ICOMOS has been active in extending its collaboration with States Parties on upstream work, with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on how to address upstream requests in a more systematic and efficient manner and on the development of Tentative Lists.

ICOMOS has extended the length of the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel meeting in order to examine the missions and projects developed by ICOMOS for the purpose of upstream processes.

Furthermore, ICOMOS wishes to draw attention to paragraph 122 of the Operational Guidelines which invites States Parties to “contact the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre at the earliest opportunity in considering nominations to seek information and guidance”, and in particular the relevance of this paragraph in connection with the preparation of the nomination dossier for mixed properties and serial properties.

ICOMOS has elaborated with the assistance of IUCN, ICCROM and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, a “Guidance on Developing and Revising World Heritage Tentative Lists” within the context of the ongoing reform of the Nomination Process.

This document responds to an increasing need of basic guidance for States Parties when developing and revising their Tentative Lists. On its first part, the Guidance presents and explains the basic concepts around the Tentative Lists within the context of the Nomination and Upstream processes. It identifies the key steps for preparing and revising Tentative Lists, as well as the stages where the Advisory Bodies might be consulted by the States Parties to provide advice, in terms of methodology and analysis for the development or revision of Tentative Lists, thereby reducing the risk of spending resources to prepare nominations that may be unlikely to succeed.

As follow up to this publication, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies identified the need to further elaborate the operationalisation of the modules presented in this guidance, in particular Module 2 on “the process of developing or revising a Tentative List”. ICOMOS is currently developing this toolkit in cooperation with IUCN and the World Heritage Centre.
The ICOMOS procedure is described in Annex 6 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. It is regulated by the Policy for the implementation of the ICOMOS World Heritage mandate (latest revision in October 2015). This document is available on the ICOMOS website: www.international.icomos.org.

This policy makes public the existing procedure, and sets out the fair, transparent and credible approach ICOMOS adopts in fulfilling its World Heritage obligations, and the way it avoids conflicts of interest.

The evaluation of nominations, which involves more than 40 to 50 international experts for each nomination dossier, is coordinated by the World Heritage Evaluation Unit of the International Secretariat of ICOMOS, in collaboration with the Chairs of the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

The ICOMOS World Heritage Panel, which brings together some thirty persons, is made up of members of the ICOMOS Board, representatives of ICOMOS International Scientific Committees as well as of some other organisations than ICOMOS and other individual experts. The Panel members are selected each year depending on the nature of the properties nominated (e.g., rock art, 20th century heritage, industrial heritage, etc.) and on the basis of geo-cultural balanced representation. TICCIH and DoCoMoMo are also invited to participate in discussions in which their expertise is relevant. In principle all members of the Panel participate by drawing on their own financial resources (pro bono work). The Panel’s composition and terms of reference are available on the ICOMOS website. They represent the various professional, geographic and cultural sensibilities present at the international level. The Panel prepares the ICOMOS recommendations for each nomination on a collegial basis.

For each nominated property, ICOMOS assesses whether it bears testimony of an Outstanding Universal Value:

- whether it meets the Criteria of the Operational Guidelines;
- whether it meets the conditions of Authenticity and Integrity;
- whether legal protection is adequate; and,
- whether the management processes are satisfactory.

All properties are given equal attention, and ICOMOS also makes every effort to be as objective, scientific and rigorous as possible.

In order to reinforce consistency of the evaluations and recommendations, and to check which additional information requests should be sent to States Parties, ICOMOS uses a check box tool, which is included in this volume.

1. Preparatory work

The preparatory work is done in several stages:

a. Initial study of dossiers. This first stage of the work consists of the creation of an inventory of the nomination dossier documents. They are then studied to identify the various issues relating to the property and the choice of the various experts who will be called on to review the dossier (i.e., ICOMOS advisers, experts for mission, experts for consultations). A compilation of all relevant comparative material (e.g., Tentative Lists, properties already on the World Heritage List, nomination dossiers, “filling the gaps” ICOMOS study, etc.) is prepared in order to assist the work of the advisers on the specific item of comparative analysis.

b. Consultations. International experts are invited to express their opinion through desk reviews about the Comparative Analysis and the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated properties with reference to the ten Criteria set out in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021), paragraph 77. ICOMOS also consults experts on a desktop basis on issues related to cultural tourism and risk preparedness in order to provide recommendations on these issues in a systematic manner through all the nomination dossiers.

For this purpose, ICOMOS calls on the following:

- ICOMOS International Scientific Committees;
- Individual ICOMOS members with special expertise, identified after consultation with International and National Committees;
- Non-ICOMOS members with specific expertise, identified mostly amongst Universities and Research Institutes or partner organisations.

For the nominations to be considered by the World Heritage Committee at its 45th session, around 173 experts provided desk reviews. 30% of the reports received has been drafted by non-ICOMOS members.

c. Technical evaluation missions. As a rule, ICOMOS calls on a person from the region in which the nominated property is located. In certain exceptional circumstances, often in cases in which the nature of the property is unusual, the expert may not originate
from the region concerned. The objective of the missions is to study the Authenticity, Integrity, factors affecting the property, protection, conservation and management (Operational Guidelines, paragraph 78).

Experts are sent the nomination dossier (i.e., electronic versions and copy of the maps in colour), a note with key questions based on a preliminary examination of the dossiers, documentation on the Convention and detailed guidelines for evaluation missions.

All experts have a duty of confidentiality. Their opinion about the nomination does not necessarily reflect that of the organisation; it is the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel which, after acquainting itself with all the information, analyses it and determines the organisation's position.

Missions are sent to all the nominated properties except in the case of nominations referred back for which the Operational Guidelines do not stipulate that a mission is necessary (Note: The principle is that properties are referred back because additional information is necessary, and not because thorough or substantial modifications are needed). The deadlines set out in the Operational Guidelines mean moreover that it is not possible to organise missions, desk reviews or consideration by the full ICOMOS World Heritage Panel for properties referred back).

In the 2021-2022 cycle, 21 experts representing 17 countries took part in field missions as part of the evaluation of the 22 nominated properties, which in turn represented 24 countries.

ICOMOS and IUCN have exchanged desk reviews and information about draft recommendations concerning mixed property nominations and cultural landscapes before and after their respective Panel meetings.

As well, in the 2021-2022 cycle, ICOMOS received comments from IUCN concerning 5 cultural landscape nominations. These comments have been taken into account by ICOMOS in its recommendations.

2. Evaluations and recommendations

a. ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Draft evaluations (in either English or French) were prepared on the basis of the information contained in the nomination dossiers, mission reports, consultations and research. They were examined by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel at a meeting in Paris from 23 to 30 November 2021. The Panel defined draft recommendations and identified the additional information requests to be sent to the States Parties. Individual meetings were organised with each nominating State Party and Panel members during the Panel meeting.

b. Interim reports. As prescribed by the revised Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (Annex 6), the Advisory Bodies have been requested to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2022. These reports provide States Parties with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation process and some include additional information requests. All documents received by 28 February 2022 were examined by the second World Heritage Panel at its meeting from 7 to 9 March 2022.

c. Finalisation of the evaluation volume and its presentation to the World Heritage Committee. Following these meetings, revised evaluations have been prepared in both working languages, printed and dispatched to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for distribution to members of the World Heritage Committee at its 45th session.

Nominated properties and ICOMOS recommendations will be presented to the World Heritage Committee by ICOMOS advisers in PowerPoint form.

As an Advisory Body, ICOMOS makes a recommendation based on an objective, rigorous and scientific analysis. However, decisions are the responsibility of the World Heritage Committee. The process relies on the Committee members and their knowledge of the nominations and the evaluations published by the Advisory Bodies.

3. Referred back nominations and requests for minor modifications

By 1st February of each year, preceding the World Heritage Committee meeting, ICOMOS also receives supplementary information on nominations referred back during previous sessions of the World Heritage Committee. One nomination which had been referred back was assessed during the recent 2021-2022 cycle.

ICOMOS also examines requests for "minor" modifications to boundaries or creation of Buffer Zones, and for changes of Criteria or name for some properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List. Seven requests of this type were submitted by States Parties before 1st February of this year.
4. Dialogue with States Parties

ICOMOS makes every effort to maintain dialogue with the States Parties throughout the nomination evaluation process (i.e. following receipt of the nominations, during and after the technical evaluation mission, and following the meeting of the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel).

First, information may be requested to provide details or clarifications. Of the 2021-2022 nominations, 100% received requests for additional information before the ICOMOS November Panel meeting; and 95% of the nominations received such requests through the Interim reports, after the Panel meeting.

The World Heritage Committee decision 38 COM 13.8 called upon the Advisory Bodies to consult and have a dialogue with all concerned States Parties during the course of the evaluation of nominations. Consequently, ICOMOS has strengthened the dialogue and communication in the evaluation process, through discussions organised during its Panel meeting, and through the delivery of the Interim reports.

In most cases, the dialogues with States Parties were fruitful in clarifying issues and elucidating facts.

However, the main point highlighted by these direct dialogues is the fact that, even though the State Party receives advice from ICOMOS earlier than previously, there is still very limited time available for both parties to work together to resolve issues. This is especially true under the current evaluation timetable established to review the dossiers that require reformulation at a wider scale. This is true for all cases even if the State Party expresses a willingness to do so. This is further exasperated by the fact that this is an ad hoc process and not a regularly anticipated step in the review.

In conclusion, ICOMOS encourages States Parties to request Upstream advice which could be useful for resolving issues prior to the submission of nominations.

As the nomination process is currently being reviewed and discussed in detail to introduce the Preliminary Assessment mechanism, ICOMOS is open to ways of increasing dialogue and adopting new methods that would uphold the credibility of the Convention in the future.

5. Conclusion

All the evaluated cultural properties are remarkable and deserving of protection and conservation. In reaching its recommendations to the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS relies on the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the direction of the World Heritage Committee.

The opinion of ICOMOS is both independent and institutional. The opinion of one of its members is not binding on the organisation, and the evaluation texts are each the work of between 40-50 persons on every nomination, with several stages of in-depth peer review. ICOMOS represents cultural heritage experts throughout the five global regions and is working to protect the entire cultural heritage of the world.

ICOMOS takes a professional and rigorous view of all the dossiers received and reviewed. Protection, conservation and management are key for the transmission of all heritage properties to future generations and ICOMOS remains committed to making recommendations for all nominated properties.

Paris, April 2022
## ICOMOS

### Check tool recommendations

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- ✓ OK - Good
- ≈ Adequate - Can be improved
- O Not demonstrated at this stage
- X Not OK - Not adequate

The grid does not give all possible combinations, but only the lowest benchmarks below which a nomination moves to another category.

This tool is to be used jointly with the table summarizing the ICOMOS recommendations.
# Cultural and Mixed Properties

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<td>Viking-Age Ring Fortresses</td>
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<td>Ethiopia</td>
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<td>Menno Welling (Malawi)</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>C 1656</td>
<td>Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt</td>
<td>Adam Blitz (UK)</td>
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<td>C 1663</td>
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<td>Oskars Redbergs (Latvia)</td>
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<th>Field mission</th>
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<td>Abdoulaye Cissé (Mali)</td>
<td>Oct. 2021</td>
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<td>Toshio Hayashi (Japan)</td>
<td>Aug. 2019</td>
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<td>Czechia</td>
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<td>Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops</td>
<td>Helmuth Albrecht (Germany)</td>
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<td>Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate</td>
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III  Cultural properties

A  Africa
New nomination
Extension

B  Asia – Pacific
New nominations
Nomination referred back by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

C  Europe – North America
New nominations
Nominations deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

D  Latin America and the Caribbean
New nomination
The Gedeo Cultural Landscape  
(Ethiopia)  
No 1641

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party  
The Gedeo Cultural Landscape

Location  
Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Regional State  
Ethiopia

Brief description  
Lying along the eastern margin of the southern Main Ethiopian Rift on the steep escarpments of the Ethiopian highlands, the Gedeo Cultural Landscape is an area of agroforestry characterised by multilayer cultivation with large trees sheltering indigenous enset, the main food crop, under which grow coffee, the main cash crop, and other shrubs. The area is densely populated by members of the Gedeo people whose traditional knowledge underpins the forest regimes. Within the cultivated mountain slopes are small areas of sacred forest traditionally used by local communities for rituals associated with the Gedeo religion. And along the mountain ridges are found dense clusters of megalithic monuments, which came to be revered by the Gedeo and cared for by their elders.

Category of property  
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021) paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

Included in the Tentative List  
28 January 2020

Background  
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission  
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

Comments on the natural attributes of this nominated property, their conservation and their management were received from IUCN on 4 March 2022 and have been incorporated into the relevant sections of this report.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 19 September to 1 October 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS  
A letter was sent to the State Party on 5 October 2021 requesting further information about the maps, the comparative analysis and boundaries, the megalithic monuments, the justification for the criteria, the Gedeo cultivation, the protection, the management, and the documentation.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 12 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the agroforestry practices, the documentation, the sustainable land use plan, and the megalithic monuments.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 23 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report  
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history  
Spread along the eastern escarpment of the Ethiopian highlands, the nominated property is home to just over a quarter of a million Gedeo people.

The steep mountain slopes of the property, the abundant alluvial rivers and the fertile soils together support long-standing agroforestry practices based on trees and shrubs combined with crops and livestock. The indigenous enset is the main food crop and coffee is now the main the cash crop. These are grown together with other indigenous trees, root crops, shrubs, etc., each species occupying a distinct layer.

There is evidence that enset has been cultivated in Ethiopia for at least 5,000 years in the south-west of the country, but authors differ as to which particular group of people were the first to cultivate the crop. While the Gedeo are Indigenous to Ethiopia and have been associated with the cultivation of enset for perhaps a few thousand years, oral traditions suggest that they moved to the southwest from the north sometime during the last...
two millennia, and, since their arrival, have migrated around the area including in the recent past, as a response to population growth. At the end of the 19th century they looked for new territory beyond the chain of hills running southward along the Rift Valley escarpment that they then inhabited, and expanded southwards and eastwards into Guji territory with settlers establishing agroforestry practices in the new forest areas. Quite when the current community arrived in the nominated area is not fully documented.

The Gedeo communities who practice this agroforestry system are still largely guided by indigenous knowledge, and traditional institutions including the Songo, or Council of elders, as well as the Baille system that regulates interaction with nature. The Gedeo people believe in Mageno, the one and only one Supreme Being who created all living things and who manifests Himself in the nature he created. Parts of the natural forest are set aside as sacred areas for ritual purposes, where no trees are felled or cultivation practised, and indigenous tree species have been preserved.

The incorporation of coffee into this traditional system appears to be quite recent. Although coffee originated in the southwest highlands of Ethiopia, it was mostly gathered from wild coffee forests until the early years of the 20th century when communities were obliged by landowners to cultivate coffee as a valuable cash crop. Over the past one hundred years, the percentage of coffee cultivated alongside food crops has increased in the forest areas.

The overall agroforestry system is seen as a testimony to Indigenous peoples who, with their ecological knowledge and local culture, achieve a balance between environmental management and subsistence farming that is capable of sustaining high densities of people. The initiative for inscription came from the elders of the community who some ten years ago urged support for a nomination which, if successful, could recognise the very specific local practices as well as offer support to sustain them for their cultural, environmental and social benefits. Within the property are many clusters of megalithic steles mainly on high ridges, which, until the mid-1930s, were associated with rituals and annual sacrificial ceremonies.

Only three clusters are seen to be part of the nomination: Tuto-fela (320 steles), Chelba-lutiti (1,530 steles), and Sede-merkato (663 steles). While some steles sites were used for burials, the original purpose of these sites remains unclear, as does when the steles were erected and which community was responsible for their construction. There is currently no evidence to link the Gedeo people with their creation. The nomination dossier suggested a construction date sometime between the 8th and 15th centuries CE, but during the course of the evaluation, findings were published of radio-carbon dating at the Sakaro Sodo site, just outside the property, which suggest a much earlier date of the 1st century CE.

In 2010, fifty-two megalithic sites were documented through surveys in Gedeo but additional sites await documentation as there have not yet been exhaustive surveys away from main paved road running north to south through the property. The nomination dossier acknowledges the need for more surveys, as well as documentation and research of the megaliths. What also needs to be clearly established, is how the comparatively small number within the nominated property relate to a very much larger number of megaliths in a wide 1,000-kilometre long band in southwest Ethiopia. Currently, except for the already inscribed site of Tiya, Ethiopia (1980, criteria (i) and (iv)) which lies to the north of the nominated property, none of the south Ethiopian sites have been studied in detail. Given the very high numbers that may exist, perhaps several thousands, it will take many years for a clearer picture to emerge. Meanwhile the steles are vulnerable. Some 10,000 individual steles were said to be extant in the wider Gedeo Zone at the beginning of the 20th century, and now only around a hundred clusters still survive.

Two prehistoric rock art sites are also present in the property and their images reflect pastoral communities, perhaps precursors of those who created the steles.

Within the property are several hundred settlements. No details of these were provided in the nomination dossier but their disposition was indicated in an annotated satellite map of the property submitted as part of supplementary information. Outside the settlements, almost all the nominated area is covered by agroforestry except for around 0.5 percent of natural forest, now maintained by Gedeo elders for its sacred and ritual importance.

The nominated property has an area of 296.2 square kilometres; there is no buffer zone as it is stated that there is no difference between the landscape within the property boundaries and the landscape beyond, as both are part of the Gedeo Zone.

The Gedeo people were absorbed into the Ethiopian Empire in the 1890s. Under the feudal system that prevailed until 1975 they had to deliver a proportion of their produce to their overlords. And from the 1920s the community was obliged to increase the cultivation of coffee as a valuable cash crop.

In 1950s Christian missionaries came to the area, established churches, and exerted far-reaching changes. Today some forty percent of the Gedeo population is Protestant Christian, while those who maintain the Gedeo religion make up about a quarter.

Over the past half century, a combination of a rapid increase in population and changes in religion have combined to weaken traditional practices and to put the traditional social systems under stress, to a degree that threatens their long-standing resilience.
State of conservation

Although the layered cultivation practices can support much large numbers of people than other types of cultivation, compared on an area by area basis, and has possibly the highest rural population in Africa living on finite natural resources, there are limits to the intensity of cultivation and where it can be practiced. ICOMOS notes that in the nominated property those limits have been more than reached in response to social and economic changes and particularly a combination of population growth, the loss of land to new settlements, and the introduction of new crops, such as khat and sugarcane. Cultivation has been extended higher and higher up the mountain slopes (advancing some 200 metres in twenty years) to areas that are both ecologically and geologically unsustainable and could lead to disastrous landslides. And within the agroforestry area, non-indigenous species such as eucalyptus are being planted. Cultivation is even threatening the sacred forests and while small areas do survive, IUCN notes that there is a need for action to be taken to sustain the tree species within them. These areas reflect high levels of biodiversity and are also refuges for indigenous floral diversity, hosting endemic, threatened and traditional medicinal plants.

So intensive is the present level of cultivation that pastoral activities which formed part of the traditional farming system have been reduced to minimal levels. More fundamentally, the long-standing and effective symbiotic relationship that the Gedeo have with their land is under threat. This situation has arisen as a result of the abandonment of traditional ways of life by young people; a shift in value systems and changes in economic engagements that reflect departure from the culturally embedded local knowledge, belief, norms and environmental ethics of regulating human-nature relationship; population growth above the national average; fragmentation of land plots; no premium paid to farmers for high quality Yirgacheffe organic coffee; the absence of protection for megalithic monuments outside the three main clusters; the vulnerability of sacred groves to poaching and encroachment; and the unlimited growth of settlements and roads.

These pressures are pushing people to cultivate the steepest slopes with marginal hill lands of more than seventy percent inclination now heavily planted with enset. The landscape is acknowledged in the nomination dossier as being “beyond its carrying capacity” and as experiencing intensive cultivation that could eventually lead to environmental degradation unless urgent conservation measures are put in place.

The nomination dossier further acknowledges that “[t]he land Vs [versus] population imbalance is a major threat that will impact, in the near future the integrity and OUV of the agricultural scape,” and further that “the economic condition of the region and its dependence on coffee could not sustain itself” unless a sustainable land use plan is developed and implemented.

The absence of protection of the megalithic monuments (outside the three main clusters), is leading to most being subject to destruction or use as building materials.

There are several hundreds of settlements in the nominated property which do not contribute directly to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, although they are an integral part of the overall agroforestry system in supporting local communities. The settlements were not mentioned in the nomination dossier but supplementary information provided in November 2021 by the State Party plots their locations and the large network of roads that link them. Currently it appears that there is little regulation applied to the scope of these settlements, to how they are provided with services, or to how road development is constrained to avoid sacred sites and cultural heritage. The State Party acknowledges that the expansion of settlements, driven by rapid population growth and development of road infrastructure, is uncontrolled and will in time threaten the sustainability of the system if no measures are taken.

Overall the factors affecting the property are extensive, on-going, and cumulative all of which could lead to an unstoppable downward trajectory unless immediate actions are taken that embrace and integrate social, economic, and cultural aspects in ways that aim to reverse the current adverse trends.

The State Party fully accepts the need for the exceedingly fragile conservation of the property to be strengthened and put onto a sustainable basis in order to address acknowledged dangers, and there is also acceptance from local administrators, elders, traditional leaders, women and youth representatives that the threats affecting the cultural landscape need to be urgently addressed.
In ICOMOS’ view, a sustainable land use plan specifically designed for the nominated property is urgently needed to address the specific dangers that it is facing, and to frame actions in the short-term as well as in the medium- and long-term to ensure that forces for drastic and irreversible change can be contained and their impacts mitigated. This is explored further in Section 4.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the property is extremely fragile and under threat, as a result of factors affecting the nominated property that are extensive, on-going, and cumulative, all of which could lead to an unstoppable downward trajectory unless immediate actions are taken that embrace and integrate social, economic, and cultural aspects in ways that aim to reverse the current adverse trends.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The Gedeo agroforestry system is a self-regenerating land use system, which is developed and managed through culturally embedded knowledge system and practices.
- The system is a multi-layered and multi-purpose system composed of mainly coffee, enset, indigenous trees, root crops and shrub, which occupy distinct layers of vertical space of the plant community.
- The Gedeo Landscape is marked by abundant megalithic archaeological sites, illustrating an extraordinary steles tradition, which attained its peak between the 8th and 15th centuries, of which three are nominated.
- A prehistoric rock art site is testimony to the occupation of the region by prehistoric pastoralists.
- The landscape is endowed with sacred forests under the custody of Gedeo traditional leaders.
- Overall, the landscape is an example of rich evolving culture, resilience and sustainability.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information, the key attributes of the nominated property are the indigenous multi-layered agroforestry system based on enset- and coffee sheltered by native trees and combined with herbs, fruits, root crops and some cereals; indigenous agroforestry systems including related beliefs and taboos related to the protection of trees; a harmonious relationship between people and nature, traditional Gedeo institutions including the Songo, or Council of elders, and the Bullee system; sacred forests; and the incorporation of megalithic sites within the Gedeo value system.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed on the grounds of comparing other sites with similar attributes – that is agroforestry and megalithic monuments. It has examined properties with a limited number of sites in Ethiopia and around the world but mainly sites already inscribed on the World Heritage List. The analysis would have benefitted from being underpinned by a clearly defined geo-cultural area.

Within Ethiopia, a comparison is made with the Konso Cultural Landscape (2011, criterion (iii) and (iv)). While this property reflects agroforestry systems and has stone monuments, the nature of both is seen as being fundamentally different from Gedeo. Konso is an arid area with abundant terraces and walled towns, and with stelae that are still part of a living tradition for marking graves.

Some comparisons have been undertaken separately for agroforestry landscapes and megalithic monuments. For the former, the nominated property is compared with the Archaeological Landscape of the First Coffee Plantations in the South-East of Cuba (Cuba, 2000, criteria (iii) and (iv)) and Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia (Colombia, 2011, criteria (v) and (vi)). Both of these are seen to be characterised by single focus crops, and neither are worked by Indigenous communities or based on very long-standing local traditions. For the latter, further comparisons were made with Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites, (United Kingdom, 1986, criteria (i), (ii) and (iii)) and the Stone Circles of Senegambia (Gambia, Senegal, 2006, criteria (i) and (iii)), both of which are seen to demonstrate completely different topography, forms and uses.

The most relevant comparisons are those with sites in South West Ethiopia. This area is inhabited by distinct ethnic groups and is characterised by enset-coffee agroforestry, together with, in most cases, megalithic as well as sacred sites. These include, within the Gurage zone to the north of Gedeo, the megalithic stelae of the inscribed site of Tiya, (Ethiopia, 1980, criteria (i) and (iv)). These are seen as being contemporary in date with those of Gedeo, but all appear to be linked to graves and none are in an agroforestry landscape.

The second comparison is with the neighbouring Sidama Zone. There, agroforestry system is seen as almost identical with that of the Gedeo Zone, as the Sidama Zone follows the same agricultural traditions in a similar environmental setting to Gedeo, and a recent survey has demonstrated that wild enset is still present in eastern Sidama. The megalithic tradition which abounds in the Gedeo Zone is equally significantly present in the Sidama Zone. The only difference noted is that the megalithic monuments in Sidama are currently less well conserved than those in Gedeo.

The nomination dossier also mentions the following areas which have similarities with the agroforestry systems in the Gedeo nominated areas: Gamo-Gofa, Ari, Kaffa,
Shakka, Yem, Gurage, Wolayta, Dauro, Konta, Jimma, Kambatta and Hadiya.

In terms of the megaliths alone, while it is stated megalithic monuments exist in all regions of Ethiopia most are located in zones within and adjoining the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Regional State. In its additional information sent in November 2021, the State Party did make clear though that the nominated area cannot be considered as representative of these other south and southwestern megalithic areas of Ethiopia, as each region has its own typo-morphological specificities, chronologies, and functions.

In terms of agroforestry, the supplementary information provided by the State Party in February 2022 offers some clarity on comparisons. It reports that recent surveys have demonstrated that the nominated agroforestry landscape of the Gedeo area, although under considerable pressure, has changed far less than other areas with similar systems. The Sidama area is undergoing a significant change as there has been a considerable shift towards economically lucrative cash and woody trees such as eucalyptus, khat (*Catha edulis*) and pineapple all of which are impacting on traditional processes and landscape patterns. Khat cultivation in Sidama increased from five percent in 1991 to thirty-five percent in 2013; while *enset* (also known as *enset*) became widely planted in the region in the 1980s and 1990s. Despite these changes, the Sidama agroforestry landscape has remained largely intact and thus can be seen to stand out in comparison to other areas.

On this basis, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the agroforestry aspects of this property for the World Heritage List. The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (v).

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (v).

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living, or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the megalithic sites are conserved by the Gedeo community through being embedded within a rich and vast indigenous agroforestry system that is supported by traditional management which revolves around traditional belief systems.

ICOMOS does not consider that the three clusters of megalithic sites can be seen as the justification for this criterion. Rather, ICOMOS considers that the focus should be on the agroforestry traditions.

For centuries, even millennia, in what is now the southwest of Ethiopia, the traditional agroforestry practices involving *enset* and more recently coffee, combined with variety of trees and shrubs, as well as other food crops, have provided a sustainable living for communities, based on traditional knowledge and belief
systems that until recently incorporated the three megalithic clusters as ritual sites.

ICOMOS considers that the property can be seen as an exceptional testimony to this long-standing and still living indigenous Gedeo cultural tradition of agroforestry with its layered cultivation of mature trees providing shelter for enset, coffee and other food crops.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party in relation to the agroforestry system and its complexity in terms of the large numbers of local varieties of enset, that are cultivated, and the clearly differentiated layers, in which larger indigenous trees provide shade for enset, which in turns shades the underlying coffee. This symbiotic system is said to sustain livelihoods while ensuring environmental sustainability.

ICOMOS considers that the Gedeo agroforestry landscape can be seen as an outstanding example of how communities over time have devised systems to optimising the constraints and opportunities of their natural environment. The Gedeo indigenous Ballee system combines customary laws, rules, regulations, norms, and codes of social relations to govern interaction with nature. The resulting landscape not only supports the highest density of population in Africa, but it also maintains harmony with species, rich bio-diversity, and produces high quality organic coffee. It is though highly vulnerable to a range of social and economic pressures that are threatening its resilience and sustainability.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (iii) and (v) have been justified.

**Integrity and authenticity**

**Integrity**

Integrity relates to the wholeness and intactness of the property and its attributes, as well as to whether all the attributes are included in the boundaries and can be considered to be intact.

The nominated property is large, extending to some fifty-eight square kilometres and the rationale for the precise delineation of the boundaries is not entirely clear.

While ICOMOS considers that all the key attributes are present within the boundaries, it also considers that some of the landscape areas immediately beyond the boundaries may also include the attributes.

It is clear, though, that the overall ensemble of attributes is extremely vulnerable to a large number of social and economic pressures as set out above. Although traditional management underpins the management of the property, the Ballee and Songo institutions that govern management are no longer adhered by all community members and have been weakened. Any failure of the traditional processes could lead to systemic collapse, as has happened to many other rural communities around the world. Thus, if the property is to survive in a sustainable form and keep its value, the whole network of attributes must be sustained and urgent measures are needed to support and strengthen the traditional framework, as part of a wider strategic approach to development.

**Authenticity**

Authenticity is about the ability of the attributes to convey its value truthfully and credibly.

In relation to the Gedeo landscape this means considering how well the agroforestry landscape reflects traditional agroforestry practices and traditional governance, as these underpin and shape the whole landscape. Thus, the attributes are all interlinked and vulnerability of one part of the system leads to vulnerability of the whole property.

ICOMOS considers that the traditional practices and governance still persist but have been weakened and are extremely vulnerable to a host of different economic and social factors, as already outlined, which means that their ability to reflect meaning is compromised to a degree.

If authenticity is to persist, traditional practices and governance both need strengthening as a matter of urgency, if the overall landscape is to reflect its meaning truthfully and credibly in the long term.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met but that both are extremely vulnerable.

**Boundaries**

As per 2020, the estimated number of inhabitants living within the nominated property is 271,305.

Quite how the boundaries were delineated has not been clearly set out. The nomination dossier states moreover that the area beyond the boundaries is similar to the area within and that this justifies the absence of a buffer zone.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries do need particular attention and might need minor adjustments to allow a clearer understanding of how they relate to cultural communities or cultural systems. Given the large size of the property, such a reflection could not be considered by the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission.

The immediate setting of the property is vulnerable to dense development and a buffer zone needs to be considered that could offer appropriate protective measures to ensure a gradation between the property and its wider setting in terms of the impact of development and other changes.
4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
There is little mention of documentation in the nomination dossier. If traditional agroforestry practices, traditional knowledge and belief systems, and traditional tree species are to be protected, there is clearly an urgent need to document all of these, through communal participation. Furthermore, the survey of steles sites within the property needs to be extended.

A detailed land use map is needed which could be developed using remote sensing. Such a map could illuminate the pattern of crops, as well as the distribution of archaeological sites, including within the sacred areas. But databases are also needed to capture cultural practices and indigenous knowledge associated with the cultivation processes and particularly enset and coffee.

Overall what is needed is a research agenda that could progress such interconnected databases, perhaps carried out with the support of Dilla University. There is an urgency to start this process in order to establish a baseline upon which to define and develop a sustainable way forward.

Conservation measures
While measures have been identified in the management plan including to collect tree seeds, to replant certain areas of the forest, and to strengthen traditional practices, ICOMOS notes that this work appears to have not yet commenced to any significant extent. And it remains unclear what precise initiatives are underway to strengthen traditional practices and to address other negative impacts and their causes.

Currently the conservation response is not commensurate with the threats facing the property.

Currently no conservation work is being undertaken on the archaeological sites that are fenced, or those elsewhere.

Monitoring
A set of eight monitoring indicators have been identified but these are broad in nature, such as the coffee-enset landscape, the conservation and deterioration rate of the steles, population increase, development and natural disasters. Monitoring will be undertaken by zonal and regional culture offices. While these indicators are not inappropriate, they do not encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and need to be augmented.

How the overall coffee-enset landscape can be meaningfully monitored twice a year by these offices is not set out. Given the size and complexity of the nominated area, monitoring needs to be much more detailed if it is to be helpful in identifying the drivers for change, as well as the cumulative impacts of change, in ways that can inform management. It would also appear essential that monitoring is mainly a community-based activity, as has been successfully demonstrated in the Gedeo area for environmental indicators.

Given the rapid pace of change that is facing the property, there would appear to be an urgent need to establish a more extensive, detailed and at least partly community-based monitoring system that could align with measures to address the underlying threats, could support the management and sustainable development of the property, and could facilitate regular monitoring.

Such a community monitoring system would need to be based on adequate databases, as discussed above, and clearly linked to the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system must be extended to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and their inter-relationship. It should also be at least partly community-based and designed to allow easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
The status and protection of traditionally used land by local communities is enshrined in the Ethiopian Constitution. At the federal level, the Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage Proclamation (209/2000) recognises the value and heritage status of a property that ‘describes and witnesses to the evolution of nature and which has a major value in its scientific, historical, cultural, artistic and handicraft content’, which, according to the nomination dossier, means that such properties are protected by law. This provides general protection for cultural aspects of the nominated property while more specific local instruments address the specificities of protecting the overall Gedeo cultural landscape.
There are two key local instruments adopted by the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Regional State. The first is the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region Rural Land Administration and Utilization Proclamation (110/2007), that states that “land for communal use […] which includes social and cultural affairs and religion is reserved” for the communities. The second, which specifically relates to the Gedeo cultural landscape, is the Proclamation for Conservation and Protection of South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region State Cultural Landscape Heritages of Gedeo (189/2021). This covers heritage sites, sacred sites and agroforestry which is defined as a “land management system for the cultivation and use of a wide range of valuable tree species, animals, combined with annual and permanent crops”. This Proclamation also sets out the management structure and operational mechanisms that will translate its clauses into practice within the property.

Until the Proclamation (189/2021) was approved, farmers were free to plant the crops they wished where they wished and thus could move to the cultivation of cereal crops instead of enset and coffee, provided indigenous trees were protected. The Proclamation is a very clear and ambitious instrument that, in effect, seeks to put in place constraints in the interests of conservation of traditional practices. But if it is to be effective, ICOMOS considers that there will be a need for much clearer definition of what is meant by agroforestry in terms of the proportion of enset, coffee, and other crops in different areas of the property, the limits of cultivation, and much more detailed documentation of the current situation. All of these needs are acknowledged. It is stated that the scope and details of the landscape to be protected shall be determined by directives, and that both Ethiopian and foreign universities will be encouraged to undertake research and documentation to underpin these directives.

Management system
The management structure is set out in Proclamation (189/2021) as consisting of a Bureau, a Gedeo Zone Heritage Management Committee, a Woreda or Town Heritage Management Committee, a Kebele or Local Community Heritage Management Committee, and a Heritage Management Office with a property manager. It will be the responsibility of all the committees to deliver the protection and conservation measures set out in the Proclamation.

The management system is well structured and underpinned by the involvement of local authorities, local communities and particularly local elders and ritual leaders, through the Ballee and Songo systems that “enact different rules and regulations that dictate human interaction with the environment”. But the structures do not yet seem to be fully in place.

While in the future, there are plans to “upgrade the qualification of the heritage protection experts in Gedeo zonal Culture and Tourism office”, in the meantime, it appears that staff will only be engaged at the archaeological sites and that “for the agricultural landscape, the whole community will be in charge, using the traditionally acquired skills and there will be no need to hire additional people”.

Although the dossier states that the local management will be supported by regional heritage and tourism offices and by periodic follow-ups from the Federal Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritages (ARCCH), it is clear that heritage and tourism staff alone are not sufficient to address the key issues, such as the controls envisaged in the Proclamation (189/2021) for which the engagement of staff providing local services such as planning, housing and the environment would seem to be necessary. For the Proclamation states that people who hold a Land Certificate “shall not have the right to change the cultural and historical context, shape and place of the heritage or heritage sites”, and that any type of modern construction that impacts adversely on the Gedeo cultural landscape is not permitted, and that permission will need to be given for projects in advance of work being undertaken, who is to implement such regulations is not at all clear. Given the many thousands of farmers in the property, enforcing such edicts will be a major challenge.

A management plan has been prepared with the full engagement of the local communities and local authorities and is based on the advice of an agroforestry expert. It sets out good aspirational aims and actions to address the key threats that have been identified. Its weakness is that the actions are directed solely at local actors who simply do not have enough resources or tools to combat the larger issues facing the property. As set out above, more integration is needed between local actors and regional and national authorities if measures are to be taken to address the causes that underpin the threats at the property.

The additional information submitted in November 2021 stated that in order to address these challenges the government has designed and implemented various conservation-livelihood approaches, including sustainable land management, climate action for land management, and integrated watershed management programmes, which have started to be implanted in certain zones. These will focus on conservation of the agroforestry system, improving the livelihood of communities, and halting rapid population growth, while a watershed development cooperative association with access to financial support through loans and subsidies has been mandated to prepare an action plan based on environmental and socio-economic problems.

What remained unclear was how these regional or national programmes will be adapted to respect the need to protect the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and how they will be integrated into the management structures for the property so that, for example, development loans fully respect and support traditional agroforestry and social practices.
In ICOMOS’s view in the light of the acknowledged vulnerabilities the property is facing, as a result of fast changing demographic, economic and landscape management issues, the proposed structure needs augmenting to define how national approaches will be translated into actions, and how major challenges facing the property will be addressed.

A sustainable land use plan for the property is needed that could define ways of achieving a balance between the many competing needs at the property such as protecting traditional practices, improving prices for the high-quality organic coffee, and raising the overall standard of living of communities. Moreover, such a plan could provide both incentives and appropriate constraints in relation to the expansion of settlements, the scope of cultivation and the type of crops and trees planted, while respecting and, if necessary, strengthening traditional management structures.

The State Party supports this approach and has undertaken a consultative meeting with stakeholders to discuss the preparation of a sustainable land use plan for the nominated area which they agree is urgently needed and have enlisted the collaboration of Dilla University. And moreover, it is reported that the higher government officials of the Gedeo Zone, including the chief administrator and the chairman of the Gedeo Zone Management Committee, are determined to realise this task in a short period of time.

To this end, the zonal administration has established a committee consisting of sixteen members selected from different sectors in the zone. Dilla University who will prepare the plan has pledged to assign academic and research staff, while the zonal administration will finance the work. The plan is scheduled to be completed before the end of the year.

ICOMOS commends the work that is being undertaken on this plan but considers that given the size and complexity of the property and of the multi-dimensional nature of the threats with which it is faced, a six-month timetable is unrealistic, particularly as such a plan needs not only to identify aims and strategies but also delivery mechanisms and any strengthening that might be needed to the formal governance structures which could extend beyond the property.

Visitor management
A Cultural Landscape Tourism Plan 2019-2023 has been prepared. This identifies the aesthetic and agroforestry aspects of landscapes, sacred forests, and megalithic sites as all having potential to attract visitors. It enumerates the difficulties in attracting tourists such as the lack of all-weather roads, clean water supplies, accommodation, interpretation, tour guides, and sets out strategic objectives and an action plan for moving forward. Commendably, it encourages non-vehicular access and simple camp site developments, stresses the need for sustaining intangible and tangible cultural heritage, and promotes engagement of local communities and local organisations as well as an incremental approach.

The plan lists responsible bodies and partners but no information is provided on what has so far been achieved over the past four years.

Community involvement
Community practices underpin this nomination and the management structures envisage their involvement but these appear not yet to be in place. While several discussions have taken place with local communities and officials, elders, the youth, stakeholder institutions at local, regional and federal institutions, it appears that this dialogue is at an early stage and how communities will advise on and be incorporated into the much needed sustainable strategic approaches to development remains unclear. What is clear is the commitment that local stakeholders have shown to the nomination processes.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection measures put in place at federal and in particular the specific proclamation (189/2021) at state level, provide a good basis for management. A sustainable land use plan for the property is needed that could define ways of achieving a balance between the many competing needs at the property such as protecting traditional practices, improving prices for the high-quality organic coffee, and raising the overall standard of living of communities.

6 Conclusion
The Gedeo Cultural Landscape is an exceptional testimony to a long-standing and still living indigenous Gedeo cultural tradition of agroforestry with its layered cultivation of mature trees providing shelter for enset, coffee and other food crops.

This symbiotic, system linking culture and nature, is underpinned by traditional knowledge systems of the Gedeo community, and has the capacity to sustain livelihoods while ensuring environmental sustainability; it not only supports the highest density of population in Africa, it also maintains harmony with species, a rich biodiversity and produces high quality organic coffee.

But this large property extending to almost 300 square kilometres and supporting just over a quarter of a million people is highly vulnerable, as acknowledged in the nomination dossier, to fast changing demographic, economic and landscape management issues. The population in Gedeo is increasing at an alarming rate; the land holding capacity has decreased by about twenty percent in less than a generation; intense cultivation is extending to unstable slopes of more than seventy percent inclination; and the sacred forests are under threat.
As the State Party acknowledges in the nomination dossier: “The land Vs population imbalance is a major threat that will impact, in the near future the integrity and OUV of the agricultural scape” and “[i]t seems that the landscape is reaching beyond its carrying capacity and that will eventually leads environmental degradation if proper conservation and livelihood measures are not taking place”.

While ICOMOS commends the State Party for the legal and management structures that have been defined, and their key emphasis on traditional structures and processes, it does not consider that sufficient measures are yet in place to address the severe challenges that the property is facing or to halt the highly negative trends that it is already experiencing, and thus overall to ensure that the landscape will continue to reflect distinctive agroforestry practices into the future in a sustainable and meaningful way.

ICOMOS considers that a sustainable land use plan is the key to achieving a balance between the many competing needs such as protecting traditional practices, improving prices for the high-quality organic coffee, and raising the overall standard of living of communities. Such a plan could provide both incentives and appropriate constraints in relation to the expansion of settlements, the scope of cultivation and the type of crops and trees planted, as part of a wider strategic approach to development.

Such a defined plan could build on the existing national government initiatives, and provide a context for the management plan but above all could focus on the specific aspects within the nominated area for which long-term protection is needed.

ICOMOS welcomes the commitment by the State Party to producing such a plan and notes that work on its development has started, with the aim of completing the plan in six months. This timeframe appears very tight in relation to the scope of the project. ICOMOS considers that if the plan is to be conceived at the level of detail required, and to have the support of the agroforestry communities, a longer timeframe will be necessary in order to allow for documentation to be gathered and full consultation to be undertaken. Perhaps more crucially such a plan would need to demonstrate specific measures for addressing the dangers that the property now faces, and how it might achieve an overall state of conservation that would ensure its proposed Outstanding Universal Value is sustained in the long term.

In spite of the progress that is being made, ICOMOS considers that the property is faced with specific and proven imminent dangers, which could lead to significant loss of historical authenticity and of cultural significance. The major threats that the property is facing could be considered as ascertained danger, in accordance with paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Inscription alone is insufficient to address these dangers. Accordingly, ICOMOS recommends that The Gedeo Cultural Landscape should be inscribed on the World Heritage List but at the same time be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This recommendation should be seen as a way to ensure that sufficient time can be given to the development of a sustainable land use plan and that it can deliver the specific corrective measures that are needed to ensure the property will move forward in ways that sustain the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, strengthen traditional management, and overall deliver sustainable livelihoods for the Gedeo communities.

ICOMOS considers that inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger should be the opportunity to gain the attention and support of the international community for the protection of the property and for the conservation of its remarkable agroforestry system, to ensure that it can survive in a meaningful way.

Such an approach could also be seen as a continuation of the processes of dialogue that were started during the evaluation process, and of the much longer-term efforts by the Gedeo communities to have the significance of their landscape recognised by the international community.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that The Gedeo Cultural Landscape, Ethiopia, be inscribed as a cultural landscape on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (v) and at the same time on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

ICOMOS recommends that a reactive monitoring mission be invited to the property to establish a Desired state of conservation and a programme of corrective measures to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Gedeo Cultural Landscape spread along the eastern escarpment of the Ethiopian highlands, is an exceptional testimony to a long-standing and still living indigenous Gedeo cultural tradition of agroforestry, with its layered cultivation of mature trees providing shelter for enset, coffee and other food crops. This symbiotic system, linking culture and nature, is underpinned by traditional knowledge systems of the Gedeo community, and has the capacity to sustain livelihoods while ensuring environmental sustainability.

The abundant alluvial rivers and fertile soils of the escarpment support the agroforestry layers spread over
the twenty kilometres that separate the top of the escarpment from the lowlands. Large trees shelter indigenous enset – (*enset ventricosum*) the main food crop under which coffee grows, and now the main cash crop – together with other indigenous trees, root crops, shrubs, etc., each species occupying a distinct layer. The Gedeo Cultural Landscape property is home to just over a quarter of a million Gedeo people.

While the Gedeo are Indigenous to Ethiopia and have been associated with the cultivation of *enset* for perhaps a few thousand years, oral traditions suggest that they moved to the southwest from the north sometime during the last two millennia. The Gedeo communities are still largely guided by indigenous knowledge, and traditional institutions including the *Songo*, or Council of elders, as well as the *Ballee* system that regulates interaction with nature. Parts of the natural forest are set aside as sacred areas for ritual purposes, where no trees are felled or cultivation practised, and where indigenous tree species and medicinal plants have been preserved, while on the mountain ridges dense clusters of megalithic monuments, some steles and others in phallic form, were also revered by the Gedeo and cared for by their elders. The Gedeo traditional systems and practices underpin the forest regimes.

**Criterion (iii):** The Gedeo Cultural Landscape is an exceptional testimony to the long-standing and still living indigenous Gedeo cultural tradition of agroforestry with its layered cultivation of mature trees providing shelter for *enset*, and more recently coffee as well as shrubs and other food crops. For centuries, or perhaps even millennia, in what is now the southwest of Ethiopia, these traditional agroforestry practices have provided a sustainable living for communities, based on traditional knowledge and belief systems that reserved certain parts of the forest as sacred areas and protected megalithic clusters of steles as ritual sites.

**Criterion (v):** The Gedeo Cultural Landscape is as an outstanding example of how communities over time have devised systems to optimising the constraints and opportunities of their natural environment. The Gedeo indigenous *Ballee* system combines customary laws, rules, regulations, norms, and codes of social relations to govern interactions with nature. The resulting landscape not only supports the highest density of population in Africa, but it also maintains harmony with species, rich biodiversity and produces high quality organic coffee. It is though highly vulnerable to a range of social and economic pressures that are threatening its resilience and sustainability.

**Integrity**

The key attributes are present within the boundaries, though some of the landscape areas immediately beyond the boundaries may also include some attributes. The overall ensemble of attributes is extremely vulnerable to a large number of social and economic pressures. Although traditional management underpins the management of the property, the *Ballee* and *Songo* institutions that govern management are no longer adhered to by all community members which means that the traditional processes that support the overall layered agroforestry practices have been weakened. This could result in systemic collapse. In order for the Gedeo cultural landscape to survive in a sustainable form and to keep its value, the whole network of attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value must be sustained as a single integrated system. Urgent measures are needed to support and strengthen the traditional framework, as part of a wider strategic approach to development, in order to address the extreme vulnerability of integrity.

**Authenticity**

Traditional agroforestry practices and governance underpin and shape the whole Gedeo cultural landscape. The attributes are all interlinked and vulnerability of one part of the system can lead to vulnerability of the whole property. Thus, how well the agroforestry landscape conveys its value depend on the resilience of the traditional processes. The traditional practices and governance still persist but have been weakened and are extremely vulnerable to a host of different economic and social factors, which means that their ability to reflect meaning is compromised to a degree. Authenticity is thus highly vulnerable. If authenticity is to persist, and if the overall landscape is to reflect its meaning truthfully and credibly in the long term, traditional practices and traditional governance both need strengthening and supporting as a matter of urgency, in order to address the extreme vulnerability of authenticity.

**Management and protection requirements**

The status and protection of traditionally used land by local communities is enshrined in the Ethiopian Constitution. At the federal level, the Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage Proclamation (209/2000) recognises the value and heritage status of a property that describes and witnesses the evolution of nature and which has a major value in its scientific, historical, cultural, artistic and handicraft content. This general protection for cultural aspects of the property is augmented by more local instruments that address the specificities of protecting the overall Gedeo cultural landscape.

The two key local instruments that were adopted by the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region are: 1) The Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region Rural Land Administration and Utilization Proclamation (110/2007), that states that “land for communal use which includes social and cultural affairs and religion is reserved for the communities”; and 2) the Proclamation for Conservation and Protection of South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region State Cultural Landscape HERITAGES of Gedeo (189/2021). This second Proclamation is specific to the property and covers heritage sites, sacred sites and agroforestry which is defined as a “land management system for the cultivation and use of a wide range of valuable tree species, animals, combined with annual and permanent crops”. It also sets out the management structure and operational
mechanisms that will translate its clauses into practice within the property, including constraints on where crops are planted, and support for traditional practices. The scope and details of the landscape to be protected will be determined by directives, and both Ethiopian and foreign universities are to be encouraged to undertake research and documentation to underpin these directives. These will need to define the traditional agroforestry of the property both generally and for specific areas as well as the limits of cultivation.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give urgent consideration to the following:

a) Continuing to progress the sustainable land use plan in order to:

i) Define a strategic approach for the development of the property that encompasses the need to provide incentives and support for traditional agroforestry practices; to improve prices for high-quality organic coffee; to raise the overall standard of living of communities; and put in place appropriate constraints for the expansion of settlements, the scope of cultivation and the type of crops and trees planted,

ii) Ensure that the plan builds on existing national government initiatives, and provides a context for the management plan but also focuses on the specific aspects within the property’s area for which long-term protection is needed in order to address the many acknowledged threats that it faces so as to ensure its resilience and sustainability,

iii) Consider, in the context of the large scale of the property and the size of the Gedeo community, extending the timescale for the plan beyond the six months envisaged to allow for more in-depth assessment and documentation to be gathered, full engagement and consultation with agroforestry communities, and delivery mechanisms to be developed,

iv) Ensure that the plan defines specific measures to address dangers that the property faces, and frames actions in the short-term as well as in the medium- and long-term to ensure that forces for drastic and irreversible change can be contained and their impacts mitigated, and overall defines how and when the property might achieve a state of conservation that would ensure its Outstanding Universal Value is sustained for the long-term,

v) Include within the plan a strategy to protect the local and national natural values of the property in ways that support traditional knowledge and the livelihoods of local communities,

b) Implementing fully the management plan and strengthening the property management office,

c) Extending the monitoring system to encompass all the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value and consider introducing a partly community-based monitoring system,

d) Undertaking a detailed analysis of the boundaries of the property to justify its specific alignment in relation to cultural communities and cultural processes and identify whether any minor adjustments are necessary,

e) Considering putting in place a buffer zone for the property that provides appropriate protective measure to ensure a gradation between the property and its wider setting in terms of the impact of development and other changes,

f) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session;
III Cultural properties

A Africa
New nomination
Extension

B Asia – Pacific
New nominations
Nomination referred back by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

C Europe – North America
New nominations
Nominations deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

D Latin America and the Caribbean
New nomination
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba

Location
Atacora Department
Benin

Brief description
The property lies next to the cultural landscape of Koutammakou in Togo and is nominated as an extension of this landscape. The nominated extension embodies the characteristic and original land use of the Batammariba, whose dwellings are known as takienta (sikien in the plural). Groves, springs and sacred rocks, terraced slopes and networks of water retaining walls, and forests and plant species used in the construction of sikien, associated with the rituals and beliefs of the Batammariba, also form part of this cultural landscape.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a nomination of an extension of a site.

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021), paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

Included in the Tentative List
16 June 2020

Background
This is a nomination for an extension of the site of Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba in Togo, inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee (Suzhou, 2004) on the basis of criteria (v) and (vi).

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by members of ICOMOS International Scientific Committees and independent experts.

Information on the property’s natural attributes, and their conservation and management, was received by the IUCN on 4 March 2022 and has been incorporated into the corresponding sections of this report.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 3 to 10 October 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 30 September 2021 requesting further information about the factors affecting the property, and about protection and management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 15 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021, summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report, including: links with the property located in Togo inscribed on the World Heritage List; justification of the property boundaries; protection measures and urban pressures; conservation measures; transnational cooperation with Togo; tourism; involvement of local communities; and the road map.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 20 January 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The Koutammakou cultural landscape stretches from north-eastern Togo to north-western Benin. The Togolese part has a total area of 31,168 ha. The nominated extension – with an area of 240,658 ha – adds the Beninese part to the existing World Heritage property, and has no buffer zone, which is also the case with the Togolese part.

Koutammakou designates the territory of the Batammariba (Otammari in the singular), which can be translated as the “builders” or the “architects”. Koutammakou is located in the foothills of the Atacora mountain range, where cave-refuges are to be found, along with sanctuaries dedicated to divinities of the land of the Tammar. The climate consists of a dry season (from the end of October until the end of April), favourable for livestock and poultry rearing, and a rainy season, when crops are planted. The Batammariba live essentially from subsistence farming. The main agricultural produce of Koutammakou consists of millet, fonio and yams. Mountain rice, black-eyed peas, Bambara groundnuts and taro are also grown to supplement the main crops.
Batammariba consists of dispersed dwellings. Each family lives in the centre of a small area of land that it manages and farms for subsistence. This wide dispersion also provides protection from outsiders. The territory is scattered with fortified dwellings, known as sikien (takienta in the singular). This dwelling type provides a defensive structure, enables economic unity and is also a religious gathering place.

Sikien architecture characteristically consists of compact, monolithic, organically-shaped earthen structures. The takienta has an upper floor, and is divided into two or three levels depending on its type: the ground floor, the upper floor and an intermediate outdoor terrace area between the two where cooking is carried out. The main characteristics that distinguish the various types of takienta are roof shapes, access to the upper floor and the number of rooms and outdoor terraces. The most recent inventory, conducted in 2018, lists three different types of sikien. The type most frequently encountered is Otchaou, with 1,144 sikien listed, consisting of a house with a vestibule and terrace, and a flat roof. The second type, Okpanri, for which 329 sikien are listed, ranges from a simplified dwelling with a single terrace (for widows and unmarried women) to a highly complex model with two or even three terraces. The third and final type, Ossori, for which 72 sikien are listed, consists of granaries arranged on either side of the vestibule tower. There is no landing or access tower to the upper floor, and no intermediate terrace.

The main stages of construction begin with the building of the two rear towers. The walls are built by manual application of successive layers. Openings are made in the towers before the mud is completely dry. The walls are often decorated by the women with lines and dashes in the freshly applied plaster. Once the walls are dry, the men insert the large wooden pillars into the ground to hold the main terrace. The young people and women then prepare the earth to be used to cover the terrace. Once the terrace is dry, the hearths are installed and the granaries are built. The building process continues for several months, and requires the participation of the whole community. The takienta requires regular maintenance after each rainy season.

The takienta is the place in which the life of an Otammari is organised from birth to death. It reflects the universe of the Batammariba in its spatial organisation, with the ground floor dedicated to the dead and deities and the upper level to the living. During the construction process, rituals are performed and a “diviner” is consulted. At each major stage of the process, a ceremony is held, not only to ensure that the construction is successful, but also to honour the divinities and ancestors. The Batammariba believe in the existence of a supreme being, and in the powers of nature, which act as its intermediaries. The ancestors also play a fundamental role in the rituals of the Batammariba. Like the supernatural powers, the ancestors of each family are provided with an altar, which may be individual or collective, inside or close by the dwelling. Outside the dwelling, some altars are a receptacle for the spirits of animals killed during hunts in the past, or the underground spirits with which ancestors having clairvoyant powers have made a pact, from which the descendants benefit. There is therefore a close link between the takienta and the sacred groves of the village.

Rites of passage are also important stages in the life of the Batammariba. The initiation of the boys (Difoni) and the girls (Dikunti) takes place every four years. The initiations are performed in sacred places, particularly in the groves. Agrarian rituals are also performed. The authority of the elders is expressed in the role they play in these community ceremonies, hence their common designation as religious chief or leader of worship.

It appears that the Batammariba, who hailed originally from northern Togo and south-eastern Burkina Faso, later settled at Koubonku and Koubentiégou. They subsequently populated the whole of Koutammakou, while remaining closely linked to the religious centres of Koubonku and Koubentiégou for the main religious activities and initiation festivities. Archaeological research suggests that the first settlements of the Batammariba date from the 6th to the 14th century CE. It was in this territory that the Batammariba developed their typical dwellings and this dispersed pattern of settlement.

State of conservation
The nominated extension area, dominated by the Atacora mountain range, and almost all the sikien, have been maintained in a good state of conservation. Although deteriorations have occurred in some of the sikien, the State Party stresses that these can be easily repaired, and the old materials can be largely reused for the building of other dwellings. According to the inventory the State Party has referenced, 1,545 sikien have been preserved, but a new inventory currently being compiled is going to list 4,550 of them.

The nominated extension and its traditional dwellings are currently being affected by changing lifestyles and the impacts of climate change. The transformations are most noticeable in the vicinity of the semi-urban centres (Natitingou, Boukombé, and Toucountouna), and along the asphalt road (RN3), but the traditional architecture is more densely concentrated outside these zones.

The cultural landscape proposed for the extension continues to be preserved for ritual purposes (groves), for medicinal purposes (plants), and in order to provide the materials needed for building sikien (wood, straw). The State Party also emphasises that expressions of culture and identity are proving resilient, as seen in the case of the rites of passage (for Dikunti and Difoni), and in the creation of several associations and commissions set up to protect and promote the Otammari language and culture.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is generally good.
Factors affecting the nominated extension
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated extension are development pressures, environmental constraints, natural phenomena, and the deterioration of the security situation.

Development pressures stem to some extent from younger generations turning away from this type of architecture towards a more “modern” form (rectangular dwelling with corrugated iron roof, in some cases with an upper floor). These new architectural forms are accompanied by the development of semi-urban centres around settlements which were once remarkable because of their large number of sikien (Natta, Natitingou and Boukombé).

In the additional information provided in November 2021, the State Party informs that planning measures have been adopted to deal with development pressures. The State Party also emphasises the existence of a traditional land use management model whereby the land is considered a sacred space from which large-scale infrastructure projects are excluded.

ICOMOS considered in its Interim Report that it would be desirable to obtain details about the drawing up of the municipal development master plans of Boukombé, Toucountouna and Natitingou, and the urban planning regulations for the urban centre of Boukombé, together with a schedule for the finalisation of these documents.

The additional information provided in January 2022 states that, following the extension nomination process under way, the three communes are currently seeking funding to update the municipal development master plans. Funding has already been obtained for Boukombé, which expects its master plan to be drawn up during 2022.

Although the building of a new takienta is an increasingly rare occurrence, ICOMOS notes that several associations and committees have been set up for the conservation and promotion of the sikien and of the Batammariba heritage.

The influence of mainstream religions is considerable in the semi-urban centres and in the villages along the asphalt road (RN3), where churches have been built and sikien have disappeared. ICOMOS wishes to emphasise however that the villages outside these zones are maintaining the traditional values of the Batammariba.

The nomination dossier for the proposed extension points out that the way of life of the Batammariba is changing, and that new economic activities are appearing, in particular the production of charcoal and timber, and cotton-growing, which all have an impact on the Kouattamakou cultural landscape. This results for example in shortages of materials for building sikien, and there is also a potential impact on other traditional practices.

In the additional information provided in November 2021, the State Party emphasises that civil society is supporting the central state in resolving this specific issue, notably through the NGO CERD Bénin (which promotes culture, education and research for development), the Safad project, and campaigns to raise awareness amongst local communities. ICOMOS notes that the impacts are visible around inhabited areas, but that the general environment remains safe from these threats.

The effects of climate change can also be measured by the frequency of rainfall, which erodes bare soil areas, weakens the architecture of the sikien and devastates fields. Wide temperature fluctuations and increasingly high temperatures are also giving rise to adaptation problems. ICOMOS notes that maintenance practices must be encouraged to combat the threats arising from this phenomenon.

The deterioration of the security situation in the sub-region is also a cause for concern. ICOMOS notes that no preventive measures have been proposed by the State Party to overcome the potential impact of security issues on the nominated extension.

ICOMOS notes that the factors affecting the property are clearly identified and summarised, but would benefit from being better documented and more fully described, to better measure their impacts. It would also be useful to establish a hierarchy of risks, particularly with regards to the gradual changes taking place in traditional society in the face of “modernity”.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the property is generally satisfactory, but that the factors affecting the property are a cause for concern, particularly in view of the large size of the nominated extension. Changes in the Batammariba lifestyle, with growing urban pressure, the construction of “modern” housing, and the emergence of new economic activities, in addition to the effects of climate change, have a negative impact on the integrity of the nominated extension, and measures must be taken as a matter of urgency.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The property nominated for extension is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The nominated extension possesses particular land use characteristics illustrated by scattered land concessions, with surrounding agricultural zones, terraced slopes, groves and other sacred places, ritual and funerary spaces, virgin (untouched) zones and processional routes for clan rituals.
The Batammariba have developed a culture that judiciously mixes a fusion with nature, technical skills, social stability and religious practices.

The nominated extension is distinctive amongst other landscapes in the Sahel because of the takienta, a family housing unit that is unique and outstanding for the technical prowess of its construction, the ingenuity of the spaces it affords, and the richness of its symbolic significance.

The nominated extension includes the historic birthplace of the Batammariba with major religious sites, and contains the three main types of takienta known to date. The extension would restore the historical integrity of the land of the Batammariba.

ICOMOS notes that the nominated extension includes the historic birthplace of the Batammariba and the major religious sites of the land of the Tammari (particularly Koubonku and Koubentiégou). In the additional information provided in January 2022, the State Party points out that the Beninese part would restore the integrity of the land of the Batammariba, who have the same traditions both in Benin and Togo. The State Party further indicates that the Batammariba in Togo and in Benin recognise Koubentégiou as the cradle of the Tammari people. The State Party also points out that the initiation places and clan cemeteries of the Batammariba of Togo are found in Benin. Some ceremonial practices are therefore conducted in Benin by both communities.

The key attributes of the nominated extension are the traditional houses known as takienta. The forests, groves, springs, sacred rocks, networks of water retaining walls and terraced slopes are attributes of the cultural landscape, in view of their inextricable links with cultural practices over the course of history, and the same applies to local plant species, particularly those used in takienta construction, or in agricultural and craft activities. Lastly, the cultural practices, knowhow and local knowledge, and many other aspects of the intangible cultural heritage of the communities in the nominated extension (in particular language, toponyms, ecological knowledge, crafts, activities and rituals) are attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of this cultural landscape.

**Comparative analysis**

The comparative analysis has been developed on the basis of the following parameters: comparisons with defensive earthen architecture, with earthen dwellings in organic forms, and with earthen dwellings expressing powerful intangible values. It has examined properties throughout the world inscribed on the World Heritage List, and others included in the Tentative Lists of States Parties, as well as other properties.

The nominated extension is compared, in a worldwide context, with defensive earthen architecture, including fortified earthen dwellings, palaces, military forts and fortified granaries. They include the *Tulou* of Fujian (China, 2008, criteria (iii), (iv) and (v)), the Fort of Bahla (Oman, 1987, criterion (iv)), and the Rukuba granaries in Nigeria. Although these buildings are comparable in some aspects, the differences are considered by the State Party to outweigh the similarities.

The nominated extension is also compared to dwellings with organic forms. The State Party notes that the comparison demonstrates a certain degree of homogeneity of architectural processes arising from the use of earth as a building material. The State Party points out however that the Batammariba are proven to be more dynamic in their architecture in terms of the number of concessions used and maintained, as well as the number of new concessions built.

The nominated extension is then compared with earthen dwellings associated with powerful intangible values. Although similar cultures in West Africa are still being maintained, the State Party argues that one of the strengths of Koutammakou is the integrity of its intangible culture. The State Party concludes that there is no other property and no other culture with such a strong connection between religious concepts, functionality, social organisation, technical skills and respect for the environment.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis could have been extended to include similar societies and environments in the Volta basin. ICOMOS also points out that the dimension of the territory is not elaborated satisfactorily in the comparative analysis. On the territorial scale, it is not about singular constructions, but rather hundreds across a very extensive territory, which gives full meaning to the historic landscape dimension. The question of the intangible dimension associated with the worship, beliefs and rituals linked to the dwellings is also weakly evoked.

With regard to the differences and similarities between the Togolese part of Koutammakou already inscribed and the nominated extension, ICOMOS considers that the nominated extension forms a coherent continuum with the Togolese part. The Beninese part of Koutammakou includes the historic cradle of the Batammariba. Furthermore, the religious centres of Koubonku and Koubentiégou today remain sacred places for the Batammariba, who continue to hold important religious activities and initiation ceremonies there.

Despite some weaknesses, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated extension for the World Heritage List.
Criteria under which inscription is proposed

Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba, was inscribed on the basis of cultural criteria (v) and (vi). The extension is therefore nominated for inscription on the basis of the same cultural criteria.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land use or sea use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the proposed extension is an outstanding example of a traditional land use system. Still alive and dynamic, it is subject to traditional and sustainable systems and techniques, and reflects the unique culture of the Batammariba, particularly the outstanding tower-houses known as sikien.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified by the nominated extension, and that the Beninese part completes and strengthens the justification of this criterion as it applies to the Togolese part of the property already inscribed. The nominated extension has a larger area, and is richer in cultural terms (representation of dwelling types, historic sites, etc.), than the Togolese part that is already inscribed. The extension restores the historical integrity of the land of the Batammariba.

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the proposed extension is an eloquent testimony to the force of the spiritual association between people and the environment. Technical knowhow, deep knowledge, social practices and religious beliefs form part of an ongoing dialogue with the natural resources in the environment, thereby creating homogeneity and fusional harmony with and between the Batammariba.

ICOMOS considers that the attributes embodied in the nominated extension are manifold, and that many of them are outstanding in terms of their own qualities, thus strengthening the justification of this criterion. The nominated extension reflects the establishment and development, over a long period, of a society with specific and original cultural traits, which has successfully adapted to changes in its immediate environment. The relationships found there between the environment, dwellings and lifestyles (social structure and organisation, construction methods, etc.) are exemplary. The religious centres of Koubonku and Koubentéougou are still today sacred places for the Batammariba, who continue to hold their major religious activities and initiation ceremonies there.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated extension meets criteria (v) and (vi).

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the property nominated for the extension lies in the presence of several thousand sikien, of which 1,400 are still occupied. According to the State Party, the Beninese part of Koutammakou includes all the elements needed to express its Outstanding Universal Value, in terms that are both tangible (dwellings and their environment) and intangible (ritual practices and beliefs linked to the sikien). Because of its cultural and religious importance in the life of the Batammariba, the continuing existence of the traditional architecture requires the perpetuation of local traditions of building and maintenance using local materials. The extension proposed by Benin to the Togolese Koutammakou property inscribed in 2004 is fully justified, as it will restore the historic integrity of the Koutammakou by including the historic birthplace from which the Batammariba dispersed.

ICOMOS stresses that integrity could be threatened if the State Party does not, in the medium term, reconstitute the vegetation cover by planting species that are used on a large scale for traditional architecture.

ICOMOS also considers that the process of “modernisation” threatens the integrity of the traditional society of the Batammariba (rural depopulation and urbanisation of urban centres). In this regard, while inscription of the property on the World Heritage List would partly open up the extension by improving lines of communication, this would also accelerate the influx of industrial building materials, which are detrimental to the traditional model but also a sign of social change.

ICOMOS notes that, in view of the large size of the nominated extension, the density of attributes varies from area to area. The integrity of some areas is also threatened by development. ICOMOS points out that it is important to better understand which areas in the nominated extension deserve closer attention and a more protective approach, in order to guarantee that the best preserved areas are very closely monitored. It will be necessary to draw up a map indicating the location of the sikien in their territory, showing in detail the nature of the land use, the terraced slopes, the network of water retaining walls, and the groves and other sacred places. This would enable the identification of zones with high concentrations of cultural and natural attributes, and provide a better picture of the original spatial organisation of this specific territory.

The nomination dossier for the extension points out that an inventory currently being compiled, led by the Catholic University of Louvain and the NGO Éco-Bénin, indicates that the number of sikien is in fact far greater than the number shown in the most recent survey (1,545). ICOMOS points out that some of the research team’s findings have already been published. The inventory shows that there are
spaces, its set-aside spaces that remain untouched, and its site, its cemetery, its sacred forests and woods, its farmland.

The intrusion of construction practices are being abandoned in favour of some villages close to urban centres, where traditional materials. ICOMOS however expresses reservations about current and future changes, in view of the case of local materials. ICOMOS considers that the conditions of authenticity of the architectural concentration are identified and reinforced conservation measures are in place.

**Boundaries**

According to the State Party, the boundaries of the nominated extension correspond to the boundaries of the villages that are recognised as being Tammarri. The limits of the nominated extension are marked in the north by the communes of Tanguíéta, Cobly and Toucountouna; in the south-east by the Sinaissiré watercourse; in the south-west by Togo; in the west by Dikoumini and Dipoli; and in the east by Wabou and Tchantangou. The population in the Beninese part is 203,503 (2013 census).

The nominated extension has no buffer zone, because of the large size of the territory, and this is also the case with the Togolese part of Koutammakou.

In the additional information provided in January 2022, the State Party points out that, although the area of the property is large, the boundaries have been determined on the basis of the villages that have been identified as Tammarri. As in the case of the Batammariba, each socio-cultural group in the Atacora lives in a territory that is specific to it, and whose boundaries are clearly defined by the villages and recognised by everyone.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for extension**

To sum up, ICOMOS considers that, despite some weaknesses, the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated extension for inscription on the World Heritage List. ICOMOS considers that the nominated extension meets criteria (v) and (vi), but that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have not been met at this stage. In view of the large area of the nominated extension, a map must be drawn up to identify the location of zones of high cultural and natural attribute concentration, and strengthened conservation measures must be put in place. It is important to clearly identify areas which merit a more protective approach, in order to guarantee that these areas are very closely monitored.
4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

The nominated extension has been largely documented over decades, and has benefited from a long tradition of research. The State Party refers to a comprehensive inventory of sikien compiled in 2017-2018, as part of the support programme for the preservation and development of gallery forests (funded by the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union). It shows the location of 1,545 sikien on a high definition map from the Benin IGN (National Geographical Institute). The extension nomination dossier is based on this inventory.

A new and much extended inventory was drawn up in 2021, as part of a project to promote earthen dwellings in Atacora, financed by the public authorities of Wallonia, involving the Catholic University of Louvain and the NGO Éco-Bénin. This has resulted in an inventory of some 4,550 sikien, divided into three categories. The State Party points out that, when the nomination dossier was being compiled, the data had not yet been finalised and therefore could not be included.

ICOMOS considers that it will be necessary to incorporate the data from the latest 2021 inventory in order to better identify attributes of the property’s Outstanding Universal Value.

Conservation measures

In its additional information, the State Party emphasises that no specific conservation plan has been drawn up, but that conservation measures have been integrated into the management plan, and that practical initiatives are already under way. The State Party also points out that a management committee for Koutammakou has already been set up, with the task of elaborating the conservation policy for the nominated extension.

In the field, the ANPT (National Agency for Heritage Promotion and Tourism Development) also assists and provides technical and financial support to the NGO Éco-Bénin for the implementation of the “Route des Tata” project, which supports communities in the conservation, enhancement and promotion of Tammari culture.

A large-scale trans-border project sponsored by the World Monuments Fund has been undertaken with the “Corps des Volontaires Béninois”, focusing on the Batammariba heritage. This has led to the setting up of four local committees to provide alerts and surveillance of the state of conservation of the sikien, bringing together representatives from the whole of the local community.

Conservation work has been carried out on forty-five sikien in the nominated extension. The State Party indicates that the work has been carried out directly by the local communities, with support from the project coordination team and the Togolese part of the Service for the Conservation and the Promotion of Koutammakou. Awareness-raising activities focusing on construction and restoration techniques have been organised in six schools.

A reforestation campaign was also carried out in 2020 with the NGO CERD Bénin. A survey of the plant species used in the construction of the sikien enabled the creation of short-cycle shea and locust bean tree plantations, two species used for plastering, decorating and hardening the walls of the takienta. Exploitation of the locust bean and shea trees has had beneficial economic consequences for the local communities involved in the project.

In 2020-2021, Project Safad carried out reforestation in several places with tree species used in the construction of sikien. Initiatives to raise awareness of the need for conservation of these species were organised in 2021 for local communities, and these efforts will continue in 2022.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures put in place represent one of the most important challenges for the management of the property. Action plans with clear priorities in terms of conservation interventions and budget proposals must be developed, together with a plan for maintenance work and monitoring mechanisms.

In the additional information provided in January 2022, the State Party indicates that a conservation plan, a maintenance work plan, and reinforced monitoring mechanisms will be incorporated in the management plan. In this framework, the results of the “HTC-ATACORA” research project, financed by the Air and Climate Agency of Wallonia and the Catholic University of Louvain, will be used to identify sikien requiring maintenance work. The State Party also adds that clear protection and conservation priorities will be defined for areas with high concentrations of attributes. A work calendar, with the projected action plans, will be drawn up and finalised at the first session of the management committee in 2022.

Monitoring

The monitoring indicators, and the corresponding monitoring intervals, are described in the extension nomination dossier. The main indicators for measuring the state of conservation of Koutammakou are the state of conservation of the environment, the state of conservation of skills, respect for tradition and for the intangible heritage, and the cultural attractiveness derived from the authenticity and good conservation of Koutammakou.

The nominated extension is monitored on a multi-annual basis by the Directorate of Cultural Heritage (DPC), with support from representatives of the local communities, and national and international technical and scientific partners. The State Party states that links are also maintained with the Directorate of Cultural Heritage (DPC) of Togo, notably through training courses given by the EPA (School of African Heritage).

In view of erosion threats, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the property should be monitored more frequently. ICOMOS also notes that the monitoring system must include risk management as a monitoring indicator.
ICOMOS considers that the documentation should be updated, taking into account the results obtained by the Catholic University of Louvain and the NGO Eco-Benin. It will be necessary to incorporate a conservation plan, a maintenance work plan, and reinforced monitoring mechanisms in the management plan, in order to take these factors into account. ICOMOS considers that, for areas with high concentrations of attributes, it will be desirable to define clear protection and conservation priorities. It will also be useful to draw up a work calendar (with short-, medium- and long-term action plans). The monitoring system must also be adapted to facilitate the incorporation of its results into the Periodic Report questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
Koutammakou has national cultural heritage status, under the terms of Article 3 of the Interministerial Order 2020 N°271/MTCA/MCVDD/MEF/DC/SGM/CTJ/CTC/DPC/CCJ /SA058SGG20, which defines its geographical limits and stipulates its Beninese components. This order recognises the tangible and intangible attributes of the nominated extension, including its traditional protection mode.


The Directorate of Cultural Heritage (DPC) is the body that devises, implements, monitors and evaluates the State Party’s cultural heritage policies and strategies. Accordingly, it elaborates the national policy and strategy for cultural heritage protection and management; ensures that a framework is set up for the inventory, conservation, enhancement and classification of historic and contemporary monuments, and archaeological, historic and natural sites; and devises the strategy for the enhancement of the historic and cultural heritage, particularly by creating a national certification or designation to apply to the most outstanding elements of the Beninese cultural heritage.

Furthermore, Article 10 of the Law N°2007-20 provides for the setting up of the National Cultural Heritage Protection Commission.

The nominated extension moreover is subject to the traditional protection mechanisms, including for example respect for the spirits of ancestors, and the Dikuntri and Difuani rites of passage.

Management system
A management plan (for 2021-2025), officially approved in 2020, was drawn up in line with the principles and guidelines of the management plan (for 2016-2026) for the Togolese part inscribed on the World Heritage List. The objective, once the extension has been inscribed, is to put in place a single management plan for the whole of Koutammakou.

The management framework is administered at national level by the Directorate of Cultural Heritage (DPC), attached to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Arts; at departmental level by the Departmental Directorate of Tourism, Culture and Arts of Atacora-Donga; and at local level by a Service for the Conservation and Promotion of Koutammakou, which is currently being set up.

The nominated extension is managed on a traditional basis by the villages and by the clans. Traditional management is governed by the codes established in Tammar society, whereby each member of a clan or lineage is aware of his or her identity and role in protecting the whole of Koutammakou; respect for traditional land law, with the land belonging to the spirits of the place, and then to the community; and the regulation and traditional management of the territory by the katenkaya, the earth priests, the allocation of farmland, which belongs to the community and not to individuals. The CNLD (National Ditammari Linguistic Commission) also participates in the traditional management of the property through its branches in the villages.

ICOMOS notes that the management plan provides for the creation of a Service for the Management and Promotion of Koutammakou. In the additional information of November 2021, the State Party informed that the management committee is operational following the ministerial order 2021 N°0142/MTCA/DC/SGM/CTJ/DAF/DPC/CCJ/SA/00 3SGG21 of 15 April 2021 that created the Koutammakou site management committee. The committee is made up of all the stakeholders in charge of the nominated extension. The committee members have already been appointed, and an initial meeting was held in August 2021.

The State Party does not directly fund the conservation of sikien architecture, as the construction of new sikien and their conservation are entirely the result of the local communities’ efforts. The State Party funding allocated to Tammar culture, via the NGO Eco-Bénin, is aimed at ensuring the development of responsible cultural tourism. The Directorate of Cultural Heritage (DPC) is currently mobilising resources for the partial implementation of the management plan for 2021-2025. Negotiations are under way, particularly with municipalities, to set aside budgets for the conservation of Koutammakou.

In the additional information provided in January 2022, the State Party also specifies that a detailed investment budget, broken down into annual expenditures, and corresponding to each priority of the projected action plan, will be finalised in the first half of 2022. The State Party adds that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts has
allocated a budget of some 65 million CFA francs for the annual work plan for 2022.

The management plan for the nominated extension has three goals: to ensure legal protection and efficient management for the conservation of Koutammakou; to showcase and promote Koutammakou and TAMMARI culture as well as sustainable tourism; and to help improve living conditions for the Batammariba.

In the additional information provided in January 2022, the State Party gave details of the measures in place to ensure trans-border cooperation with the Togolese part of the World Heritage property already inscribed. From the outset, the State Party states that collaboration with Togo began from the start of the extension nomination process. The Togolese management committee for the property has actively participated in the validation of the Beninese management plan. If the extension is approved, a transnational property management body will be set up before 2024, under the supervision of the two cultural heritage Directorates of Togo and Benin. The modus operandi and missions of the body will be defined by bilateral agreement.

ICOMOS notes that the impact of climate change and bad weather is taken into account as a factor affecting the property in the extension nomination dossier. The additional information submitted by the State Party indicates that several concrete actions referred to in the management plan have already been implemented to take this factor into account. The documents already drawn up are the National Risk Analysis and Coverage Scheme and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2019-2030). Since 2015 the commune of Boukombé has drawn up a communal contingency plan for responses to flooding, pockets of drought, soil erosion and fires. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre is supporting a programme for the period 2021-2022 focused on ensuring the resilience of communities in combating adverse climate change impacts in the Togolese and Beninese parts of Koutammakou.

ICOMOS emphasises that it is important to draw up a risk management plan and a conservation plan in order to fully take into account the impact of climate change and bad weather in the management of the nominated extension.

The IUCN also recommends the possibility of establishing an integrated management structure that covers both the cultural and natural values of the nominated extension and guarantees the integration of duly qualified personnel dedicated to the conservation of natural values.

Visitor management
The State Party aims to make tourism a key economic development priority by creating the ANPT (National Heritage Promotion and Tourism Development Agency). On the ground, the ANPT assists and provides technical and financial support to the NGO Éco-Bénin for the implementation of the “Route des Tata” project.

Other practical initiatives are under way, such as the project to create the CICO (International Centre for the Otamari Civilisation) under the leadership of the NGO CERD Bénin. At Natitingou, the regional museum displays Koutammakou heritage (scale models of sikien, everyday objects) to visitors. Koutammakou cultural events are also held; there are two cultural festivals held in Benin and Togo – the Tammar Art and Culture Festival FESTAM, and the Tamberma Festival FESTAMBER -, and the hope is to merge them into a single trans-border event. Visitor circuits are being put in place through the efforts of local guides, associations and NGOs. Local communities in the village of Koussoucoingou set up an association in 2007, and now offer accommodation in sikien to visitors, organise tourism trails, and provide introductions to local gastronomy and craft techniques. To date twenty-three dwellings are available for tourist accommodation, and 7,096 tourists stayed in them in 2019.

In the additional information provided in January 2022, the State Party informs that the planned tourism strategy will take into account the calendar of cultural events and ceremonies, in order to prevent the “folklorisation” of local traditions and practices. In the framework of the “Route des Tata” project, the guarantors of tradition are directly involved in conservation, maintenance and showcasing actions, as are the takienta owners, united in an association. Two local community representatives also sit on the Koutammakou management committee to enable information sharing, and guides have received training in sustainable tourism approaches.

Community involvement
The traditional management of the nominated extension has enabled the conservation of the architectural and landscape models of Koutammakou. The relationships between the environment, dwellings and lifestyles of the Batammariba (social structure and organisation, building methods, etc.) are exemplary from this viewpoint. ICOMOS emphasises that the involvement of the local communities in the protection and everyday management of their architectural heritage and their environment is clearly visible, as is the positive reaction to the extension nomination proposal.

The extension nomination dossier also describes the ways in which Tammar society is evolving, under the impacts in particular of education, the centralisation of administrative power, mainstream religions, tourism, increasing monetarisation, and the appearance of new needs. The State Party indicates that, in order to attenuate risks of abandonment of traditional management forms, it is important to achieve greater involvement of the Batammariba in traditional Koutammakou management and conservation practices. In this respect, the “Route des Tata” project has enabled the training of specialised builders and the construction of sikien. The communities have also actively participated in the planting of a plantation of locust bean and shea trees.
ICOMOS notes however that there is no indication of any link between this traditional system and the management and conservation plans. For example, the management plan does not include any action to involve local communities in the activities planned in the devolved structure to ensure legal protection and efficient management for the conservation of Koutammakou.

ICOMOS considers that a form of combined protection, incorporating both traditional and institutional stewardship, is an asset in terms of ensuring the involvement of local communities and increasing their awareness and participation in the safeguarding and management of the extension nominated for inscription.

**Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated extension**

To sum up, ICOMOS considers that the management system for the nominated extension combines both traditional management, at village and clan level, and the legislative measures taken by the State Party to protect the site and involve local populations. If the extension is approved, the State Party also emphasises in the additional information that a transnational body for the management of the property will be set up before 2024, under the supervision of the two cultural heritage Directorates of Togo and Benin.

In view of the threats of erosion, ICOMOS notes that it will be necessary to incorporate a conservation plan, a maintenance work plan, and reinforced monitoring mechanisms in the management plan, in order to take these factors into account. In the case of areas with high concentrations of cultural and natural attributes, clear protection and conservation priorities will have to be defined.

ICOMOS also notes that it is necessary to ensure greater involvement of the Batammariba in the management of the property, and to take into account traditional practices for the management and conservation of Koutammakou. For example, the management plan does not include any action to involve local communities in the activities planned in the devolved structure to ensure legal protection and efficient management for the conservation of Koutammakou.

With regard to the issues of documentation, protection and conservation measures, the transnational management of the property and tourism management, it is necessary for the State Party to draw up a road map and an implementation calendar that could cover all these aspects by establishing priorities over the short, medium and long terms, provided that adequate financial resources can be obtained, including funding from external sources.

**6 Conclusion**

Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba, extends from north-eastern Togo to north-west Benin. The Togolese part was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2004, and the nominated extension adds the Beninese part to the existing World Heritage property.

The nominated extension is an essentially changing and living cultural landscape. It is characterised by an original land management by the Batammariba, whose dwellings (takienta) embody an architecture that is unique for the technical prowess of its construction, the ingenuity of the spaces it affords, and the richness of its symbolic significance. Groves, springs and sacred rocks, terraced slopes and networks of water retaining walls, forests and plant species used in the construction of the sikien, associated with the rituals and beliefs of the Batammariba, are the component parts of this cultural landscape. The cultural landscape of Koutammakou is an example of the close relationships between human beings and nature, and is crucial for an understanding of the synergistic lifestyle of the Batammariba in the Atacora massif. The relationships there between environment, dwellings and lifestyles (social structure and organisation, construction methods, etc.) are exemplary. The nominated extension will restore the historical integrity of the land of the Batammariba. The religious centres of Koubonku and Koubentégou are still today sacred places for the Batammariba, who continue to hold major acts of worship and initiation ceremonies there.

ICOMOS considers that the extension nominated for inscription has the potential to be approved for the World Heritage List, on the basis of criteria (v) and (vi). However, several important aspects require additional actions on the part of the State Party. The results of the inventory conducted in 2021 by the Catholic University of Louvain and the NGO Éco-Bénin should be taken into account in the management of the cultural landscape of Koutammakou, in view of the 4,550 sikien identified, compared with the 1,545 sikien previously listed in the 2017-2018 inventory, and on which this extension nomination dossier is based. Furthermore, a map showing the location of the sikien in their territory, and indicating in detail the nature of the land use, the terraced slopes, the network of water retaining walls, the location of groves and other sacred places, is also necessary. This would enable the identification of areas with high concentrations of cultural and natural attributes, and provide a better picture of the original spatial organisation of this specific territory, but would also guarantee that areas worthy of a more protective approach could be very closely monitored.

ICOMOS also considers that a form of combined protection, incorporating a stewardship that is both traditional and institutional, is an asset to ensure the involvement of local populations and to increase their awareness and their participation in the safeguarding and management of the nominated extension. The State Party should ensure greater involvement of local communities in the property management and conservation plan, and take
into account traditional practices for the management and conservation of Koutammakou.

In order to guarantee the preservation of the property, it is recommended that the management plan should be supplemented by the drawing up of a full conservation plan, a maintenance work calendar, and reinforced monitoring mechanisms, with an associated action plan with short-, medium- and long-term goals, and dedicated financial resources.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of the extension of Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba, Benin, be referred back to the State Party, to allow it to:

- Draw up in the short term a map indicating the location of the sikien in their territory, and providing details of the nature of land use, the terraced slopes, the network of water retaining walls, and the location of groves and other sacred places. This geo-referenced database will ensure regular updating and appropriate document management, which are essential for effective management and protection of the proposed extension and its attributes;

- Incorporate in the short term the results of the “HTC-ATACORA” research project in the management of the cultural landscape of Koutammakou. These results will be useful in more precisely identifying areas of high concentrations of cultural and natural attributes;

- Ensure in the short term greater involvement of local communities in the management and conservation plan of the proposed extension, and take into account traditional practices for the management and conservation of Koutammakou;

- Elaborate in the short and medium terms the municipal development master plans of Boukombé, Toucountouna and Natitingou, and the urban planning regulations for the urban centre of Boukombé;

- Incorporate in the management plan in the short and medium terms a conservation plan, a maintenance work plan, and strengthened monitoring mechanisms in order to take these factors into account;

- Define in the short and medium terms clear protection and conservation priorities for areas with high concentrations of attributes;

- Implement this road map in accordance with the established order of priority, and subject to obtaining adequate financial resources, including from external sources.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following points:

a) Setting up the transnational property management body, under the supervision of the two cultural heritage Directorates of Togo and Benin, and defining its operating procedures and missions,

b) Preparing a risk management plan to take into account the impact on the proposed extension of climate change and bad weather,

c) Considering the possibility of establishing an integrated management structure, covering both the cultural and natural values of the proposed extension, and guaranteeing the integration of duly qualified personnel, dedicated to the conservation of natural values;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
III Cultural properties

A Africa
New nomination
Extension

B Asia – Pacific
New nominations
Nomination referred back by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

C Europe – North America
New nominations
Nominations deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

D Latin America and the Caribbean
New nomination
Koh Ker
(Cambodia)
No 1667

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Koh Ker: Archaeological Site of Ancient Lingapura or Chok Gargyar

Location
Preah Vihear Province
Cambodia

Brief description
Located between the Dangrek and Kulen mountain ranges on a gently sloping hill some eighty kilometres northwest of Angkor, the archaeological site of Koh Ker is a sacred urban ensemble consisting of numerous temples and sanctuaries with associated sculptures, inscriptions, and wall paintings; archaeological remains; and hydraulic structures. Constructed in a single phase over a twenty-three-year period, it was one of two rival Khmer Empire capitals – the other being Angkor – that co-existed between 921 and 928 CE, and was the sole capital from 928 to 944 CE, after which the Empire’s capital moved back to Angkor. The city was established by King Jayavarman IV, who claimed the kingship in 921 CE. His sacred city was believed to be laid out on the basis of ancient Indian religious concepts of the universe. The new city demonstrated markedly unconventional city planning, architectural features, artistic expression (the influential Koh Ker Style), and construction technology, notably the use of very large monolithic stone blocks. Although Koh Ker was short-lived as a capital and thus acted only as an interlude in Khmer history, its innovations had a profound and lasting influence on urban construction and artistic expression in the region.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

Included in the Tentative List
27 March 2020

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members, and independent experts.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 27 September 2021 requesting further information about the identification and the mapping of the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, the rationale of the boundary demarcation in relation to the attributes, research, conservation, interpretation, and visitor management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 11 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report concerning tourism management, Heritage Impact Assessment, and future research.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 23 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
Koh Ker was a capital of the Khmer Empire between 921 and 944 CE. The name Koh Ker is the modern derivative of Chok Gargyar, meaning the ironwood tree in the Cambodian language. It was also known as Lingapura, which is of Indian origin, meaning the city of lingas.

The archaeological site is located between the Dangrek and Kulen mountain ranges and nestled on a gradual slope embraced by hills to the east, south, and west, with the Steung Sen River to the north. The nominated property is partially hidden in the broad-leaf forest, with the towering thirty-five-metre-high Prasat Prang pyramid piercing through the dense arboreal canopy.

The orientation of the city is rotated fourteen degrees clockwise from the cardinal directions, presumably for symbolic, astronomical or political reasons. The layout of the city is presented in the nomination dossier as being based on the shape of the sacred Padmaka or Shiva Shakti mandala, a concept of city plans from the Vastu Shastra, a collection of treatises of ancient Hindu
architecture and town planning, though there are no known contemporary records or inscriptions to confirm the original planning methodology.

The city has no clear boundary, nor does it have a defence system such as a city wall to help define its perimeter. Temples and associated artificial ponds are concentrated in the city centre around the Prasat Thom temple complex, the largest building complex of the city. As the distance from the centre increases, the density of the constructions decreases sharply. Dykes are located primarily at the high contours of the surrounding hills. They were built to prevent the city from flooding, and at the same time to guide water flow to feed city ponds and reservoirs used for ritualistic and utilitarian purposes. Secular buildings are believed to have been constructed of wood, but these have vanished over the centuries.

The nominated property comprises thirty temples and sanctuaries, thirty archaeological remains, and nine hydraulic structures – some elements of these types are also scattered throughout the buffer zone and satellite zone. As the shortage of this report does not allow a detailed account of each of the elements, a selection of the most important temples and sanctuaries, archaeological remains, and hydraulic structures is described here.

A. Temples and sanctuaries

The temples and sanctuaries in the nominated property can be divided into five groups: the Prasat Thom temple complex; the marker temples; the associated temples; other temples; and sculptures, inscriptions, and wall paintings.

Prasat Thom temple complex

Constructed in 921 CE, the first year of the capital's establishment, the Prasat Thom temple complex is the city centre and defining landmark of Koh Ker. The complex includes, along the central axis from the east, the Tomb of the White Elephant King, Prasat Thom (Prasat Prang, Prasat Ruom with surrounding moat, Prasat Kraham, and Prasat Kuk), Prasat Srut, the ceremonial pond, Prasat Balang Tbong, and four linga terraces.

The Tomb of the White Elephant King is a small artificial mound with a huge stone sculpture of an elephant. It has been regarded throughout history as one of the most sacred places in Cambodia.

Prasat Prang is a thirty-eight-metre-high stepped pyramid constructed as the Koh Ker version of Mount Meru and Kailash, the earthly abode of Lord Shiva. At its top is a temple with a huge plinth, which is believed to have enshrined what was the world's largest linga at that time.

Prasat Ruom is a square terrace of twenty-one brick towers and two libraries with rich statues and a strip of wall painting, surrounded by a large moat and accessed by causeways along the central axis. The statues constitute the unique and outstanding iconography of the so-called Koh Ker Style in Khmer art history.

Prasat Kraham, square in plan and perhaps the biggest open-space brick tower in Khmer architecture, is the gateway of Prasat Thom. Prasat Kuk is a cruciform building linked to Prasat Kraham as a part of the entrance to Prasat Thom. The group of Prasat Srut forms the central bay of the temple complex and comprises two identical buildings laid out symmetrically to the central axis. Prasat Balang Tbong is the central pedestal that lies on the central axis and is separated by the ceremonial pond from Prasat Srut.

The four linga terraces, namely Prasat Balang Cheung, Prasat Thnoeng, Prasat Andong Kuk, and Prasat Sralau, are lined up perfectly perpendicular to the central axis. Prasat Sralau was also a chapel of a hospital constructed during the reign of Jayavarman VII in the 13th century CE by re-using stones and the foundation of a previous temple structure.

Marker temples

The marker temples are those that seem to be directly aligned with the Prasat Thom to form the geometric shape of the sacred mandala. They are Prasat Banteay Pir Choan, Prasat Chen, Prasat Damrei, Prasat Khan, Prasat Kok Krong, Prasat Krachap, Prasat Neang Khmau, Prasat Pram, Prasat Chrap and Trapeang Ang Khan. Both Prasat Banteay Pir Choan (Brahma Temple) and Prasat Chen (Vishnu Temple) are equidistant from Prasat Thom (Shiva Temple). Dedicated to Lord Brahma, Prasat Banteay Pir Choan opens towards Prasat Thom, deviating from the usual temple orientation to the east. The temple comprises the central tower surrounded by eight brick buildings. Dedicated to Lord Vishnu, Prasat Chen comprises three laterite sanctuaries that are square in plan and face east. Prasat Banteay Pir Choan, Prasat Chen, and Prasat Thom together represent the Hindu Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva). Prasat Krachap is the second largest temple complex in Koh Ker after Prasat Thom, and the only temple with a causeway that connects it to the Rahal, the largest reservoir of Koh Ker, suggesting its religious significance.

Associated temples

The associated temples are those that associate with the marker temples to form groups. They are Prasat Beng, Prasat Kraham, Prasat Tuol Kruos, and Prasat Trapeang Rosei.

Other temples

These are important temples randomly scattered in the city centre. There are nine such temples.

Sculptures, inscriptions, and wall paintings

Temples and sanctuaries in Koh Ker are richly adorned with sculptures of Indian epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the Shaivite and Vishnuithe mythologies. These artistic works are particularly rich in the Prasat Thom temple complex, Prasat Chen, and Prasat Kraham. The size of the sculptures and the
movement and dynamic motion expressed by them defined a new artistic style – the Koh Ker Style – which had a profound and lasting impact on the region’s artistic works in subsequent centuries.

There are seventy-three inscriptions found in nine temples of the nominated property. They shed light on the social, economic, cultural, and religious life in ancient Cambodia, and help establish the chronology of Koh Ker as the capital and the construction of its various temples. These inscriptions are typically found on doorjambs, free-standing steles, and temple pillars.

A strip of wall painting is found at Prasat Ruom, which is the sole survivor of this type of art in the nominated property.

B. Archaeological remains

The archaeological remains in the nominated property can be categorised into five groups: the Royal Palace complex; platforms and pedestals; boundary stones; quarry sites; and artefacts.

The Royal Palace complex

Located approximately 500 metres south of Prasat Thom, the rectangular palace complex is enclosed by a gallery with the solid wall facing outward. Andong Preng is a rectangular artificial pond located at the northeast corner of the compound. Roof tiles were found to the west of the pond, suggesting there were once buildings there. Some palace structures were found southeast of the compound, including drainage components, basements of buildings, and a brick floor. The east gate of the palace, with a laterite basement and roof tiles on the ground, has been identified.

Platforms and pedestals

There are fourteen laterite platforms, which are thought to be the foundations for wooden sanctuaries. The similar proportions of these platforms suggest there once was a standardised construction system prevalent at the site. There are also remains of pedestals with no traces of having had platforms.

Boundary stones

Boundary stones (goi in Khmer) were placed at the corners of land plots to determine and delineate the temple domains. Only a few boundary stones have been found in Cambodia, of which six are in the nominated property, five in the buffer zone, and one in the satellite zone.

Quarry sites

Three sandstone quarries have been found from where the grey to yellowish-brown sandstone blocks used in Koh Ker’s monuments likely originate.

Artefacts

Artefacts have been collected from above ground and in excavations, including fragments of clay roof tiles, shards of earthenware, shards of Khmer and Chinese ceramic, iron staples, and clamps.

C. Hydraulic structures

The water management system at Koh Ker is a combination of a highland system of damming river valleys and a lowland system of reservoirs, channels, and bunded fields. This amalgamation of techniques is unique to the Khmer history. The hydraulic structures of this water management system can be classified into two broad categories: artificial ponds, and embankments.

Artificial ponds

Artificial ponds were constructed for religious and utilitarian purposes. In addition to the numerous water bodies associated with temples, there are five nationally registered artificial ponds in the nominated property. Situated in the city centre southeast of the Prasat Thom temple complex, the Rahal is the largest artificial pond. With an almost rectangular plan, it measures approximately 1140 metres by 500 metres, and is three to four metres deep.

Embankments

Embankments are essential during the wet season to prevent the city from flooding, and to collect water for living during the dry season. They also guide water from various sources to run through the lingas of temples or sanctuaries for the purpose of sanctification. There are five nationally registered embankments in the nominated property, and many more in the buffer zone and satellite zone.

The nominated property has an area of 1,187.61 ha and a buffer zone of 3,523.77 ha. An additional 4,078.05 ha “satellite zone” beyond the buffer zone has been established to protect the wider setting of the nominated property.

The earliest evidence of the human occupation of Koh Ker was a small settlement in the 6th century CE. In 921 CE, King Ishanavarman II ascended the throne at Angkor, the capital of the Khmer Empire. At the same time, Jayavarman IV claimed his kingship and began to establish his own capital city at Koh Ker to rival the legitimate one at Angkor. As a result, between 921 and 928 CE the Khmer Empire was ruled by two kings from two capitals at the same time. Ishanavarman II died in 928 CE, and Jayavarman IV formally ascended his rival’s throne and ruled the Empire from Koh Ker until his demise in 941 CE. His son Harshavarman II continued to use Koh Ker as the capital until 944 CE, when King Rajendravarman II ascended the throne and moved the capital back to Angkor. Koh Ker thus became a secondary city of the Khmer Empire and remained so during the Angkor period from the 10th to 15th centuries. Koh Ker was abandoned after the 15th century.

Koh Ker was constructed in a single phase between 921 CE and 944 CE, possibly according to a preconceived layout of a sacred mandala. During this period, most of
the Koh Ker temple complexes, individual temples, artificial ponds, and pedestals were built, and a sophisticated hydraulic system was constructed to transform the often-flooded area into habitable land. Inscriptions found on site indicate that between 928 and 944 CE, when Koh Ker was the sole capital, more than 10,000 people lived in and around the city. Only two temple complexes were constructed in Koh Ker after 944 CE, when the capital moved back to Angkor.

Koh Ker was rediscovered in 1873 by French researcher Louis Delaporte. In the following century, several French scholars documented and studied the archaeological site and identified the Koh Ker Style as a unique artistic achievement.

State of conservation
The landscape and setting of the nominated property are in a good state of conservation, without any disturbance from modern development or other similar activities.

Sixty-three conservation projects and related works have been undertaken since 2017, including surveys, documentation, condition assessments, conservation and repair, stabilisation, archaeological excavations, research, outreach, environmental and ecosystem restoration, landscape improvements, tourism facility upgrading, and community development.

The National Authority for Preah Vihear (NAPV) has been undertaking regular monitoring and maintenance. Emergency stabilisation of unstable temple constructions has been conducted to prevent the structures from collapsing and to gain time for detailed planning, research, and subsequent interventions.

Over the years since Koh Ker’s abandonment in the 15th century, many artificial ponds have silted up and been transformed into paddy fields, although the original function of water collection during the wet season still remained to a certain degree. Recent attempts have been made to systematically restore the hydraulic structures. As the result, the Rahal reservoir has been restored, and more ponds are to be reclaimed by the government.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the site, although in a ruined state, is stable, and that the state of conservation is good.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are environmental pressures, notably vegetation growth, temperature and moisture fluctuation, and forest fire. Farming activities may also be a factor in the future.

Vegetation growth is the main cause of structural damage to and collapse of the archaeological ruins. It also provides the opportunity for water ingress and soil deposition, which accelerate the damage.

Temperature and moisture fluctuations create tension between the surface and subsurface of the building materials such as sandstone and laterite, causing slow but accumulated deterioration.

Farming activities could potentially damage the landscape, the hydraulic systems, and the natural environment in the buffer zone over time. The NAPV currently has these activities under control.

An additional environmental factor is forest fires in the dry season. Risk mapping is carried out routinely, with information being updated in a timely fashion. The risk management mechanism is in place and effective.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good and that factors affecting the nominated property are under control.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Koh Ker is an exceptional example of a sacred urban ensemble, envisaged and planned in a single phase, in a remarkably different approach from previous town planning practices, as evident from the changes in existing norms of alignments, scale, and aesthetics of the time.
- This sacred and ceremonial centre responded to local topographical settings with large infrastructures for protection, connectivity, and water management, creating an iconic and symbolic city infused with geometric order and religious symbolism in harmony with nature.
- The city shows how influences from Indian religion, town planning, architecture, and artworks were adapted, assimilated, and refined into a distinctive local style – the Koh Ker Style – which had a lasting impact on the art and architecture design of the region.
- The divinisation of the king as a political idea through the Devaraja cult, manifested in architecture and art for the first time at Koh Ker, became the source of inspiration for the great monuments of Angkor and in Southeast Asia in later centuries.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information, the key attributes of the nominated property can be grouped as follows: the spatial layout of the city, the temples and sanctuaries, the archaeological remains, the hydraulic structures, and the traditional religious activities.
The comparative analysis has been developed around three parameters: influences, impacts, and interpretations. Comparisons are made at the national, regional and global levels. The properties selected for comparison are inscribed on the World Heritage List, included on States Parties’ Tentative Lists, and listed at States Parties’ national level. The geo-cultural region is inferred to be Southeast and South Asia, though the State Party has included selected comparisons from a global perspective.

At the national level, nine sites were selected for comparison, two of which are on the World Heritage List, two are on Tentative Lists, and five are similar in construction date to the nominated property.

The nominated property stands apart from these comparators by its innovative urban planning, architectural style, symbolism, aesthetics, hydraulic system, and use of megalithic stone for temple construction. These innovations were adopted and adapted in the successive dynasties of the Khmer Empire.

The nominated property also testifies to the beginning of the lasting tradition of materialising Devaraja, the idea of elevating the status of a king to a god-king by using the symbolism of temple architecture and town planning, based on the same idea used only conceptually by King Jayavarman II in 802 CE. Furthermore, the height and scale of Prasat Prang were never surpassed by any later structures.

At the regional level, eighteen sites from Thailand, Myanmar, Viet Nam, Indonesia, India, Laos, and Nepal were selected for comparison, of which eleven are inscribed on the World Heritage List and one is included on a State Party’s Tentative List.

While influences from ancient Indian town planning are evident in several sites in the region, the comparisons set the nominated property apart by the grand vision reflected in its urban planning, as well as by its combination of art, architecture, city planning, symbolism, and religious and secular functionality in a single city. Furthermore, Koh Ker is a snapshot of Khmer history, having largely escaped from later overlays of other periods or eras.

At the global level, three properties on the World Heritage List and one nationally listed site were selected for comparison. These are Pre-Hispanic City of Chichen-Itza (Mexico, 1988, criteria (i), (ii) and (iii)), Tikal National Park (Guatemala, 1979, criteria (i), (iii), (iv), (ix) and (x)), Monuments of Oviedo and the Kingdom of the Asturias (Spain, 1985 and 1998, criteria (i), (ii) and (iv)), and Amarna (Akhenaten), in Egypt. Its imbued Indian influence sets the nominated property apart. While sharing the common concept of using pyramids to express religious and political powers, each site demonstrates its unique culture.

ICOMOS considers that the sites selected for comparison at both national and regional levels are appropriate, the logic underpinning the comparative analysis is sound, and the conclusions reached are valid.

ICOMOS considers, however, that the comparators selected at the international level are not so relevant to highlighting and understanding the values of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis overall justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii) and (iv).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is an outstanding example of cultural exchanges between Indian religious symbolism and Indigenous cultural values and traditions, as demonstrated by the urban design, architecture, and arts of the early 10th century Khmer Empire, which had an enduring impact in the Khmer Empire and on a wide part of Southeast Asia. The Koh Ker Style was created by interpreting, adapting, assimilating, and refining ancient Indian religious concepts, iconography, and accompanying architectural and artistic expression. The complex symbolic imagery of the capital city is a materialised inspiration of Indian religious philosophies.

ICOMOS considers that many cities and settlements in South and Southeast Asia, including the nominated property, exhibit strong cultural and religious influences from India in terms of town planning and architectural design. What has not been demonstrated at this stage is the outstandingness of these influences as presented by the nominated property as compared with the town planning and architectural design of other cities in the geo-cultural region.

ICOMOS considers, however, that the Koh Ker Style is the product of the fusion of Indian religious symbolism with Indigenous cultural values and traditions. This new artistic expression features dynamism and monumental representation, communicating a sense of power and grandeur in its sculptural art, which was previously unseen in India and countries in the region. The Koh Ker Style subsequently exerted a strong influence on the art and architecture of the later dynasties of the Khmer Empire, and in the region beyond national boundaries. This interchange of values, as demonstrated by the Koh Ker Style, justifies this criterion.
Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history:

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Koh Ker is an outstanding example of an urban ensemble of a preconceived layout of the sacred symbolic mandala representing the Shiva cult, which showed a marked advance over similar attempts in the region, including the Indian subcontinent. The State Party indicates that the use of colossal monolithic stone blocks in construction and sculptures inaugurated a centuries-long phase of stone temple construction across the Khmer Empire.

ICOMOS considers that ancient cities in South and Southeast Asia frequently appropriated shapes of sacred patterns having their origins in Indian religious motifs. ICOMOS does consider, however, that the nominated property demonstrates a marked difference from previous cities and towns of the Khmer Empire in terms of its urban design, religious symbolism, artistic expressions, construction techniques, and scale of buildings. The use of megalithic stone blocks for construction made the grand scale of buildings possible, which established an outstanding prototype of city construction that profoundly transformed the urban landscape of the later dynasties, culminating in Angkor Wat in the 12th century, an architectural marvel of the world. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified for this latter reason.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iv).

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity as proposed by the State Party is based on the wholeness and completeness of the urban centre of Koh Ker, as demonstrated by the spatial relationship between the temples and sanctuaries, archaeological remains, and hydraulic structures. All the elements that contribute to the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property are included within the property area, with few being included in the buffer zone and satellite zone, and most of them remained unchanged after the city was abandoned in the 15th century. The hydraulic structures are mostly intact, with some still functioning today to fulfill the needs of the local communities.

An important array of statues, sculptures, and inscriptions, as well as traces of paintings, are still an integral part of the original structures of Koh Ker. Some sculptures were looted in the past, particularly during the civil war period between 1967 and 1975. The looting has effectively been stopped with the enforcement of laws and the establishment of a management body. Many looted sculptures have been repatriated from abroad. Important sculptures have been transferred to the national museums for restoration, with replicas proposed to be installed in the original places for interpretation purposes. The major threats to the nominated property are under control.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity have been met.

As mentioned in the Interim Report, ICOMOS considers that, in the future, research and archaeological investigations should be undertaken in the wider setting of the nominated property, particularly on the hills that embrace the city, in order to understand the hydraulic systems that were once a part of the original city planning and were the critical infrastructure that transformed the wild landscape into a habitable place for more than 10,000 people.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on its ability to truthfully and credibly express its cultural values through its location and setting, forms and designs, and materials and substances, as demonstrated by the archaeological evidence.

The authenticity of the nominated property is high. Having been abandoned since the 15th century it thus escaped from later modifications, has effectively preserved the original landscape, location and layout of the city, the spatial arrangement of the temples and hydraulic structures, and the forms, designs and materials of the structures. The past conservation interventions were mainly restrained to stabilization and maintenance. Many temples and water bodies, though in a ruined state, still perform their original functions, contributing to the spiritual and secular lives of the local communities.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets the conditions of authenticity.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met.

Boundaries

There are no inhabitants in the nominated property. As of 2019, 1,108 inhabitants (237 households) live in the buffer zone and 212 (52 households) in the satellite zone.

The boundaries of the nominated property follow those of the archaeological site listed and protected by Royal Decree promulgated in May 2004. They have been delineated to encompass the original sacred centre of Koh Ker created by King Jayavarman IV together with the main associated elements of the archaeological site, including its sacred geometry, the main temples, and their axial alignments. The boundaries are also influenced by the designation under the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage (1996) and related bylaws.

The buffer zone conforms to the surrounding landmarks, natural terrain, and associated civic infrastructure such as a dyke, and the Royal Road. These features acted as reference points for establishing the urban ensemble of...
Koh Ker in the early 10th century CE. Development in this area is highly regulated, and all the temples in this zone are accorded the same protection as the temples within the nominated property.

A “satellite zone” beyond the buffer zone provides a wider protected zone under the national laws. All restrictions on development also apply to this zone, which is intended to be managed in the interest of sustainable social and economic development of the site.

Three small villages are located in the buffer and satellite zones.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies the consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List. The nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iv), as well as the conditions of integrity and authenticity. The underlying logic for the boundary demarcation is sound and appropriate, and the current property area, buffer zone and satellite zone provide adequate protection for the nominated property.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
The inventories of the attributes of the nominated property are comprehensive and detailed, including the built heritage, archaeological remains, sculptures and paintings, inscriptions, water bodies and ponds, archival images, and trees. These inventories and other documents are available at the National Authority for Preah Vihear (NAPV) office. They represent useful baseline information for management, monitoring, conservation intervention, and research.

Conservation measures
Emergency stabilisation has been undertaken since the 1990s to secure the structures from collapse. Structural conservation, regular maintenance, and monitoring have been performed continuously by the NAPV to keep the archaeological site from deteriorating further. Archaeological remains have been inventoried and documented, and the excavated sites have been backfilled to protect the historic fabric from further damage. Ponds and reservoirs that had silted up over the years are being restored to their original states by the NAPV.

ICOMOS considers that inscriptions are one of the most important sources of information for Cambodian history, yet they are often located in vulnerable locations such as at the entrances of temples on the lower parts of the walls facing passageways. ICOMOS requested additional information in November 2021 on the specific measures that have been taken for their protection, conservation and monitoring from both gradual deterioration and accidental damage. The State Party replied that these inscriptions have been documented with photogrammetry, rubbing and digitisation; they are fenced for physical protection, cleaned, desalinated, and treated against biological deterioration.

A temporary shelter has been constructed over Prasat Ruom to protect the only wall painting found in the nominated property. Risk mapping and condition assessment of some of the structures have been undertaken to develop and prioritise conservation treatments. Conservation interventions follow internationally accepted principles and procedures.

Monitoring
The current monitoring activities benefit from the existing documentation, which acts as baseline information for measuring changes and predicting trends. Specific monitoring indicators focus on management and protection, conservation, regional development, tourism and outreach, World Heritage site awareness, environmental quality, green agenda, and risk. The departments under the NAPV are responsible for monitoring. Daily monitoring of the nominated property is performed by security staff who are overseen by a supervisor and reporting personnel.

The NAPV has a reporting and reviewing system, which is in fact an effective monitoring mechanism. There is a monthly, biannual, annual, and five-year reporting and reviewing mechanism within the NAPV, which compels the relevant departments under NAPV to constantly assess the conditions of the archaeological site and its wider setting.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable to further develop the monitoring system to reflect the factors affecting the property and ensure easy integration of monitoring outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

ICOMOS considers that the current comprehensive inventory and documentation provide a good foundation for conservation, management, and monitoring. The conservation measures are effective, and the monitoring mechanism will be adequate once it is further developed to take into account the factors affecting the property and adapted for easy integration of monitoring outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.
5 Protection and management

Legal protection
Of the nominated property’s total area, 93.1 percent is in public ownership and 6.9 percent is privately owned by the local population as farmland.

There are five national laws that protect the nominated property. The Royal Decree on the Establishment of Koh Ker Temple Site, NS/RKT/0504/070, promulgated in 2004 and amended in 2020, mandates the protection of temples, art objects, archaeological and anthropological remains, and ancient hydraulic infrastructure, as well as the natural landscape, forest ecosystem, and biodiversity. It demarcates the nominated property, its buffer zone, and its satellite zone.

The Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage (1996) is the principal law for the protection of national cultural property against illegal destruction, vandalism, and illicit transfer of ownership, excavation, export and import of artefacts. The Land Law (2001) stipulates that the archaeological site and cultural and historical heritage are state property. The Law on Forestry (2002) requires strict protection of the forest ecosystem within the recreational and religious forests that are in the Permanent Forest Estate category. The Royal Decree on the Organisation and Functioning of the National Committee for Disaster Management (2015) defines the organisation and functioning of the National Committee for Disaster Management as the headquarters of the Royal Government for leading, administering, and coordinating all activities responding to either natural or human-made disasters in Cambodia.

ICOMOS considers that the current legal protection of the nominated property is adequate.

Management system
In 1999, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts commenced managing the archaeological site. From 2005 to 2016, the management responsibility was transferred to the APSARA National Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor. Responsibility was shifted to the National Authority for Preah Vihear (NAPV) in 2016.

The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts is the highest national institution responsible for managing the nominated property. Under the Ministry, the NAPV is the site manager responsible for maintenance, protection, monitoring, upkeep, conservation, documentation, research, archaeological surveys and excavations, museum management, cultural tourism-related activities, community education, awareness-raising, development, outreach, environmental protection, and risk management. It also assesses all requests for construction within the nominated property.

The NAPV is governed by a Board of Directors whose mission is to set directions and supervise the NAPV’s activities. Chaired by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the Board consists of representatives from the office of the Preah Vihear Provincial Governor and the ministries of Economy and Finance; Interior; Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction; Tourism; and Environment. The NAPV is managed by a Director-General who is supported by Deputy Directors-General and operated through six technical departments: conservation and archaeology; land management and community development; tourism development; environment, forestry and water; public order and cooperation; and administration and finance.

The expertise of the NAPV staff includes archaeology, architecture, stone conservation, museology, engineering, history, forestry, agriculture, tourism, information technology, land use management, and community development. Funding for NAPV comes from the national budget and the Angkor Conservation and Development Fund. In addition, the NAPV also receives financial and technical support from member countries of the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and the Development of Preah Vihear (ICC-PV).

The ICC-PV, established in 2014 by Cambodia in collaboration with UNESCO, is a consultative body comprising the Royal Government of Cambodia, two co-chair countries (China and India), six founding countries, and a group of ad-hoc experts. It examines general policy matters related to safeguarding the property in conformity with international conservation standards; follows up the conservation and development activities conducted by the NAPV and its partners; and makes recommendations.

The ICC-PV has included Koh Ker in its activities since 2016. Funds for conservation are raised through ICC-PV member countries.

The ICC-PV normally meets twice a year, during a technical session in March and a plenary session in September. Prior to the meetings, the ad-hoc experts are invited to the site to discuss with staff any issues that have been identified. During the meetings, the condition of the site, the progress made during the previous six months, and issues to be addressed are discussed and action plans are made. After the meetings the NAPV then implements the plans accordingly.

Site management is guided by a five-year Comprehensive Cultural Management Plan (CCMP), which was developed, approved, and implemented in 2020 by the NAPV. The management plan is divided into two parts: a general management plan, and four sectoral plans. The general management plan includes an overview of the nominated property, the current management system, threats and challenges, management strategies, implementation strategies, and an action plan. The sectoral plans are the Conservation Management Plan, Tourism Management Plan, Regional and Community Development Plan, and Disaster Management Strategies. All the activities, initiatives, and strategies are prioritised into four categories: immediate (0-1 year), urgent (1-2 years), necessary (2-5 years), and desirable (5-10 years).
Guidelines for conservation interventions are provided, which are in line with internationally accepted principles.

Heritage Impact Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment processes are embedded in the management plan. In addition, before conducting large conservation interventions, a rapid risk assessment and documentation – which is in essence a heritage impact assessment – is performed and issues are presented, discussed, and evaluated at the biannual ICC-PV meetings, which result in recommendations.

Risk management applies to both the natural environment and cultural heritage. Environmental risk management deals primarily with wildfires. In the dry season, the underbrush around the temples that are in potential fire zones is regularly cut back. The NAPV has rangers monitoring the entire archaeological site twenty-four hours a day from six locations. Dissemination seminars for the local population also cover the topic of uncontrolled burning of rice fields. There is a risk mapping team comprised of staff members from different departments of the NAPV. This team meets twice a week to schedule the investigation of structures and to discuss the observations made.

The CCMP has laid a solid foundation for the conservation and management of the nominated property. Its implementation will undoubtedly require significant human resources. ICOMOS considers that capacity building should therefore be a top priority for the NAPV.

ICOMOS notices that in recent years, research on the history, urban planning, artistic and architectural styles, hydraulic engineering, and sacred and secular lives of the Koh Ker people has been progressing. ICOMOS considers, however, there is a lack of an overall strategy for future research to guide the conduct of all research in the context of the CCMP, and to expand the understanding of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. In the Interim Report, ICOMOS raised this issue and asked whether the State Party envisages such a strategy, and when it could be developed. The State Party responded positively with the commitment to develop such a strategy, and provided a list of the proposed activities with existing partners to conduct further research on specific fields in the next two to five years.

ICOMOS considers that the current management system is adequate.

Visitor management
The Koh Ker archaeological site, which is accessed by three National Roads, is one of the key tourist destinations in the country. Currently, there are twenty-one temples open to visitors. They are linked by a gravel road that serves a visitor circuit. Traffic signs have been installed along the main road from the entrance to the visitor circuit. The main parking area is located in front of the Prasat Thom temple complex, which is overcrowded at times, especially at peak time during the high tourist season. There are smaller parking areas at several other locations across the site. A booth is located in the buffer zone near the site’s entrance, from where tourists can purchase tickets, obtain information, and use the restrooms. There are two local guesthouses (twenty rooms), one resort (five rooms), and three local restaurants at Srayang Township, located south of the nominated property in the buffer zone just before the entrance to the site. Local eating places and restrooms are available at the Prasat Thom temple complex.

The Koh Ker archaeological site received approximately 300 to 400 tourists per day in 2017 and 2018. Generally, large numbers of domestic tourists visit from March to April and from September to November, while international tourists normally visit between November and February. The number of visitors is expected to increase in the event of the property being inscribed on the World Heritage List. The State Party estimates that the carrying capacity of the twenty-one temples currently open to the public is 3,000 to 4,000 tourists per day. As indicated in the State Party’s Additional Information letter responding to the ICOMOS’ Interim Report, the carrying capacity of the individual monument will be established in 2022 depending on the available funds.

A Tourism Management Plan has been developed as a sectoral plan of the CCMP. New visitor circuits are planned to provide access to more temples in order to reduce pressures on the most popular ones. A large visitor centre complex is proposed to be constructed to the south of the nominated property in the buffer zone, with a ticket office, restaurants, workshops, and shops. Tourists will park here and change to more environmentally friendly vehicles such as electric cars and bicycles. Better designed signage with QR (Quick Response) applications to facilitate visitors’ access to information are also proposed, as are improved parking areas. The local communities are encouraged by the NAPV to develop initiatives for restaurants, visitor accommodation, and selling local goods. As indicated in the State Party’s Additional Information letter responding to the ICOMOS’ Interim Report, all these planned activities will be subject to a prior Heritage Impact Assessment for evaluation by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. Tourism initiatives will be closely monitored and supervised by the NAPV.

ICOMOS considers that the current visitor management is adequate. ICOMOS welcomes the State Party’s commitment to conducting the Heritage Impact Assessment for the planned visitor centre and other infrastructure.

Community involvement
The local communities still use the temples and the Tomb of the White Elephant King as places of worship, and use the ancient water bodies and hydraulic systems. The NAPV employs the villagers to assist with activities such as conservation intervention, restoration, surveying, documentation, and archaeological excavation, which not only increases their income but also raises their awareness of the value of the archaeological site. Awareness-raising
workshops have been held to encourage villagers to appreciate the temple sites. Selected villagers were brought to the National Museum of Cambodia in Phnom Penh to see the statues that were brought or looted from Koh Ker. Community development has been one of the top priorities for the NAPV, with a department dedicated specifically to this aspect.

**Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that both the legal protection of the nominated property and the management system are satisfactory. Capacity building should be a top priority for the long-term site management. The current visitor management and community involvement are adequate. The carrying capacity for each monument should be established, and Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed tourist centre should be undertaken prior to the commencement of the work.

6 Conclusion

Koh Ker was a short-lived capital of Khmer Empire for only twenty-three years, yet it had exerted a profound influence on the later dynasties and beyond the country. The primary interesting features of Koh Ker: Archaeological Site of Ancient Lingapura or Chok Gargyar are its artistic expression of the Koh Ker Style, which had a strong influence on the monumental and sculptural arts of the region, and its use of megalithic stone block for construction, which profoundly transformed the urban landscape and temples of the later dynasties of the Khmer Empire.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iv), the conditions of integrity and authenticity, and the protection and management of the property are satisfactory.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property justifies inscription on the World Heritage List.

7 Recommendations

**Recommendations with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that Koh Ker: Archaeological Site of Ancient Lingapura or Chok Gargyar, Cambodia, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv).

**Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

Brief Synthesis

Koh Ker: Archaeological Site of Ancient Lingapura or Chok Gargyar was a capital of the Khmer Empire between 921 and 944 CE. Partially hidden in a dense broad-leaf forest between the Dangrek and Kulen mountain ranges on a gently sloping hill some eighty kilometres northwest of Angkor, the archaeological site comprises numerous temples and sanctuaries with associated sculptures, inscriptions, and wall paintings, archaeological remains and hydraulic structures.

Established by King Jayavarman IV in 921 CE, Koh Ker was one of two rival capitals of the Khmer Empire that co-existed between 921 and 928 CE – the other being Angkor – and the sole capital until 944 CE, after which the Empire’s political centre moved back to Angkor. Constructed in a single phase over a twenty-three-year period, the sacred city was believed to be laid out on the basis of ancient Indian concepts of the universe. Koh Ker demonstrated markedly unconventional city planning and architectural features, which were primarily the result of the combination of King Jayavarman IV’s grand political ambition and the two outstanding innovations that helped to materialise this ambition: the artistic expressions of the Koh Ker Style, and the construction technology using very large monolithic stone blocks. Although short-lived as a capital and thus acting only as an interlude in Khmer history, these innovations had a profound and lasting influence on urban construction and artistic expression in the region.

**Criterion (ii):** The archaeological site of Koh Ker exhibits in an exceptional way the interchange of human values that resulted in the Koh Ker Style, a sculptural expression featuring bold, expressive imagery and a dynamic sense of movement that resulted from the fusion of Indian religious and artistic symbolism with local design concepts and artistic craftsmanship. The Koh Ker Style, though formed within a short period of twenty-three years in the 10th century, had an enduring influence on the artistic expression of the subsequent period of the Khmer Empire and other Southeast Asian countries.

**Criterion (iv):** The archaeological site of Koh Ker is a prototype of a new urban landscape featured by grand-scale buildings, thanks to the use of colossal monolithic stone blocks for construction and sculptures. It had inaugurated a centuries-long phase of stone temple construction across the Khmer Empire and became a source of inspiration for the great monuments of Angkor and Southeast Asia in later centuries.

**Integrity**

All attributes necessary to express the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including the temples and sanctuaries, archaeological remains and hydraulic structures, are included within the property. The layout and built environment of the entire ancient capital are evident. Many looted sculptures have been repatriated. Threats to the attributes are under control.

**Authenticity**

The link between the property’s attributes and its Outstanding Universal Value is truthfully expressed, and the archaeological remains can be said to truthfully convey their meaning; there are no conjectural reconstructions. The absence of later modifications or
reuse after its abandonment in the 15th century has left the property with a high level of authenticity in terms of its location and setting, forms and designs, and materials and substances, as demonstrated by the archaeological evidence. The geographical location of the ancient capital city, the layout of the original urban plan, and the archaeological remains of the temples, royal palace, hydraulic systems, sculptures, inscriptions, and wall painting are authentically preserved in situ. The property is the same size and is in almost the same condition as at the time of its documentation in the late 19th century.

Management and protection requirements

Koh Ker: Archaeological Site of Ancient Lingapura or Chok Gargyar is protected by the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage (1996). The Royal Decree on the Establishment of Koh Ker Temple Site, NS/RKT/0504/070, of 2004, as amended in 2020, defines the boundaries of the property, the buffer zone, and the satellite zone beyond the buffer zone.

The National Authority for Preah Vihear (NAPV) is the dedicated governmental authority that oversees policy formulation and implementation for the protection and conservation of the property, and for combating illegal destruction, alteration, excavation, alienation or exportation of cultural objects at both Preah Vihear and Koh Ker. The NAPV technical teams, together with the active participation of the community, undertake activities for the conservation and promotion of the property according to a Comprehensive Cultural Management Plan. The International Coordinating Committee for Preah Vihear advises and monitors all NAPV activities. Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms have been embedded in the current management system. Risk management for both the natural environment and the cultural heritage is carried out by staff with adequate equipment following established procedures. Specific long-term expectations include building up staff capacity.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Establishing the carrying capacity for each monument,

b) Undertaking a full Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed visitor centre complex, and for any other development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the property,

c) Developing an overall research strategy to guide the conduct of all future research in order to further improve the understanding of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property,

d) Strengthening the capacity of the staff for the long-term protection, conservation, and management,

e) Adjusting the monitoring system to take into account the factors affecting the property and for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Santiniketan

Location
West Bengal
District of Birbhum
India

Brief description
Established in rural West Bengal in 1901 by the renowned poet and philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore, Santiniketan was a residential school and centre for art based on ancient Indian traditions and on a vision of the unity of humanity transcending religious and cultural boundaries. The tangible and intangible aspects of Santiniketan embody ideals of internationalism that sought local, Asian and western sources of inspiration. A ‘world university’ was established at Santiniketan in 1921, recognising the unity of humanity or “Visva Bharati”. Distinct from the prevailing British colonial architectural orientations of the early 20th century and of European modernism, Santiniketan represents orientations toward a pan-Asian modernity, drawing on ancient, medieval and folk traditions from across the region.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

Included in the Tentative List
20 January 2010

Background
This is a new nomination. A previous nomination for Santiniketan was submitted in 2010 but was withdrawn before consideration by the World Heritage Committee. The current nomination is substantially revised, including a new justification for Outstanding Universal Value and changed delineation to the boundary and buffer zone.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 24 to 28 October 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 24 September 2021 requesting further information about the comparative analysis, boundaries, legal protection, development pressures, community involvement and management system.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 1 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: comparative analysis, evidence of cultural interchange, legal protection, inventory and documentation, buffer zone, campus master plan and heritage impact assessment.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
Santiniketan is situated in a rural location in West Bengal, and is associated with the work and philosophies of Rabindranath Tagore, a world-famous poet, artist, musician and philosopher, and a recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1913). The site was established as an ashram and given its name in 1863 by Tagore’s father, Debendranath Tagore. In 1901, Rabindranath Tagore began its transformation to a residential school and centre for art, based on the ancient Indian tradition of gurukul. His vision was oriented at the unity of humanity, or “Visva Bharati”.

Tagore was able to attract prominent scholars and educators to Santiniketan and the school grew both in the number of pupils and breadth of its curriculum, ultimately embracing the philosophies of many cultures and religions, as well as modern languages and western sciences. Training in carpentry, weaving and book-binding was included, along with academic disciplines, as well as literature readings and communal singing. In 1919, Nandalal Bose arrived at Santiniketan to teach art and under his supervision, Kala-Bhavana grew as an Art Department. In subsequent years, teachers from Europe and the West were invited to teach at Kala-Bhavana and
western art techniques were introduced. In 1934 the Department of Music or Sangit-Bhavana moved into its own premises.

Tagore’s philosophies developed in the direction of a universal humanism that compelled him to travel abroad. These influences gradually opened Santiniketan to international horizons, leading to the foundation of Visva-Bharati or ‘World University’ (‘where the world would form a single nest’) in 1921. Santiniketan developed into a pan-Indian University, due to the diversity of its teachers and its subjects. The national profile sought for Visva-Bharati by Tagore was enriched by foreign scholars.

Tagore died in 1941, and his son Rathindranath took over, and established the Rabindra-Bhavana museum. In 1951 the Parliament of India passed the Visva-Bharati Act, which confirmed its national importance, and established regulations for its perpetuation and functioning.

The nominated property has an area of 36 ha, and is enclosed by a single buffer zone of 537.73 ha. The buffer zone corresponds to the boundary of the area under the ownership of Visva-Bharati. The Visva-Bharati campus extends throughout the proposed buffer zone, and includes the site of Sri niketan, which was introduced by Tagore in 1922 to experiment with rural reconstruction and community building. The nominated property and buffer zone area are under the control of the Visva-Bharati University according to the Visva-Bharati Act (1951).

Santiniketan today is a large, low-density built-up area where multi-functional buildings of different sizes and architectural characters are set within landscaped complexes. Many of the key buildings were built by Surendranath Kar who, along with Nandalal Bose, travelled with Tagore.

The diversity in building designs and materials, together with artworks, plantings, water bodies and landscape modifications have created a distinctive built environment through experimentation with a number of traditional and modern architectural models. There are examples of low-level reinforced concrete buildings, thatched cottages, earthen huts and brick or concrete houses. Artworks include sculptures, murals and elements within buildings such as furniture, panelling and decorative pillars. All educational structures and residential buildings are integrated within specifically designed landscapes intended to create a favourable environment for students to learn and to experience nature. Both local vegetation and exotic trees and plants have been used. Many of the lectures and other educational programs were held outdoors or in open-sided pavilions.

The nominated area is comprised of three main areas: the Ashrama or Hermitage, the residential quarters or Uttarayan, and the area with Kala-Bhavana and Sangit-Bhavana, the Schools for Art and Music.

The Ashrama or Hermitage is the earliest part of Santiniketan, established by Debendranath Tagore, and is comprised mostly of residential buildings. Santiniketan Griha (built between 1858-1863) is the earliest residential building; and a small platform flanked by chhatim trees marks the spot where the Maharishi stopped to meditate, seen as the starting point for what became Santiniketan. Other buildings include various hostels, library, office, educational buildings, pavilions, and residences for the Tagore family.

The Uttarayan area was established to the north of the Ashrama from 1919 with the construction of two mud brick buildings (one of which, Konark, still stands), followed by five additional houses for Rabindranath Tagore. These show various experiments with the thermal performance of mud buildings. Included here is the three-storey residence known as Udayan, used by Tagore to receive visitors. It demonstrates local traditions and elements of western modernism. The elevated pavilion/house known as Udichi was the last house built for Tagore, and was designed to allow enjoyment of the environment. In the 1920s, the gardens of Uttarayan were designed by Tagore’s son Rathindranath, a horticulturist who imported exotic plants from Africa and Latin America.

Historically, the establishment of Santiniketan is placed within the context of the Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi Movement, part of the Indian freedom struggle. Set within the experiences of colonialism, Santiniketan consciously expressed the quest for indigenous forms of modernity, and Tagore’s orientation to a universalism through local diversity and internationalism. Key historical figures in the establishment of Indian independence have associations with Tagore and Santiniketan – notably Mahatma Gandhi, who visited Santiniketan for several periods and referred to Tagore as Gurudev (teacher), as well as Nehru and Indira Gandhi (who was a student at Santiniketan). Tagore’s composition Jana Gana Mana was adopted as India’s national anthem in 1947.

Santiniketan is also situated in relation to global and local movements in art and architecture. It was consciously international in its outlook, with aesthetic and philosophical influences from India, China, Japan, Bali and Myanmar, as well as Islamic architecture and Art Deco. The development of Santiniketan drew from ancient, medieval and folk traditions from across the Asian region.

Today, Visva-Bharati has over a thousand students. Approximately a third of these live on the campus. While the University has adopted a more subject-based approach to academic curricula over time, the school has retained much of its traditional character, reflecting Tagore’s ideals.
State of conservation

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is well maintained and the state of conservation is satisfactory. A condition survey was completed in 2009, and has been used as a basis for planning and prioritising conservation work. ICOMOS commends the State Party for the improved state of conservation of the property that has been achieved since the submission of the previous nomination.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are development pressures (particularly in the buffer zone and wider setting), construction of new roads, visitor management pressures, and deterioration of physical materials. The management plan provides an overview of the pressures affecting the property, and a condition report on the key elements.

Two proposed developments within the campus were identified in the management plan as posing potentially detrimental impacts on the nominated property. However, in the additional information provided in November 2021, the State Party reported that these have been cancelled by Visva-Bharati, and that the Vice-Chancellor has confirmed that no building additions will be approved within the nominated property.

There are also potential impacts due to the construction of bypass roads that cross through parts of the property and the buffer zone. In the additional information provided in November 2021, the State Party acknowledged these impacts, and explained that the bypass roads help to divert traffic away from the campus and alleviate congestion near the Ashram area.

The nominated property is dependent on the maintenance of local knowledge and skills. For example, many building materials need to be regularly replaced, using the same materials and techniques; and the maintenance of landscape attributes requires regular gardening and occasional replacement of plants, retaining their character. The nominated property is vulnerable to extreme weather events and earthquakes; and security has been identified as a potential factor affecting the nominated property due to the possible damage from vandalism and political unrest.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory, although some materials and elements are dependent on continued regular maintenance. The main factors affecting the nominated property are development pressures in the property, the buffer zone and in the wider setting, and deterioration of the physical materials of the buildings, landscape elements and artworks.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Based on the utopian and internationalist ideals of its founder Rabindranath Tagore, Santiniketan constitutes an exceptional testimony to ideas of progressive education.
- The architecture and landscape of Santiniketan are a study of interchange between local and international influences, including Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic traditions, and experimentation in construction, materials and design.
- The design of buildings, furniture, artworks and landscape is a demonstration of an Asian avant-garde of the early 20th century.
- The architecture of Santiniketan was consciously distinct from the British colonial architecture of India, reviving Indian and local construction and embracing building forms from other Asian cultures.
- Set within the historical context of colonial partition and the Indian freedom movement, Santiniketan represents an exceptional voice from within a colonised nation for indigenous forms of modernity.
- Santiniketan is directly and tangibly associated with the life, works and vision of Rabindranath Tagore and his contemporaries of the Bengal School of Art, and crystallises their ideas of humanism, inclusive internationalism and a pan-Asian modernism.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information provided by the State Party, the key attributes of the nominated property are the elements that express the vision of Tagore and his contemporaries including the thirty-six identified heritage buildings (including some interior elements); murals, sculptures and artworks; landscape elements, lake and gardens; and pavilions and platforms. The continuing traditions of intangible cultural heritage at Santiniketan are also attributes, such as seasonal festivals, and the continuing aspects of Tagore’s educational philosophies.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed around the focus on 20th century architectural design movements and educational institutions on the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists worldwide, as well as other properties.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that there are relatively few World Heritage properties recognised specifically for their associations with educational institutions. These include: the Central University City Campus of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) (Mexico 2007, criteria (i), (ii) and (iv)); Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas (Venezuela, 2000, criteria (i) and (iv)); University and Historic Precinct of Alcalá de Henares (Spain, 1998, criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi)); Monticello and the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.
Santiniketan in its comparative context due to the wide educational institutions in India established in the 20th century. The State Party also provided information on other criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi)); Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar (India, 2016, criteria (iv) and (vi)); the site of the most ancient university in the Indian subcontinent; and the University of Mumbai, part of the Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai (India, 2018, criteria (ii) and (iv)). The State Party has also provided a comparison with the 19th century New Lanark (United Kingdom, 2001, criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi)) on the basis of its underlying philosophy of progressive education and social reform.

Universities included in global Tentative Lists have also been included in the comparative analysis, including: National Schools of Art, Cubanacán (Cuba, proposed on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v)); Francke Foundation Buildings (Germany, proposed on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi)); Degania and Nahalal (Israel, proposed on the basis of criteria (v) and (vi)); Oak Grove School (India, withdrawn from the Tentative List, previously proposed on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv)); The Remains of the Vikramshila Ancient University, Silk Roads of India (India, proposed on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (vi)). A few additional sites are also included that are not on the World Heritage List or Tentative Lists, including: Dartington Hall Trust (United Kingdom) which was based on the teachings of Tagore; École des Beaux-Arts (France); Glasgow School of Art (United Kingdom); and Auroville (India), a township established on the basis of the work of renowned Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo in collaboration with Mirra Alfassa.

Although further examples could be included, such as the University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia (Portugal, 2013, criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi)), ICOMOS considers that these comparisons drawn from the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists are limited in their ability to place Santiniketan in its comparative context due to the wide span of historical periods and cultural contexts.

The State Party also provided information on other educational institutions in India established in the 20th century. These include: Banaras Hindu University, established in 1916 and oriented at teaching of Hinduism and Sanskrit literature; Sevagram, established by Mahatma Gandhi in 1936 (influenced by Santiniketan), and Sabarmati Ashram, also associated with Gandhi; and Kalakshetra, established in 1936. In Additional Information provided in February 2022, the State Party described the influences of Santiniketan’s philosophies on the Theosophical Society campuses at Adyar, Varanasi and Madanapalli; Anand Bhawan, the Nehru family home in Allahabad; and Sri Palee in Sri Lanka, where Tagore laid the foundation stone in 1934. What emerges from this information is an understanding of the intensity of exchanges in the region (particularly India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh) between Tagore and his contemporaries, and their influences on emerging institutions for culture and education.

The comparative analysis also contrasts Santiniketan with global developments in architecture and design in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The justification for criterion (ii) relies in part on a comparative assessment of architectural interchange and innovation, within the context of the Asian region and of tensions between the colonial and the local in West Bengal. For this reason, the State Party has briefly discussed examples of modernism and 20th century architecture recognised in the World Heritage List. These are quite diverse and include: Bauhaus and its Sites in Weimar, Dessau and Bernau (Germany, 1996 and 2017, criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi)); Luis Barragán House and Studio (Mexico, 2004, criteria (i) and (ii)); Stoclet House (Belgium, 2009, criteria (i) and (ii)); Works of Antoni Gaudi (Spain, 1984 and 2005, criteria (i), (ii) and (iv)); The 20th-Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright (United States of America, 2019, criterion (ii)); and The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, Switzerland, 2016, criteria (i), (ii) and (vi)). There are also some interesting parallels drawn in the comparative analysis such as an exhibition of Bauhaus in Kolkata organised by Tagore.

ICOMOS notes that the State Party has provided a comparative analysis that is both locally and globally framed. The comparative analysis identifies some areas of commonality and difference between the nominated property and others, and highlights gaps in relation to Asian expressions of modernism. ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis establishes the basis for consideration of the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property as an embodiment of the local and internationalist philosophies that were deployed in the development of Santiniketan by Tagore and others. This search for modernity looked beyond colonial templates to an experimentation with internationalism, pan-Asian cultural exchange and education during this period.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii) and (vi).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the architecture, furniture, artworks and landscape of Santiniketan are tangible demonstrations of an Asian avant-garde of the early 20th century. Tagore and his associates travelled widely and drew inspirations from many sources. The interchange of traditions is demonstrated in the strands of local and Asian regional cultural influences, including Japanese and Chinese art and architecture, as well as Art Deco, creating a new design language and an interest in a pan-Asian aesthetic.
Additional Information received in February 2022 explains that this was an aspect of the search for an architectural identity in the late colonial period in India and neighbouring countries. Experimentation with both local and other Asian building traditions and educational philosophies was facilitated by interpersonal networks and knowledge flows, and by collaborations with key thinkers inside and beyond the region.

In response to a request for additional information, the State Party explained that there were myriad intellectual and stylistic elements and outcomes which are broadly defined as the Asian avant-garde. A modernism rooted in traditional values, local techniques and a search for the universal is manifested in different ways throughout the nominated property, including the use of vernacular materials and traditions, as well as expressions drawn from multiple faiths.

The State Party has explained that the influences of Santiniketan on other places can be seen in the role of art and architecture in mediating between the western world and local cultures during this period in other parts of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The links between Tagore and various global leaders in movements for progressive education in Asia and Europe is also an indicator of the qualities of interchange.

ICOMOS considers that while Santiniketan was clearly shaped by many cultural influences, the arguments offered by the State Party concerning the influences of its architecture on other places, or on the development of an Asian avant-garde or Indian modernism, are not strongly substantiated. It was the ideas of Tagore and his contemporaries as expressed in and throughout Santiniketan that have been influential, rather than the architecture. ICOMOS considers that the justification is more compelling in relation to criterion (iv), and in combination with criterion (vi).

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that it tangibly demonstrates the humanist ideology of Rabindranath Tagore, a key figure in early Indian Modernism. Santiniketan was developed as a counterpoint to colonial models, imbued with both Indian cultural ideals, humanism and internationalism. Set purposefully in a rural environment, the educational philosophy, architecture, artwork and landscape were intentionally inter-related elements.

ICOMOS considers that through the work of Rabindranath Tagore, Santiniketan represents an unusual and important nexus between artistic and political movements significant in the region, and a focus on the cultures of Asia. The buildings and works of art, along with the philosophy of learning implemented at Santiniketan, tangibly represent the spiritual and intellectual ideals of Tagore. The model of the ‘living’ educational institution, and the connections to seasonal and cultural cycles in its rural setting are significant in relation to the justification for this criterion. Much of the material presented in the justification for criterion (vi) demonstrates the wider influence of Santiniketan through the ideas that it conveyed, particularly in the south Asian region.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

While not initially nominated according to criterion (iv), ICOMOS considers that it would be useful to examine whether Santiniketan represents an outstanding way the emergence of post-colonial centres of cultural, philosophical and spiritual exploration in the the early 20th century in Asia.

In suggesting the relevance of criterion (iv) ICOMOS is not arguing that the nominated property be placed within an architectural typology, but instead sees this property as one where there has been a purposeful physical manifestation of influential ideas and educational philosophies (as described in the justification for criterion (vi)). Santiniketan arose in a particularly significant and dynamic period of south Asia’s history that included experimentation with ideas, forms and materials. It was purposefully located within a rural environment away from colonial templates, and drew inspiration from local traditions as well as other cultures, reflecting the universalism of Tagore’s philosophy. ICOMOS considers that the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property is best found in the inseparable interaction between criteria (iv) and (vi).

ICOMOS considers that criteria (iv) and (vi) are demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The nominated property contains thirty-six buildings and other attributes (landscape elements, plantings, sculptures, artworks) which tangibly demonstrate the development of Santiniketan, its architectural diversity, and its foundational philosophies.

ICOMOS considers that all the elements needed to demonstrate the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are included in the property boundary. As a functioning educational campus, some modifications have been made, including the installation of new artworks, but these seem to be compatible with the ethos of the educational institution. There are some development pressures of concern discussed below that could impact on the integrity of the nominated property.
Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of its buildings, art, landscape and planning to demonstrate the ideals underling the establishment of Santiniketan as an educational institution, and as an example of cultural interchange. The thirty-six identified buildings in the nominated property retain their form and design, layout and functions. Likewise the layout of the landscape, and the artworks inside and outside the buildings have been maintained in their original form and location.

The State Party points to the continuing use of traditional materials and methods in the conservation and maintenance of several of the structures and murals. The importance of the awareness and maintenance of the spirit of the place throughout the landscape itself is also emphasised by the State Party.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated property is demonstrated although it is potentially vulnerable due to the deterioration of traditional and other materials and changing uses. The authenticity of the spirit and feeling of Santiniketan are particularly vulnerable to educational and social changes.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met, although both are potentially vulnerable and require the support of an effective management system.

Boundaries

As per 2021, there are approximately 4,619 inhabitants within the nominated property, 2,795 in the buffer zone, and 7,414 in total.

The property boundary encloses the three areas that accord with the establishment of Santiniketan by Rabindranath Tagore, and the evolution of the residential school during his lifetime. The boundary therefore contains all the areas, buildings and other features necessary to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The property is enclosed by a single buffer zone. It accords with the boundary of the Visva-Bharati campus, and the area covered by the Visva-Bharati Act of 1951. In administrative terms, the clarity of the ownership and legal protection of the buffer zone is advantageous to the establishment of an effective management system. ICOMOS notes that parts of the buffer zone are relatively narrow, leaving the nominated area vulnerable to development pressures. In additional information provided in February 2022, the State Party emphasises that sufficient protection is in place for the buffer zone and wider setting through the operation of the State level Apex Advisory Committee, and cooperation between Visva-Bharati and relevant state and local authorities.

In addition to the delineation and protection of the property and its buffer zone, the State Party acknowledges the importance of the wider setting to the sense of place for Santiniketan. In addition to the provisions of the Visva-Bharati Act, the wider area is also a Protected Area of 2,037 ha established by the West Bengal Apex Advisory Committee in 2014.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) is not met, but that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is demonstrated through the interaction of criteria (iv) and (vi). The conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met, although they could be vulnerable.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

The nomination dossier maps and describes thirty-six buildings, a lake and five sculptures within the property that demonstrate the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of Santiniketan. Detailed photographs were submitted with the nomination dossier, and architectural drawings have been made for the identified heritage buildings. Additional information provided in February 2022 included an inventory of twenty-one landscape elements/areas, eighteen sculptures, thirty-four murals, five platforms/pavilions and four building interiors.

Santiniketan has on-site museums, including the Rabindra-Bhavana established by Rathindranath Tagore following the death of Rabindranath Tagore. It has a collection of documents associated with Tagore’s life.

The management plan sets out the requirements for ongoing documentation, recording and information management. It is acknowledged that the documentation of the tangible aspects needs to be improved, and standards and techniques are outlined including: preparation of a completed and detailed base map; a comprehensive documentation of architectural elements (including significant interior features); and comprehensive fabric mapping. Recommendations for periodic documentation are also made. ICOMOS considers that an overall inventory would be a useful improvement to underpin the implementation of the management system, including fully integrated documentation and monitoring of buildings, landscape elements, artworks and intangible heritage elements of the nominated property.

Conservation measures

Santiniketan is the subject of regular maintenance by the Visva-Bharati grounds staff and Visva-Bharati Engineering Department. Building conservation projects are implemented by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI); and the murals, sculptures and other artworks are monitored and restored by the Kala-Bhavana within Visva-Bharati. Various specialist agencies cooperate on conservation projects, such as the ASI, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), and the National Research Lab for Conservation of Cultural
In the nomination dossier and management plan, the State tradition describes protection through an inherent respect for Santiniketan in a manner which the management plan Visva-Bharati has therefore protected the character of the wider setting. A range of State land management laws apply to Santiniketan by prohibiting incompatible development in the area. The Supreme Court of India upheld the protection of ideals of Rabindranath Tagore. A 2005 judgement of the Visva-Bharati, an institution of national importance established by a specific act of the Indian Parliament. Protection of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property relies on the provisions of the Visva-Bharati Act of 1951. This is a national law established to continue the ideals of Rabindranath Tagore. A 2005 judgement of the Supreme Court of India upheld the protection of Santiniketan by prohibiting incompatible development in the area. A range of State land management laws apply to the wider setting.

Visva-Bharati has therefore protected the character of Santiniketan in a manner which the management plan describes as protection through an inherent respect for tradition.

In the nomination dossier and management plan, the State Party acknowledges that “there is, at present, no statutory protective designation of the property as a legally notified heritage zone and neither is any structure on the property protected under Central or State legislation as a monument/heritage building”. The management plan also states that the Visva-Bharati Act’s provisions may not be adequate to protect the tangible aspects of the property without additional legislative and statutory provisions. However, in the additional information provided in November 2021 and in February 2022, the State Party clarified these statements regarding legal protection, emphasising that because the Visva-Bharati Act is enacted at the national level, the property and its buffer zone is subject to the highest level of protection. According to the State Party, because Visva-Bharati is an ‘Institution of National Importance’, the lack of heritage designation should not to be interpreted as an absence of protective designation. The State Party considers that the Visva-Bharati is cognizant of the protection of the entire campus that includes the nominated property and the buffer zone and has adequate protective and legal framework to ensure this through the responsibilities and functions of the Heritage Committee.

In support of these arguments, the State Party points to the listing by Visva-Bharati of thirty-six individual buildings and structures as heritage as per its official estate map, and the establishment of the Heritage Committee to review, monitor and ensure their protection and conservation. The State Party also considers that the involvement of the Archaeological Survey of India in the Heritage Committee, the responsibilities of the Ministries for Education and Culture, and the roles assigned to the President of India and the Prime Minister of India in the Visva-Bharati Act emphasise the national importance placed on the protection of the nominated property.

ICOMOS acknowledges the significance of the national legal framework of Visva-Bharati. ICOMOS notes that Visva-Bharati’s heritage list is currently focused on the historic buildings, rather than on the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property (and the full range of potential attributes that also include landscapes, artworks, pavilions and so on). ICOMOS agrees that the Visva-Bharati Heritage Committee is essential to the effectiveness of the legal protection and management system. This could be further strengthened through the development of guidelines for the Heritage Committee’s responsibilities.

**5 Protection and management**

**Legal protection**

The entire property and its buffer zone are owned by Visva-Bharati, an institution of national importance established by a specific act of the Indian Parliament. Protection of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property relies on the provisions of the Visva-Bharati Act of 1951. This is a national law established to continue the ideals of Rabindranath Tagore. A 2005 judgement of the Supreme Court of India upheld the protection of Santiniketan by prohibiting incompatible development in the area. A range of State land management laws apply to the wider setting.

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**Management system**

According to the additional information received from the State Party in November 2021, Visva-Bharati has a Heritage Committee chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. It reviews all development proposals prior to their approval, although as far as ICOMOS can discern, there are limited formal processes of Heritage Impact Assessment in place. In June 2019, it was agreed to further expand the scope of the Heritage Committee to include approval of a list of heritage items of Visva-Bharati, and to frame policies for their conservation.

Regarding Heritage Impact Assessment processes, additional information received in February 2022 explains
Management of the wider setting of Santiniketan is coordinated by the Apex Advisory Committee of the Government of West Bengal. There are established protocols with the Santiniketan Sriniketan Development Authority (SSDA), Government of West Bengal, Visva-Bharati, and municipal authorities to coordinate on issues such as transportation, roads, water supply and waste management. The Apex Advisory Committee is chaired by the Chief Secretary of the Government of West Bengal, and is responsible for a regional planning and development framework, including the protection of Santiniketan from adverse impacts of development in the wider area.

In 2009, a national inter-disciplinary process involving ten national cultural institutions provided an action plan for Santiniketan. It addresses conservation works to the tangible elements, documentation and digitisation of records and artworks, and improvements to the museums. The action plan has been the basis of subsequent projects. The University Estate Department of Visva-Bharati has responsibilities for the maintenance and management of the University campus, and cooperates with specialist agencies in India in the completion of conservation projects.

The management plan contains a condition report on the property and analysis of threats. It is organised to address planning needs, interpretation and visitor management, documentation, maintenance, conservation works, research and funding. The need for disaster risk management is also briefly discussed.

The management plan is largely descriptive. It details recent and current conservation initiatives, identifies urgent treatments needed, specifies the approaches to fabric conservation and information management, and sets out some long-term objectives.

The management plan foreshadows the development of a master plan for the Visva-Bharati campus. In additional information received in February 2022 the State Party states that the campus master plan is being operationalised. It is not clear whether this means that the master plan has been written or whether it is under development. ICOMOS considers that it is an important component of the management system and recommends that once the master plan has been developed, it should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies for comments.

**Visitor management**

Santiniketan receives different types of visitors, including scholars and students, tourists and visitors interested in the teachings of Tagore. The on-site museum is open to visitors, as are the five houses in which Tagore lived in the last four decades of his life (all within the Uttarayan complex of the nominated property). These have interpretive displays and signs. The management plan has identified several intrusive impacts within the Uttarayan complex associated with visitor management such as traffic congestion, growth of hawkers, and litter. Several strategies are outlined to mitigate these issues. Visits to the Ashram area and the areas used for education are generally guided, with less signage provided.

Visva-Bharati has a policy of minimising tourism in order to maintain the educational functions of the property, although Santiniketan is promoted to tourists by the West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation. The management plan states that there is currently an absence of comprehensive visitor interpretation, although authorised guides operate within the nominated property. While accommodation is provided inside the nominated property for visiting scholars, faculty and students, there is no tourism accommodation.

Festivals at Santiniketan and Sriniketan attract large numbers of visitors, and most visits occur during a four-month period each year. Consideration of the carrying capacity is outlined in the management plan, and indicators relating to visitor pressures have been developed as part of the monitoring system.

ICOMOS considers that the interpretation and presentation to visitors could be improved through the development of a post-pandemic plan for visitation.

**Community involvement**

Tagore’s philosophy and vision for Santiniketan included care for the local community, and the functions of the educational institution create a community within Visva-Bharati. There are therefore a number of different communities associated with Santiniketan. These include the staff, students, faculty and alumni of Visva-Bharati, as well as the residents of local villages and surrounding areas. Community members participate in daily rituals of the Ashram, musical and theatre performances, and in seasonal festivals. These activities are considered by the State Party to be directly related to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. According to the additional information received from the State Party in November 2021, the Visva-Bharati Vision 2030 outlines strategies for community engagement and empowerment through its programmes for Rural Integration and Women and Tribal Development. Local communities are also involved in traditional maintenance activities such as the renewal of thatched roofs and mud plasters.
ICOMOS considers that there is ample evidence of the strong interests of the local and campus communities in maintaining the character, uses and integrity of Santiniketan. However, there is less clarity about the extent of direct involvement of communities in the management system itself. This is an area that could be considered further by the State Party and Visva-Bharati.

**Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property**

In summary, ICOMOS observes that the management system is functioning satisfactorily, despite the disruptions caused by the global pandemic. It is essential that the Heritage Committee and the Apex Advisory Committee regularly meet and implement their responsibilities. The value of the maintenance regimes for the landscape and buildings cannot be over-stated; and the engagement with national and state specialist agencies for heritage conservation, such as the Archaeological Survey of India, is an important component of the management system. ICOMOS considers that the effective operation of the Heritage Committee is essential for the protection and management of the nominated property. The reliance on the Visva-Bharati Act to ensure the long-term protection of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property could be further strengthened through improvements to the documentation and mapping of the property, development of guidelines and other tools for the Heritage Committee, and the preparation of written Heritage Impact Assessments that align with the requirements of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

**6 Conclusion**

Santiniketan is strongly associated with the life and achievements of Rabindranath Tagore, an internationally recognised Nobel laureate, poet, writer and thinker, known for his humanist ideals. The nomination of Santiniketan includes parts of the Visva-Bharati campus that were developed during Tagore’s life and demonstrate the continuing legacy of his experiments, educational philosophies and humanist ideology. The emergence of Santiniketan in the context of early 20th century India also reflects a push away from colonial templates, seeking local, Indian and pan-Asian cultural approaches.

The justification for Outstanding Universal Value developed by the State Party emphasises these characteristics in relation to criterion (vi). ICOMOS considers that this criterion is strongly demonstrated due to the direct associations with the influential ideas, works and vision of Rabindranath Tagore and his associates. Santiniketan represents the distillation of these ideas and a continuing legacy of a unique model of education based on both ancient Indian ideas and internationalism that is embodied in the buildings, landscape, artworks and continuing festivals and traditions. This occurred within the specific historical and geocultural context of early 20th century colonial India influencing the leaders of the Indian Freedom Movement, (such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Indira Gandhi). The influences of the ideals and philosophies represented in Santiniketan can be traced through other early 20th century locations of cultural learning in south Asia.

The State Party also nominated the property on the basis of criterion (ii) due to the many cultural influences that Tagore and his associates introduced at Santiniketan. This argument relies on the importance of Santiniketan’s architecture as a tangible expression of an Asian avant-garde, Indian Modernism and the creation of a new design language and interest in a pan-Asian aesthetic. ICOMOS considers that while it is clear that many cultural influences and ideas have been purposefully brought into the development of Santiniketan, the reliance on the qualities of the property’s architecture to demonstrate these interchanges was not well demonstrated. As explained above, Santiniketan can be understood as an embodiment of Tagore’s philosophies, but its architecture has not been shown to be specifically influential. This is not to suggest a diminished importance, but rather provides a basis for consideration of other cultural criteria.

ICOMOS appreciates that the State Party has identified the importance of Santiniketan as an ensemble (buildings, landscape and artworks in an inter-related whole) that embodies the philosophies that flowed through the establishment and development of Santiniketan. ICOMOS has found that the arguments presented are pertinent for the justification of criteria (iv) and (vi).

ICOMOS considers that the continuing educational and cultural uses of the nominated area within the Visva-Bharati campus, the high national importance of Santiniketan, and the eclectic character of the architecture, landscapes and artworks of Santiniketan that resulted from experimentation with Tagore’s philosophies are well established by the materials presented by the State Party.

The importance of Rabindranath Tagore as a prominent individual in India and globally in the early 20th century is undisputed, and is not the primary issue for this nomination. ICOMOS appreciates that the State Party has recognised the necessity for World Heritage nominations to focus on the values and characteristics of the property in question, rather than as a means to celebrate the lives and achievements of famous individuals. The test for this nomination therefore lies in how the nominated property can demonstrate Tagore’s ideals in discernible ways, and how this can be considered exceptional in some specific way, demonstrating one or more of the cultural criteria.

In combination with criterion (vi), criterion (iv) is considered by ICOMOS to provide a basis for the articulation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. Santiniketan was an experimental settlement in education and communal life in a rural setting, combining Indian cultural traditions with those drawn from other Asian cultures and religions. Through experimentation and internationalism, progressive
education and visual art are intertwined with architecture and landscape, transcending available colonial templates. Santiniketan represents in an outstanding way the emergence of post-colonial centres of cultural, philosophical and spiritual exploration in the early 20th century in south Asia.

Visva-Bharati has a complex responsibility to ensure the long-term conservation of the property within an operating university campus. The management system should be further strengthened, based on a clear articulation of the Outstanding Universal Value and related attributes.

Regarding the legal protection, the State Party has clarified that while none of the historic buildings, artworks or landscape elements are currently designated within heritage laws, the Visva-Bharati Act itself provides a strong basis for protection. ICOMOS considers that this is adequate, but that it also relies heavily on the high respect given to the institution by all levels of government, and the intentions of the Visva-Bharati administration to continue the legacy of Tagore. The mechanisms of the Visva-Bharati Act were not intended to address heritage management decision-making, placing a heavy reliance on the effectiveness of the Visva-Bharati Heritage Committee and the continuing cooperation of national agencies for culture and heritage, such as the Archaeological Survey of India. ICOMOS considers that these key elements of the protection and management of the property are adequate, but recommends further strengthening, possibly through the future application of national or state heritage laws, and through actions to support the operation of the Heritage Committee.

ICOMOS understands that the boundary of the nominated area has been drawn to locate the most important historic buildings, landscape elements and artworks, demonstrating the beginnings and development of Santiniketan during Tagore’s lifetime. This boundary seems appropriate. ICOMOS also understands that the buffer zone has been delineated to reflect the area under the control of Visva-Bharati. This pragmatic approach is supported, although there are some sections of the buffer zone which ICOMOS considers to be too narrow, leaving the nominated area vulnerable to development pressures. While the area surrounding the buffer zone has its own forms of protection, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party continues to consider how to reduce this vulnerability.

As described above, ICOMOS notes that some conservation and restoration projects have been completed in the past decade through partnerships between Visva-Bharati and other Indian specialist agencies. This has significantly improved the state of conservation, although the submitted management plan recognises that much further work is needed. To support these projects, a much more detailed documentation of the significant elements of the nominated area is needed. The thirty-six identified historic buildings have been documented through drawings and photographs, and additional information provided by the State Party in February 2022 included an inventory for the artworks and landscape elements. Because Santiniketan is best understood as an integrated whole, ICOMOS considers all of these to be potential attributes, underlining the importance of an integrated approach to documentation and monitoring. An inventory of the intangible aspects of Santiniketan that are considered important to the continued expression of Tagore’s ideals is also recommended.

ICOMOS acknowledges the disruptions to some aspects of the management system due to the global pandemic. It is essential to re-establish these as soon as possible, including the regular processes and meetings of the Heritage Committee, the creation of a master plan for the Visva-Bharati campus, the development of conservation plans for each identified heritage element, implementation of risk management planning, Heritage Impact Assessment, and plans for visitaton and interpretation.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that Santiniketan, India, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iv) and (vi).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Established in rural West Bengal in 1901 by the renowned poet and philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore, Santiniketan was a residential school and centre for art based on an internationalism that drew upon ancient, medieval and folk traditions of India as well as Japanese, Chinese, Persian, Balinese, Burmese and Art Deco forms.
The built elements of Santiniketan demonstrate experimentation in construction techniques, materials and designs, a counterpoint to prevailing colonial templates. Santiniketan displays eclectic influences and a revived attention to the local in a search for a modernity based on internationalism. Santiniketan represents the physical manifestation of a utopian ideal of a community that became a crucible for intellectual and artistic ideas that were to have a decisive impact on 20th century art, literature, poetry, music and architecture in the south Asian region.

Criterion (iv): Santiniketan was an experimental settlement in education and communal life in a rural setting. The community was in many ways meant to represent a uniquely Indian example of a ‘total work of art’ (Gesamtkunstwerk) where life, learning, work and art along with the local and the global intertwined seamlessly. The built and open spaces constitute an exceptional global testimony to ideas of environmental art and educational reform where progressive education and visual art are intertwined with architecture and landscape: with the Ashram, Uttarayan, and Kala-Bhavana areas forming the prime sites of these practices in the most significant periods of development. Santiniketan represents in an outstanding way, the emergence of post-colonial centres of cultural, philosophical and spiritual exploration in the early 20th century in south Asia.

Criterion (vi): Santiniketan is directly and tangibly associated with the ideas, works and vision of Rabindranath Tagore and his associates, pioneers of the Bengal School of Art and early Indian Modernism. Against the backdrop of the Partition of Bengal, Santiniketan became the crucible for an artistic and intellectual renaissance in the early 20th century. As a cultural and intellectual incubator, it had an indelible imprint on the leaders of the Indian Freedom Movement, including Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Indira Gandhi. The significant influence of the ideals and philosophies represented in Santiniketan are demonstrated at other early 20th-century locations of cultural learning in south Asia. Santiniketan represents the distillation of the ideas and continuing legacy of a unique model of education recalling ancient Indian ideas as well as internationalism through a living institution, embodied in the buildings, landscape, artworks and continuing festivals and traditions. And while many of Tagore’s art and literary works bear a unique association with Santiniketan, his experimentation through education with an internationalist humanist ideology finds its manifest reflection in Santiniketan.

Integrity

Part of a continuing contemporary university campus, Santiniketan is an ensemble of historic buildings, landscapes and gardens, pavilions, artworks and continuing educational and cultural traditions that together express its Outstanding Universal Value. The property is of adequate size and all the attributes needed to convey its significance are included. The property includes the areas developed at Santiniketan during the life of Rabindranath Tagore and his family and associates, a period of experimentation and flourishing of ideas. Changes to uses, building alterations and installation of some new artworks and plantings have occurred, yet these areas and the elements within them are generally intact. The state of conservation of the property has been improved over the past decade through institutional partnerships. Santiniketan is in use as part of the Visva-Bharati campus. Spirit and feeling of the place reside in both the tangible (buildings, artworks, pavilions, gardens and landscapes) and intangible attributes (educational philosophies, building practices and cultural celebrations). The integrity is potentially vulnerable to development pressures, particularly on the periphery of the buffer zone.

Authenticity

Santiniketan meets the requirements of authenticity through its ability to convey Tagore’s philosophy and global learnings. There is a high degree of continuity in the spatial layouts of the Ashram, Uttarayan, and Kala-Bhavana areas. Despite changes in uses and new artworks in some areas, the buildings and other attributes retain their eclectic forms based on experimentation with techniques and materials ranging from brick, mud, coal tar, living tree, sandstone, glass, cast iron, thatch, timber, bamboo, laterite, precast concrete, and reinforced concrete. Some of these attributes could be vulnerable through decline in traditional skills. The pavilions, gardens and platforms that were central to the education philosophies are in place and in continued use; and the murals and frescos, wooden windows and furniture retain their authenticity, depicting oriental influences and local indigenous plant species. Aesthetic development of the senses went hand in hand with intellectual development at Santiniketan. The festive celebrations that have come to form a special culture of the institution, and within the local communities use traditional Indian forms and rituals, including decoration of the site, use of flowers, alpana, chanting of Vedic hymns and blowing of conch-shells.

Management and protection requirements

The property and buffer zone are within the Visva-Bharati campus. The legal protection is provided by the Visva-Bharati Act of 1951, a national law established to continue the ideals of Rabindranath Tagore that establishes Visva-Bharati as an institution of national importance. Because there are no other heritage designations in place at the national or state level, further strengthening of the legal framework and management system is recommended.

Further documentation of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value has been identified in the management plan as a priority. While the historic buildings have been relatively well documented, the same standard has yet to be achieved for the other attributes. A fully integrated inventory is needed as a basis for the future effective management of Santiniketan, including the recording and safeguarding of traditional practices and celebrations. The main factors affecting the property are development pressures (particularly in the buffer zone and wider setting),
construction of new roads, visitor management pressures, and deterioration of physical materials. The value of the maintenance regimes for the landscape and buildings cannot be over-stated; and the engagement with national and state specialist agencies for heritage conservation, such as the Archaeological Survey of India, is an important component of the management system. The development of individual conservation plans for the attributes of the property is recommended.

There will be no new developments approved within the property boundary, and all conservation projects will be overseen by the Visva-Bharati Heritage Committee. Due to the delineation of the buffer zone based on the area within the Visva-Bharati campus, it is relatively narrow and vulnerable to development pressures in several places. The importance of the wider setting of Santiniketan has been recognised and a range of state land management laws and protective mechanisms apply to the wider setting.

A campus masterplan is being developed to ensure that the needs of the ongoing uses of Visva-Bharati as a contemporary educational institution are aligned with the long-term obligations arising from World Heritage inscription.

Within the management system, the effective operation of the Visva-Bharati Heritage Committee is essential to the long-term conservation of the property. This should be further strengthened through the development of guidelines for the Heritage Committee’s responsibilities, and by ensuring that Heritage Impact Assessments are prepared for the Heritage Committee in a written format in accordance with the requirements of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Considering possibilities to strengthen the long-term legal protection of the property currently provided by the Visva-Bharati Act of 1951 by applying appropriate national and/or state laws for heritage protection,

b) Developing a master plan for the Visva-Bharati campus and submitting this to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies for comments,

c) Implementing the documentation priorities outlined in the management plan and establishing a single consolidated inventory of attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property as a basis for the implementation of the management system, including buildings, platforms/pavilions, interiors and furnishings, artworks (murals, sculptures), landscape plantings and features and intangible heritage elements of Santiniketan,

d) Developing conservation plans and policies for each of the identified tangible attributes,

e) Closely monitoring the ability of the buffer zone to protect the property from development pressures, and consider possibilities for revising the delineation and/or strengthening the legal protection of the buffer zone,

f) Developing and implementing formal Heritage Impact Assessment processes to aid the Visva-Bharati Heritage Committee in its role, ensuring that assessments are fully documented in written form,

g) Fully implementing the disaster risk management strategy and monitoring system outlined in the management plan,

h) Developing a post-pandemic plan for visitation to Santiniketan, including interpretation strategies,

i) Identifying opportunities for enhanced community involvement in the management system for the property;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
The Persian Caravanserai (Islamic Republic of Iran)  
No 1668

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
The Persian Caravanserai

Location
Islamic Republic of Iran

Brief description
Caravanserais were roadside inns, providing shelter, food and water for caravans, pilgrims and other travellers. The routes and the locations of the caravanserais were determined by the presence of water, geographical conditions and security concerns. The fifty-six caravanserais included in this serial nomination are only a small percentage of the numerous caravanserais built along the ancient roads of Iran. They are considered to be the most famous, influential and valuable examples of the caravanserais of Iran, revealing a wide range of architectural styles, adaptation to climatic conditions, and construction materials, spread across thousands of kilometres and built over many centuries. Together, they showcase the evolution and network of caravanserais in Iran, in different historical stages.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of fifty-six monuments.

Included in the Tentative List
2 February 2017 as “Persian Caravanserai”

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 1 to 23 October 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 24 September 2021, requesting further information about the serial approach, justifications for criteria (ii) and (iii), conditions of integrity, governance arrangements, human capacity and financial resources, planning framework, conservation guidelines and monitoring.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 10 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: links between the component parts; the serial approach; the distinctiveness of the Persian Caravanserai; the selection of the component parts; setting; reconstruction; and the composition of the Persian Caravanserai Base.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
From the Achaemenid era (559-330 BCE) onwards, a network of roads was built across Iran, among which one of the most important was the road between Susa and Sardis (in Anatolia, present-day Turkey) running for a distance of about 2,500 kilometres. As part of the infrastructure supporting these roads, the Achaemenid kings promoted the construction of road stations (chāpār-khānehs) where royal messengers and travellers could rest and obtain fresh mounts. These stations served as the prototypes for the future caravanserais. During the Parthian empire (247 BCE-224 CE), trade between the East and the West flourished via the Silk Roads. During the rule of the Parthians over Persia, numerous stations and caravanserais were built, linking it with the East and Central Asian steppes as well as the West and Mesopotamia.

The Sassanid era (224-651 CE) was an important period in the development and architecture of pre-Islamic caravanserais. Because of the flourishing economy of the empire, road construction and the safety of travellers became a top priority leading to the construction of many caravanserais on main roads. The earliest caravanserais
 included in the nominated property date from this period (e.g. Deyr-e Gachin and Noushirvān). Until the end of the Sassanid era, construction of caravanserais was only allowed under the authority of the king.

The advent of Islam and its spread into Iran, led to great changes at social, cultural, economic, commercial and religious levels. Following the fall of the Sassanid empire, the protection and maintenance of roads was neglected. For over three centuries, warfare and widespread robbery made long journeys difficult. Increased security during the Seljuk era heralded further construction of caravanserais. Two examples from this era are included in the nominated property: Parand (Ghal’e Sangi) and Robāt-e Sharaf. Three other caravanserais dating from the Ilkhanid dynasty (1256-1335) form part of the nominated property: Anjireh Sangi, Jamāl Ābād and Abbās Ābād Tāyβād. During the Timurid era (15th-16th centuries) more caravanserais were built, aimed at trade expansion. The difference with earlier periods is that they were also built within cities. Two component parts illustrate this era: Qelli and Fakhr-e Dāvd.

The growing importance of maritime routes in the 16th century had a significant impact on terrestrial ones; trade with European countries expanded. In reaction to these changing dynamics, during the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722) new connections emerged and with it, new transportation reduced their relevance. The construction and influence of the trans-Iranian railway network and large-scale use of motor vehicles led to huge societal transformations and subsequently many caravanserais were gradually abandoned and fell into decay. Fifteen caravanserais reflect this last era: Yengheh Emām; Neyestānāk; Chehel Pāyeh; Khān; Deh Mohammad; Taj Ābād; Chāh Kūrān; Anjīreh Ājori; Kharānqā; Rashī; Borāzjān; Chameshk; Aftāl; Bastak; and Sa adossaltaneh.

One of the critical concerns for caravans and travellers in general during their journeys was water scarcity. Therefore, locations of caravan halts were determined by the presence of supplies of drinking water. Usually along the caravan routes there were cisterns at regular distances, at which travellers could get water and rest after having travelled many kilometres. Hence, many caravanserais had cisterns (either in the courtyard or outside the building). In some cases, water could be channelled from nearby springs, streams or rivers.

The distance covered by a caravan or group of travellers during a full day’s journey depended on topography; which in turn determined the location of the caravanserais. In general, in plains areas the spacing was on average thirty-five kilometres. In mountainous regions, the distance between two caravanserais was determined by the steepness of the road, therefore the interval could be as little as ten to twenty kilometres. In the lowlands along the Persian Gulf, the distance could be as little as five kilometres.

The sheer number of caravanserais built over many centuries allows multiple ways to categorise them or to group them into different typologies. A general distinction can be made between urban or what the State Party calls ‘out of city’ caravanserais. The former were usually located beside bazaars and they were related to commercial hubs of the city. Due to the high price of the land, these caravanserais usually had two storeys. For out of city caravanserais, security was a critical motive for their construction and influenced their architectural design. Therefore, these caravanserais were mostly built as self-sufficient constructions, particularly if no villages existed in the vicinity. Because the price of land was low, they mostly had just one storey and relatively large courtyards.

Climatic and geographical conditions can be used to group the caravanserais into five main typologies: the mountain type; the Persian Gulf (semi-tropical) type; the Southern shore of the Caspian Sea type; the Central Plateau deserts type; and the plain area type. Caravanserais built in mountainous and cold regions for the most part do not have a central courtyard; instead, they have a large hall for housing travellers. Since these regions were seldom of major economic importance, the caravanserais were mostly designed to provide shelter to travellers and protect the caravans during winter storms.

Maritime trade was very important and the transfer of goods between ports of the southern coasts and the central cities of Iran led to the construction of many roads and consequently a large number of caravanserais. In the hot, humid coastal areas along the Persian Gulf, buildings were designed to facilitate air currents and to provide as much shade as possible. Therefore, caravanserais were generally constructed without a central courtyard and had a quadrangular structure with one cross-shaped central room and several peripheral rooms. Rooms could be accessed from the outside. Most of these caravanserais were built during the reign of the Safavid dynasty.
There are fewer caravanserais on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea compared with other regions of Iran. The mild weather and higher population density resulted in larger numbers of human settlements, hence diminishing the need for the construction of caravanserais. Most of the caravanserais located in this region are structured around a central courtyard. While this model reduces air currents inside rooms and stables, it provides higher security and safety.

The majority of the caravanserais were built in the plains of the central desert. These are considered to be among the largest, most magnificent and most beautiful of their kind. Their dominant plan is a central courtyard with two or four big iwâns (porches) on two or four sides of the courtyard. Lodgings surrounded the central courtyard and stables were built behind these rooms which were a few steps higher than the courtyard level, in order to prevent water, mud or dust from entering the rooms. The ‘plain area’ caravanserais are located in the fertile plain of Iran. These caravanserais exhibit characteristics between the desert type and the semi-tropical Persian Gulf type.

The area of the fifty-six component parts totals 30.62 ha, with buffer zones totalling 3,347.15 ha. The area of the component parts mainly encompasses the caravanserai buildings or, in a few cases, it includes other ancillary structures located outside the caravanserai (e.g. a water Qanat or a water cistern).

State of conservation

Many, if not most, of the caravanserais included in the serial property have been expanded, reconstructed and restored over the centuries. The arrival of the railways and later on motor vehicles led to radical changes; this resulted in the gradual decay and abandonment of the caravanserais. Those located in remote locations and where climate conditions are harsher were affected the most. The inclusion of the component parts on the National Cultural Heritage List from 1934 onwards led to major restorations over the years.

Mâdar Shâh was the first caravanserai to be designated in 1934. This caravanserai underwent considerable changes in the late 1950s and early 1966, when it was transformed into an hotel. The nomination dossier acknowledges that the interventions attempted to create a building similar to the architecture of the Safavid era. The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission confirmed that this component part has been heavily restored and reconstructed with additions of two extra floors on one wing along with a horizontal extension to house more rooms and many of the facilities necessary for a modern luxury hotel.

Other caravanserais that were listed up until the 1970s – such as Gânjali Khân (1937), Mahyâr (1942), Gaz (1951) and Milûnsht (1957) – went through early heavy-handed restorations and partial reconstructions involving the use of cement, reinforced concrete and white-washing of walls and ceilings. Photographs included in the nomination dossier point to past reconstructions at Noushirvân, Qellî, Robât-e Sharaf, Fakhr-e Dâvûd, Zafarânîyeh and Qasr-e Bahram. In addition, the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission reported that the covering vault of one of the shotor-khâns (stables), located east of the entrance axis of Chameshk caravanserai, was destroyed. In Tâj Ābâd, which is a circular caravanserai, a part of the shotor-khâns on the west side was also destroyed. At Yengeh Emârân the covering vault of the south iwân facing the courtyard has disappeared. Based on information provided by the technical evaluation mission, these parts will be rebuilt with traditional materials and workmanship.

At present, conservation interventions are much more controlled and informed by a good level of documentation and research. Partial reconstruction is meant to protect the authentic fabric; for example, when there are walls that have lost their facing layer, a new layer is reconstructed to prevent further deterioration from the impact of weathering to the core of the wall. In domes, vaults and arches partially damaged, their missing parts are reconstructed for structural stability.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation for most component parts is acceptable except for a few component parts. These are: Tîlî, Khoy, Sâeen and Chameshk. The mission observed that the latter three do not have doors, therefore access to their interiors is not controlled. During the period of the mission, Khoy was undergoing conservation works. Caravanserais that are not currently used and are not considered as archaeological sites are more exposed to the effects of weathering. Some of the ancillary buildings such as water cisterns, tombs or kilns which are located outside the caravanserais but are included within the area of the component part are in urgent need of conservation (e.g. the tomb next to Khân caravanserai and the water cistern outside Châh Kûrân). At Borâzjan, the condition of the courtyard’s stone cladding should be urgently assessed.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are development pressures, environmental pressures, natural disasters and tourism pressures.

Caravanserais located in the vicinity of villages or small towns are less likely to be impacted by development pressures, since their development is bound by master plans. However, in some cases, the effectiveness of those measures is questionable. For example, based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, the construction of a modern mosque in the buffer zone of Sheikhli Khân had to be stopped by the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts (IMCHTH) over concerns of excessive height and unsuitable use of materials. Similarly, at Tâj Ābâd, houses were built in close proximity to the southwestern part of the caravanserai, and consequently the shotor-
Modern structures, directly connected to the caravanserais, were also observed at Borājān, and Jamāl Ābād. A fuel tank in close proximity to Maranjāb was also noted by the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission.

At Khoy, a highway tunnel is being constructed in close proximity to the caravanserai. Since the Azāl caravanserai is located in a dense commercial area, negative changes and transformations in the surrounding buildings should be carefully controlled. A number of communication towers with negative visual impacts were observed in the buffer zones and the wider setting of several caravanserais (e.g. Zeynoddīn; Sarāyān; Rashtī; Neyestānak; Meybod; Maranjāb; and Deh Mohammad).

Bastak is used as an hotel and café-restaurant by a private investor. Some of the interventions are not well adapted to the architectural design of the building.

Caravanserais located in mountainous and desert areas are particularly exposed to environmental pressures. Wind erosion is the major pressure in this regard. Its negative impact was observed by the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission on the walls and roofs of component parts that have not been recently subject to conservation work. When erosion occurs, it accelerates deterioration if it is not repaired in a timely manner. Moisture is also a major threat. Although water is scarce in the desert environment, the small amount of water from dew and rare rainfalls can cause big damage because of the great differences in temperature between day and night and between seasons in the desert climate. Damage caused by moisture becomes more serious when coupled with wind erosion as it allows water to get into the eroded fabric and fine cracks and holes. It then causes further damage as it crystallises with the changes of temperature.

For caravanserais located in the temperate and wet areas of the northern parts of Iran, damp is a major cause of decay. Tītī caravanserai is a clear example of this. High humidity and precipitation have caused the colour of the materials to change in all parts of the caravanserai. As a result, weeds and other vegetation can be observed in this component part.

The construction of a factory for the production of lime in the wider setting of the Anjireh Ājor and Anjireh Sangī caravanserais raises concerns about the effects of pollution, as well as from the cumulative effects of potential expansion of housing and service buildings for workers and improved road accessibility.

The potential impacts of climate change are not referred to in the nomination dossier: however, ICOMOS considers that it is a factor that deserves further attention, since it can have a multiplying effect on existing environmental pressures. Since the nominated property is located in an earthquake-prone region, earthquakes are a potential threat to the caravanserais. Yet, no risk-preparedness plan has been developed specific to the needs of the nominated property.

Based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, at present visitor and tourism pressures are not a major issue. However, it must be noted that the mission took place in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Visitor numbers included in the nomination dossier reflect a sharp decline of both foreign and national visitors in 2020 compared to levels registered in 2018. Data included in the nomination dossier goes back only to 2017, and therefore does not provide detailed information on the long- and medium-term visitor trends.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission observed that the adaptation of some of the component parts to house modern hospitality functions creates a number of difficult issues and problems. ICOMOS therefore recommends that the State Party issues general guidelines for the adaptation of the caravanserais with regards to modern requirements such as electricity, air conditioning, water, sewage, kitchen facilities and staff accommodation.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is acceptable for most component parts but that some are in urgent need of conservation works. The main factors affecting the nominated property are development pressures and environmental pressures.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Associated with a network of historical routes, caravanserais provided an exclusive space for human interactions, a meeting point for travellers, merchants, scientists, and many other scholars who wished to exchange knowledge and ideas, in addition to security, commercial and exchange functions.
- As a type of building, the caravanserai is considered to be one of the exceptional products of the Persian civilisation and architecture which was shaped and evolved over generations in the geographical context of Iran and has been able to maintain its effect, importance and situation for more than two millennia.
- The Persian Caravanserai is a legacy of uninterrupted continuity of the Persian tradition of architecture through millennia, subject to needs and necessities. Its formation, change and development in different periods depended on social, economic, religious and political circumstances.

This is a serial nomination of fifty-six component parts spread across thousands of kilometres, through different provinces of Iran and different climatic conditions. The caravanserais included in the series were selected from over 1,000 known caravanserais, about 700 of which are registered in the National Cultural Heritage List. ICOMOS recalls that conforming with the requirements of paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines for the
Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, serial properties must include component parts related by clearly defined links.

ICOMOS notes that the nomination dossier and the additional information provided include many written and graphical references to the historical routes to which the caravanserais were linked – namely the Silk Roads, the Spice Roads, the Khorasan Road, and the Royal Road. In ‘The Silk Roads: An ICOMOS Thematic Study’, published in 2014, ICOMOS recommended a conceptual approach based on a selection of corridors. A thematic approach was considered but not favoured for several reasons; namely, that it would break up the understanding of the overall connectivity of the later cities, smaller market towns, the way-stations, the shrines, the monasteries, etc. It added that a collection of way-stations along the route, divorced from their landscapes, their context of smaller towns, hydraulic management, natural passes, etc. would seem less important. Moreover, it noted that such an approach would go against the recommendations of the Ittlingen Expert Meeting (held in Switzerland in 2010), which stated that serial nominations should not be a mere catalogue of sites without an adequate definition of the functional links between the component parts. The Ittlingen recommendations were reflected in paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Consequently, in its request for additional information sent in September 2021, ICOMOS asked the State Party to explain what links exist between the caravanserais included in the serial nominated property other than the nature of their typology. ICOMOS considered that the State Party’s reply did not include new information compared to that already included in the nomination dossier. Consequently, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS reiterated its request regarding this issue in more detail. In addition, the Interim Report asked if the State Party could clarify the rationale for choosing a typological focus to justify the serial approach and if a cultural route approach had been considered at some point in the development of the nomination.

The State Party’s reply restated the importance of the caravanserais as vital road infrastructures. It added that as a whole, the selected caravanserais link important historical and cultural routes and that most of the Iranian caravanserais were located along the Silk Road/Great Khorasan Road. The State Party also clarified that it was impossible to follow an approach based on cultural routes given that the architectural evolution and transformations of the caravanserais through various historical eras was a significant criterion for the selection of the series.

ICOMOS considers that, given their function as road infrastructures, all caravanserais – be they part of the nominated property or not – are in their essence defined by their associations with roads. While several of the component parts are associated with the Khorasan Road, others were located along less important roads, part of a complex road network. Moreover, this network was not the same across the timeframe of almost two millennia associated with the series presented but varied over time. ICOMOS considers that what needed to be clearly explained is how the fifty-six component parts, which are part of the nominated property, are connected.

Comparative analysis
The basic premise of the comparative analysis provided by the State Party in the nomination dossier is the caravanserai as a type of building. The analysis acknowledges from the outset that caravanserais are a common heritage that stretches from Europe to China, from the Maghreb region to the Indian subcontinent. However, only five countries, considered to have the highest number of caravanserais and with better conditions of integrity and authenticity, were selected: Turkey, Syria, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. The following parameters are then used to structure the comparisons: location variation; functional diversity; types of caravanserais’ construction resources; climate diversity; history; diversity of form and plan; construction materials; water supply systems; architectural details; decoration; patrons/sponsors. An additional set of parameters are presented in a table with ratings but are not referred to in the comparisons presented. These are: role of inns in the prosperity of commerce in the Old World; basic number of caravanserais; basic required living spaces (rooms, stables, courtyard, etc.); required service spaces (kitchen, lavatory, bathroom, store, warehouse, etc.); role of caravanserais in cultural interactions; security level; functional and efficiency level; and quality of the accommodation. ICOMOS notes that some of these parameters are not relevant for the purpose of the comparative analysis.

The comparison with caravanserais in Turkey concludes that Iranian caravanserais have a much longer history, that they are greater in number, that their variety of schemes and plans is greater, that the diversity and number of routes in Iran are also greater, and that the diversity of accommodation spaces is greater. In relation to Syria, the analysis suggests that the diversity and number of routes in Iran is greater and that the water supply technology in the Iranian caravanserais is more sophisticated and advanced, among other aspects. Caravanserais in Turkmenistan have a narrower range of decorative aspects, a shorter history, are fewer in number and the diversity and number of ancient routes is smaller. The analysis of the caravanserais in Armenia reaches similar conclusions in terms of numbers, diversity and historical span. Similar conclusions are presented for the comparison with the caravanserais of Azerbaijan.

Overall, this part of the comparative analysis concludes that the caravanserais situated in the countries studied possess outstanding characteristics and values, in addition to being well-preserved. However, the State Party concludes that Iranian caravanserais are unique in terms of their number, architectural and historical values, their role in cultural interaction of different nations, location, functional diversity, effective role in the ancient
world’s trade development, and many other exceptional factors.

ICOMOS considers that the reasons why the State Party chose to limit the comparative analysis to only five countries are insufficiently justified. ICOMOS also considers that some of the conclusions presented by the State Party are related to quantitative measures (i.e. number of caravanserais or number of routes) rather than the combination of values and attributes expressed by the nominated property. The comparative analysis is also exclusively based on the caravanserais as a type of building and related to criterion (iv) whereas the property is also nominated under criteria (ii) and (iii).

The comparative analysis also fails to explain how the Persian Caravanserai presents distinctive features or characteristics that are specific to Iran, to be considered as a separate typology that does not exist in the wider geo-cultural area. For this reason, ICOMOS in its Interim Report asked the State Party to provide further information on the distinctiveness of the Persian caravanserais, in relation to caravanserais in the wider region. This aspect is analysed in detail in relation to the proposed justification of criterion (iv).

The comparative analysis has a second part related to comparisons between the caravanserais included in the nominated property and other Iranian caravanserais. In this section, the State Party explains that the fifty-six component parts were selected from among the more than 1,000 known caravanserais and the roughly 700 included in the National Cultural Heritage List based on the following criteria: historical continuity (from the Sassanid, early Islamic, Buyid, Ziyarid, Seljuk, Ilkhanid, Timurid, Safavid and Qajar eras); the evolution of architecture (i.e. plan and design changes during different periods); geometry, variety of materials and use of superior architectural patterns; variety of categories (based on location, setting and climate); and state of conservation and management.

In its request for additional information sent in September 2021, ICOMOS noted that a number of caravanserais that are not included in the nominated property are referred to as examples in the ‘description’ section of the nomination dossier. Therefore, ICOMOS asked the State Party to clarify the process followed for arriving at a total of fifty-six component parts. The State Party replied that certain caravanserais included in the ‘description’ section were not selected because they do not meet the selection criteria established or because their condition is not stable enough. ICOMOS notes that no detailed reasons were provided as to why those and other caravanserais do not meet those criteria. It also notes that a few caravanserais included in the nominated property do not seem to have a stable condition either or have a poor state of conservation (e.g. Parand, Anjireh Sangi, Tili, Sáseen and Chameshk). Likewise, the State Party states that authenticity was a consideration for the selection of the component parts; yet ICOMOS notes that some of the caravanserais selected have been heavily reconstructed in the past, as shown in the photos included in the nomination dossier and the additional information submitted in February 2022.

For these reasons, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked the State Party to provide a detailed description of the specific process and steps followed to exclude other caravanserais before the final number of fifty-six component parts was reached. In its reply, the State Party explained that of the 1,000 caravanserais identified on the National Heritage List of Iran, over fifty percent have been demolished or their conservation status is not adequate. The selection process then considered the different historical periods – from the Sassanid to the Qajar periods. The State Party also explained that whereas few caravanserais remain from the Sassanid era, the Safavid and Qajar eras boast an abundance of caravanserais. The additional information then states that 250 caravanserais in one historical period were identified without specifying which historical period was referred to. The additional explanations provided repeat that the selection process applied the criteria identified, namely differences and diversity in plan and architecture, state of conservation and integrity and authenticity.

ICOMOS acknowledges that it would be unreasonable to expect detailed reasons why each and every single one of the approximately 500 other caravanserais that could have been considered were not included in the series. However, it could be expected to know out of those 500 caravanserais, how many belong to each historical period considered. For example, the State Party explains that few caravanserais remain from the Sassanid era but there is no information as to how many there are. There is also no information why, out of those few, only two were included in the series or why those two are the most representative, in the absence of information about the other caravanserais.

ICOMOS therefore concludes that the selection of the component parts does not appear adequately elaborated and justified at this stage, despite the additional information provided. In addition, ICOMOS considers that, beyond the explanation that caravanserais were associated with historical routes, the clear links between the fifty-six component parts that form the nominated property have not been sufficiently and comprehensibly justified beyond their typology, as required by paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

ICOMOS does not consider that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List at this stage.
Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the emergence of the caravanserais facilitated the richness of the exchange of cultural values. The diversity and variety that can be seen in this heritage are the result of the extremely long period of time and uninterrupted use of the caravanserais that were a place for interaction between various civilizations over the span of the last three millennia. Caravanserais, as one of the most significant structures constructed on historical routes, such as the Silk Roads, Shahr-e-Khorasan (Khorasan Road) and pilgrimage routes, presented valuable ideas.

In its request for supplementary information sent on 24 September 2021, ICOMOS noted that the justification offered by the State Party relates to caravanserais in general and is not specific to the caravanserais included in the nominated property. Therefore, it asked for further information as to how the proposed series of fifty-six caravanserais could be considered to exhibit an important interchange of human values and provide historical evidence of those interchanges of ideas and influences. The State Party replied that historical documents, poems, Persian literature and the various written travel accounts are all documented evidence proving the important role of the caravanserais in the interchange of human values. It added that the caravanserais have also played an important role in the interchange and transferring of traditional knowledge and knowhow on the construction of these structures.

ICOMOS considers that the additional information provided remains general and could apply to caravanserais located in other territories; it also does not explain what concrete interchanges of human ideas or influences – related to developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design – are to be considered, as required by this criterion. In addition, the information provided does not explain how those influences are embodied in the attributes of the nominated property. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Persian caravanserai bears an exclusive cultural tradition for long journeys in past times and is a symbol of a civilization in the region of Iran that has lasted from the 5th century BCE to the early years of the 20th century. The network of caravanserais and its related infrastructures in different time periods were of significant importance for the expansion of trading among different areas of the known world as well as the growth of economic and cultural interactions among various ethnic groups and nations.

ICOMOS also requested supplementary information about the justification for this criterion, in its request sent on 24 September 2021. ICOMOS asked if the State Party could clarify what cultural tradition is exactly referred to and what cultural practices are associated with it, given that this criterion largely considers processes. The State Party explained that the construction of a secure station and/or safe place outside human settlements was an initiative dating back to 500 BCE. With time, this tradition determined the locations of caravanserais and that examples of the cultural tradition of building and restoring caravanserais continued from the Seljuk to the Qajar periods. It added that pilgrimage routes and religious beliefs that led to services for public utility and interest, endowments and offerings, are among other features of cultural practices and interactions pursued as a result of the existence of the caravanserais.

ICOMOS considers that the justification provided in the additional information differs to a certain degree from that included in the nomination dossier; whereas the latter emphasizes a tradition associated with long journeys and the network of caravanserais along the travel routes, the former focuses on the construction of caravanserais per se. Both aspects, even when combined, do not explain how those traditions are best expressed by the caravanserais included in the nominated property. As the comparative analysis included in the nomination dossier shows, thousands of caravanserais were built along trade routes such as the Silk Roads.

ICOMOS also notes that the series as presented emphasizes the caravanserais as a typology, which consequently decontextualizes it from its broader historical, economic and environmental context as infrastructures associated with cultural routes. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the caravanserai, from an architectural point of view, is a unique and exceptional type of building that appeared and developed over a very long time in the Persian region and represents the knowledge, art, creativity and adaptation to nature by the people of Persia. The caravanserais included in the nominated property are architectural masterpieces from the Sassanian to the Islamic period, as well as from the time of the Seljuks, Safavids and the Qajars, located all over Iran – from the banks of the Aras River to the northern shores of the Persian Gulf.
ICOMOS considers that the information and documentation provided in the nomination dossier did not clearly illustrate in what ways the caravanserais of Iran significantly differ from other caravanserais situated in other countries, which flourished in relation to terrestrial commercial and cultural routes between the East and the West. Moreover, ICOMOS notes that the fifty-six component parts express a wide diversity of architectural styles and even typologies, depending on their location and timeframe. This aspect renders it even more difficult how to identify the precise characteristics that are determinant to the definition of what constitutes the Persian caravanserais. Therefore, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked the State Party to provide details as to what characterises the Persian caravanserais as a distinct building typology; that is, what architectural, artistic or construction specificities make it recognisable as a different type of building when compared to other caravanserais in other countries. ICOMOS also requested if such distinctiveness, if clearly demonstrated, would be best illustrated by a particular historical period or dynasty.

The State Party’s reply reiterated references to the Persian origins of the terms *Karevan* and *Karevansara*. It added that the Turkish caravanserais took inspiration from the Iranian caravanserais and display more varied architectural structures and styles and are richer in decoration. The State Party concluded that the decoration is specific to the local architectural style of each region and built by different methods and different ways of using construction materials. No answer was given as to if the distinctiveness of the Persian caravanserais would be best illustrated by a particular historical period or dynasty.

ICOMOS notes that the comparative analysis included in the nomination dossier is structured around caravanserais in modern political entities (i.e. countries), whereas the nominated property covers a timeframe of almost two millennia, in which such political entities (i.e. dynasties and empires) and the territories they covered were very different than they are at present. The system of caravanserais extended well beyond the present boundaries of Iran to neighbouring areas such as Uzbekistan, and especially Turkey; some of these areas were actually part of Persia at the time when some of the caravanserais were built.

To support its analysis, ICOMOS conducted another series of desk reviews in addition to the one already undertaken at the beginning of its evaluation process. This consultation process led ICOMOS to conclude that the denomination of Persian caravanserais as a typology in itself would be unjustified, particularly taking into account the timeframe of almost two millennia represented by the series proposed. ICOMOS considers that it would be more correct to speak of the caravanserais of Iran.

ICOMOS notes that the essence of criterion (iv) requires that the nominated property must demonstrate that it is associated with a significant stage(s) in human history and that the property may have been prompted by that moment, or may reflect its impact. While the approach followed by the State Party to include caravanserais from different historical periods was intended to demonstrate their evolution over time, it is unclear how some of the caravanserais included in the series – and the period that they represent – reflect that evolution. The diagram included in the nomination dossier, illustrating the development of caravanserais throughout the history of Iran, states for instance that the Ilkhanid and Timurid periods reflected a continuation of Seljukid architecture and style. Other references in the nomination dossier state that the construction of caravanserais during the rule of the Afshar, Zand and Qajar dynasties can be considered as a continuation of the Safavids. More specifically, the nomination dossier mentions that during the reign of the Afshars and Zands, no major changes took place in the construction of caravanserais, but that the Safavid model was followed.

ICOMOS notes that thirty-one out of the fifty-six component parts (that is, more than half) reflect the Safavid period, which the nomination dossier refers to as the golden age of the construction of caravanserais in Iran. The professionals and scholars contacted by ICOMOS in its additional desk review consultation process supported this view.

As expressed in its Interim Report, and in line with paragraph 137 of the *Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, ICOMOS considers that the definition of clear links between the component parts is fundamental to avoid reducing a serial property to a mere catalogue of sites. The wide time range of the series reinforces this concern, in light of the lack of clear evidence as to how each component part can be said to illustrate the evolution of the caravanserai as an outstanding example of a type of building and how that typology may have been prompted by (a) significant stage(s) in human history. ICOMOS therefore recommends that the State Party focus the selection of the component parts around the Safavid period.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been demonstrated at this stage, due to the problems arising from the selection of the component parts of the series.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (ii) and (iii) have not been demonstrated and that criterion (iv) has not been justified at this stage.
Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the nominated property and its attributes. For a serial property this requires examining this at two levels: at the component parts’ level and for the nominated property as a whole.

At the component parts’ level, there are caravanserais that retain their original function as temporary accommodation and resting places for travellers for business or religious purposes, or tourism, as well as caravanserais that are presented as archaeological sites. Therefore, their integrity cannot be assessed in the same way. For the caravanserais that still retain their function (or at least aspects of it), their wholeness or physical integrity is ensured for most component parts; in some cases, this is partly because certain structural and architectural elements have been reconstructed in the past decades, using similar traditional materials and construction techniques. Based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, there are problems of physical integrity in three component parts: Tāj Ābād, Chameshkh and Yengeh Emām.

For the caravanserais presented as archaeological sites, their wholeness and intactness from a physical perspective cannot be considered in the same way. Therefore, it is essential to examine if there are adverse effects of development or neglect that can impact on their structural stability. While in the past, neglect led to the decay of some of the caravanserais (particularly those located in remote locations), based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, at present there are no major issues in this regard.

Some adverse effects of development were observed by the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission at several caravanserais; these effects mainly affect the setting of the component parts. Some examples include: the construction of a highway tunnel close to the Khoy caravanserai; the existence of modern structures around Borājān, and Jamāl Ābād; the presence of a fuel tank in close proximity to Maranjāb; and the presence of communication towers at Zeynodān; Sarāyān; Rashti; Neyestānak; Meybod; Maranjāb; and Deh Mohammad.

Assessing the conditions of the component parts also requires analysing if all the necessary elements are included within the boundary and if the area is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the component part’s significance. ICOMOS noted that the boundaries of each component part are drawn to include the area of the footprint of the caravanserai only. Therefore, in its request for additional information sent in September 2021, ICOMOS asked the State Party to clarify the reasons as to why the immediate setting and important related elements were not included within the boundaries of the component parts. The State Party did not provide any explanations related to the immediate setting; regarding the related elements, it clarified that only those elements that directly render services to each caravanserai have been included within the boundaries whereas those that may render services outside the caravanserais, for example the network of roads, were not included.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission observed that a number of important ancillary elements are not included within the boundaries of the component parts. For instance, the historic bridge constructed over a valley flood plain that connects the road to the entrance of the Īzadkhāst caravanserai. The watch tower located on the top of the hill next to this same component part is another example. The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission noticed another similar tower next to Chehel Pāyeh. These watch towers were constructed in order to protect these particular caravanserais, even if they were units within a much bigger network of defensive structures along travelling routes. Their exclusion from the boundaries of the nominated property is not justified and undermines the integrity of the component parts.

ICOMOS notes that in the nomination dossier, in the brief synthesis of the proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, it is stated that the locations and settings of the caravanserais were of paramount importance. Yet this is not reflected in the boundaries of the component parts. ICOMOS considers that the location and setting of each caravanserai was the determinant for its architectural design, for example in response to climatic conditions, availability of water or defence needs. For the caravanserais located outside cities, their location and relationship to the road must be considered as an important attribute. Urban caravanserais were usually located beside bazaars and they were related to commercial hubs of the city. These relationships must also be reflected in the boundaries of the component parts.

Consequently, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS noted that the boundaries of the component parts must include the immediate setting of the caravanserais which reflect the functional, spatial and environmental connections of the caravanserais with their rural or urban surroundings. Similarly, ancillary buildings that were determinants for the location and functioning of the caravanserais should also be included within the boundaries of the component parts.

Therefore, ICOMOS considers that the proposed boundaries of the component parts do not ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the significance of the nominated property, as required by paragraph 88 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The integrity of the property as a whole is also related to the choice and number of component parts included in the series. As analysed in relation to the comparative analysis, ICOMOS considers that the rationale for the selection of the component parts has not been sufficiently justified in relation to how each component part contributes to the
understanding of the evolution of the caravanserais of Iran as a distinct building typology.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated at this stage, and not all attributes are included in the boundaries of the component parts, integrity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, cannot be confirmed at this stage.

Authenticity

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of caravanserais must be analysed on the basis of whether the potential Outstanding Universal Value is truthfully and credibly expressed through their use and function, form and design, materials and substance, and location and setting.

The nomination dossier includes little information about the current uses of the component parts, with the exception of the ones that are preserved as archaeological sites. The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission gathered that a considerable number of caravanserais still receive religious pilgrims in a way that is not much different to pre-modern times. Among these, many have been adapted, or are being adapted, to a modern version of their original use and function, and have different degrees of alterations made to their form and design.

Adaptive re-use often requires that doors are opened up or bricked up and other changes are made to create toilets, kitchens and other modern conveniences. The more luxurious the accommodation the greater the loss in form and design the component part suffers. Mādar Shāh, which has functioned as a five star hotel since the 1960s, has seen the biggest changes in its form and design. Ganjali Khān has been adapted to function as a centre for traditional arts and crafts, which is not a great deviation from its original use and function since caravanserais historically were used by commercial caravans for the buying and selling of goods.

An important change in the use and function of the caravanserais is that stables are no longer needed. Stables are an essential part of the spatial distribution and architectural design of caravanserais. Water structures (e.g. qanats, collection points and water cisterns) are essential parts of, or closely related to, caravanserais. Some of the water structures continue to function today, particularly the ones in remote desert locations. Others are kept as historic relics.

In terms of form and design, it is difficult to determine to what extent past reconstructions and interventions were based on complete and detailed documentation and not conjecture; some of the photographic documentation included in the nomination dossier reinforces this concern. ICOMOS found that some of the caravanserais seem to have been heavily restored in the past and that a significant number have experienced some degree of reconstruction. Since those past interventions were carried out using traditional materials and following traditional building techniques, it is often not possible to distinguish the old and new parts. Likewise, traces of stratification on the structures are also very limited.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked the State Party to clarify if past reconstructions had influenced the selection of the component parts and asked for more information on how reconstruction is approached in the conservation guidelines prepared and used at present. The State Party replied that only a very small number of the caravanserais (or parts of them) were reconstructed in the past with a view to maintaining their integrity and authenticity and that historical documents and field evidence are available on this. It added that only the Yām caravanserai was reconstructed based on archaeological excavations and historical photographs, some of which were included in the additional information provided. As noted in its Interim Report, ICOMOS recalls that, based on paragraph 86 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances.

Based on the information gathered by the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, recent and ongoing conservation interventions follow good conservation practices with regards to differentiating new materials and substance from original ones as well as relying on earlier trusted documentation. However, the mission also noted that certain architectural and technical elements have been added to the Bastak caravanserai, which affect its integrity and authenticity.

Decorative elements that remain in caravanserais that are of high archaeological value have been preserved and presented with great attention to their authenticity. The authenticity of materials and substance of underground and lower parts of walls in all component parts are for the most part intact. As for the higher parts of walls and roofs, the authenticity of materials and substance differs greatly. The caravanserais that are in remote locations and were not in use for long periods have suffered from deterioration.

Most past interventions and present ones, with a very few exceptions, were carried out by traditional master builders using age-old techniques and choice of materials. However, it is not possible to say that traditional materials and craftsmanship have not been affected by contemporary building materials. Based on information from the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, it is understood that sometimes cement or hybrid mortars are used together with traditional lime mortars.

The locations and settings of the caravanserais in relation to different historic routes remain obvious and understandable. In remote areas historic roads remain in their original width and form as dirt roads. However, in many of the component parts located near villages, the built areas have expanded. For urban caravanserais, their setting remains largely the same as in the past.
Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated at this stage, authenticity for the whole nominated property as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, cannot be confirmed at this stage. ICOMOS also considers that the conditions of authenticity of the caravanserai of Yām, which has been significantly reconstructed, and of the caravanserais of Bastak and Mādar Shāh, which have undergone considerable alterations to their architectural designs, are not met.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have not been met at this stage.

**Boundaries**

There are no permanent inhabitants within the boundaries of the component parts. On the other hand, the population residing in the buffer zones varies considerably based on the location of the component parts – whether they are in an urban or rural area and whether they are located in a remote location.

Many of the issues related to the adequateness of the boundaries of the component parts have already been referred to in the integrity section of this evaluation report. ICOMOS considers that at present, the way the boundaries are drawn presents the caravanserais mainly as isolated architectural objects. ICOMOS considers that the locations and settings of the caravanserais are integral parts of their identity and must be included within the boundaries of the component parts. This applies to both urban and out-of-city caravanserais.

As for the inclusion of ancillary buildings within the boundaries of the component parts, ICOMOS considers that the systems developed for the provision of water must be taken into account, particularly considering the general aridity of the region, and their strategic character for both people and animals. This aspect of the caravanserais is insufficiently developed in the nomination dossier. The technical strategies for obtaining and distributing water allow better understanding of the environmental dynamics that shaped the design and location of the caravanserais on a landscape scale.

ICOMOS recalls that the Bisotūn caravanserai is included within the World Heritage property of Bisotun (Iran, criteria (ii), (iii)), inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS concludes that the rationale and process behind the selection of the component parts has not been sufficiently explained, particularly with regards to the comparison with other similar buildings and in relation to the justification for the choice made. The information provided does not clearly justify how each component part contributes to the understanding of the evolution of the caravanserais of Iran as a distinct building typology, in a substantial, readily defined and discernible way.

ICOMOS considers that, beyond the explanation that the caravanserais were associated with historical routes, the clear links between the fifty-six component parts that form the nominated property have not been sufficiently and comprehensibly justified beyond their typology. The delineation of the boundaries of the component parts does not include their immediate surroundings, which are an integral part of their identity. Together, these elements lead ICOMOS to conclude that the conditions of integrity are not demonstrated at this stage.

Regarding conditions of authenticity, ICOMOS notes that it is difficult to determine the extent to which past reconstructions and interventions were based on complete and detailed documentation. ICOMOS recognises that traditional materials and building techniques are still in use and are essential to the conservation of the nominated property. However, ICOMOS notes that some past reconstructions seem to have been undertaken because some of the caravanserais were abandoned and fell into decay, following the introduction of modern transportation systems, as is acknowledged in the nomination dossier. Such type of reconstructions must be distinguished from necessary consolidation and maintenance interventions over time.

In addition, since criteria (ii) and (iii) have not been demonstrated and that criterion (iv) has not been justified at this stage, authenticity as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, cannot be confirmed at this stage.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

All the component parts are mapped and recorded; plans, sections and elevations are available for each component part. The documentation is available on site or at the offices of the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts (IMCHTH) at the provincial level, and at the Persian Caravanserai Base in Tehran.

Detailed documentary and illustrative material of past interventions and reconstructions, allowing comparison of the state of conservation before and after, is available – some of which is included in the nomination dossier. However, ICOMOS notes with some concern that the documentation and research for ancillary buildings such as water cisterns, qanats and other separate historic elements, is not available for all component parts nor has the same level of information.

**Conservation measures**

Based on information gathered by the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, traditional building materials and craftsmanship are still largely used in all conservation practices. Since brick, which stands out as the main building material, can still be produced with traditional
techniques as it was centuries ago, replacement is preferred instead of prolonging the life of the material. However, as observed during the technical evaluation mission, sometimes cement or hybrid mortars are used together with traditional lime mortars. It was also observed that the quality of the interventions can vary from one project to the next; there are very comprehensive and detailed projects for some buildings while details are missing for others.

ICOMOS, in its first request for additional information sent in September 2021, asked the State Party to provide further information on the conservation procedures and documents that are to guide the conservation and maintenance works for the nominated property, and in particular, what conservation principles guide such works. The State Party explained that the prevailing approach to conservation and restoration practices includes: least intervention, adherence to restoration principles, and respect for the authenticity and integrity of a property (both in performance and in the use of construction materials), without further details. It added that the decisions about which interventions to undertake are generally taken by a technical council composed of traditional architects, master restoration experts and engineers. The State Party also explained that a number of conservation handbooks exist at the national level to guide such interventions.

According to the nomination dossier, all component parts have individual restoration plans. After ICOMOS’ enquiry about the content of such plans, the State Party explained that the structure of such plans consists of: studies, field work (documentation, monitoring, pathology), and planning (including detailed maps for interventions and associated timeframes and financial estimates). Samples of the illustrative material and other information included in this type of plan were also included.

Based on the observations of the technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party issues general guidelines for the adaptation of the caravanserais with regards to modern commercial and hospitality functions.

Monitoring
The monitoring programme included in the nomination dossier is structured around four elements: conservation and maintenance; research and education; tourism; and development.

In its request for additional information sent in September 2021, ICOMOS noted the high number of monitoring indicators identified. Therefore, it requested further information on how the data collected will be stored and shared among the different actors involved in the management system for the nominated property; in particular, how the information collected at each of the component parts will be aggregated to gather an overall understanding of the state of conservation of the whole nominated property and how such information will be used to inform future conservation and management decisions. The State Party responded that the monitoring information for each caravanserai is saved separately at the monitoring unit of IMCHTH provincial offices; some elements will be aggregated and then examined at the Persian Caravanserai Base by monitoring experts.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring programme may be too ambitious, in terms of the number of indicators identified and particularly the periodicity (that is, frequency) of data collection, given the considerable number of component parts. As it stands, the monitoring programme seems to be designed mainly at the component part level. Despite the additional information provided by the State Party, it remains unclear how the monitoring programme is to function for the nominated property as a whole. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that monitoring needs to be considerably strengthen in this regard.

ICOMOS considers that current documentation methods and conservation measures are adequate, although certain elements could be enhanced and further aligned with international conservation principles. The monitoring programme should be strengthened to facilitate data collection and aggregation to inform management decisions for the nominated property as a whole. It would also be advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
All component parts are registered on the National Cultural Heritage List. Therefore, they are protected by different legislative instruments, namely the Law for Protection of National Heritage (1930), the Bylaw Concerning Prevention of Unauthorized Excavation (1986), and the Law Concerning Acquisition of Land, Building and Premises for Protection of Historic Properties (1969).

Buffer zones are subject to regulations that prohibit any damaging or disturbing activity such as polluting industrial activities or garbage accumulation. Construction activities inside the buffer zone of the following component parts are forbidden: Abbās Ābād-Tāybād; Robāt-e Sharaf; Qelli; Maranjāb; Gabr Ābād; Deyr-e Gachin; Qasr-e Bahram; Šāeen; Chehel Pāyeh; Chāh Kūrān; Goujebel; Zeynoddin; Anjireh Ājor; Anjireh Sangi; and Bastak. Constructions in the buffer zones of other caravanserais are subject to height regulations. Changes in land-use of gardens and farmlands within the buffer zones of all component parts are prohibited.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection for all the component parts and their buffer zones is adequate. However, their effective implementation must be ensured. The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission observed that the construction of a modern mosque in the buffer zone of Sheikhal Khān had to be stopped by the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts (IMCHTH) due
to concerns of excessive height and unsuitable use of materials.

Management system
By law, the IMCHTH is the responsible authority for the conservation of all artistic, historical and cultural monuments and sites within the country. For the purpose of managing the nominated property, the IMCHTH has established the Persian Caravanserai Base, under the Deputy of Cultural Heritage. The work of the Persian Caravanserai Base is supported by two Committees – the Technical Committee and the Steering Committee – and by local (also called provincial) technical offices. ICOMOS, in its first request for additional information sent in September 2021, asked the State Party to provide further details on the role and responsibilities of each of these actors, within the overall management system of the nominated property. The information provided largely repeated what was already included in the nomination dossier.

The State Party explained that the Technical Committee is a consultant committee which provides advice about any technical details such as interventions or use of materials. Therefore, it consists of experienced specialists from various fields including restoration and conservation, tourism, handicrafts, anthropology, archaeology, road engineering, and architecture. The Steering Committee is composed of representatives of different institutions related to the management of the nominated property, namely from the IMCHTH, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Environment Protection Organization, the City Councils and Mayors, the Village Councils, the Iranian Endowment Organization as well as from NGOs and the private sector.

Regarding the local technical offices, the State Party explained that these are offices located in the provinces which are responsible for one or more of the caravanserais, operating under the supervision of the Persian Caravanserai Base. From the organigram submitted, ICOMOS understands that there are twenty-four such offices.

Given the complexity of these governance arrangements, ICOMOS also enquired about how the different actors coordinate their actions and transfer information between different administrative levels. The State Party explained that the different committees hold meetings on a regular basis. ICOMOS understands that such meetings are held monthly; however, this is unclear given the limited information provided. No details were provided about the coordination or the transfer of information between administrative levels.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS also enquired about the staff composition of the Persian Caravanserai Base and their competencies. Based on the information received, this is a team composed of fourteen professionals, whose roles are related to conservation, documentation, monitoring, maintenance, research, tourism and financial affairs.

Since the information about protection and management included in the nomination dossier was very limited, particularly for a serial nomination of this type with a large number of component parts, ICOMOS, in its request for supplementary information sent in September 2021, also asked for clarifications about the human capacity and financial resources available as well as the functioning of the planning framework.

The information about financial resources included in the nomination dossier was limited to a table related to the total funding available for maintenance, conservation and restoration for the period between 2016 and 2020. The State Party added that budget allocation for each caravanserai depends on the conservation priorities and the degree of significance of the conservation practices.

Regarding the planning framework, ICOMOS acknowledges that a management plan was submitted with the nomination dossier. However, its content largely reflects information included in the nomination dossier about the description of the nominated property, its history and development, legislative measures and governance arrangements. This management plan refers to an action plan divided into short-term plans (two years), middle-term plans (five years) and long-term plans (ten years). The information included about these plans is structured into ‘documentation and research’, ‘conservation and restoration’ and ‘tourism management, presentation, training and education’. However, this information is limited to what can be described as broad management objectives, some of which are repeated for the short-, medium- and long-term. Given the difficulty in understanding the articulation between these plans, ICOMOS asked the State Party about their nature and how they are articulated with the management plan. The State Party answered that the categorisation of the action plan to short-, medium- and long-term plans is based on the continuing nature of restoration and conservation plans for the caravanserais.

All caravanserais included in the nominated property have individual restoration plans. In addition, urban caravanserais (that is, those located within cities and villages) are taken into consideration in urban and rural master plans. The provisions included in those plans in relation to the caravanserais and their buffer zones should be approved by the IMCHTH. For out-of-city caravanserais, the IMCHTH has notified the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development about their boundaries.

Visitor management
The national plan for expanding tourism nationwide, titled Document 15-Years Development of the Tourism Industry in the I.R Iran, is considered as the upstream document for the tourism extension plans of all provinces. There is no specific tourism management strategy for the nominated property.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission observed that most component parts have a standard information panel with the name of the building, its history and significance in Persian and English, as well as a ground floor plan
identifying the different elements of the caravanserai. Caravanserais that are adapted to a modern hotel function have extra information boards and leaflets for their guests. Some component parts include in their interpretation and presentation information on local significant individuals or local crafts and characteristics of the locality, such as traditional handicrafts or typical plants.

Based on the nomination dossier, the State Party intends to develop a master tourism plan for caravanserais, which will include historical routes. ICOMOS considers that a tourism strategy for the nominated property is needed, that puts conservation at the centre of all proposed activities.

**Community involvement**

Based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, local communities are involved in the management of the component parts that are located in cities or within the vicinity of villages. In such cases, some members of the local communities are employed in different positions. In addition, some adaptive reuse projects aim to serve the community in a direct manner by allocating spaces within the component parts for local NGOs or for locally needed functions, such as a library, child care centre or a training centre. As the IMCHTH accumulates mandates for cultural heritage as well as tourism and handicrafts, management approaches for many component parts address these areas in an integrated manner.

**Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the management system for the nominated property, as a whole, needs to be strengthened. The delineation of the boundaries of the component parts does not include their immediate surroundings, which are an integral part of their identity, and therefore should be revised. While the legal provisions in place for the buffer zones contribute to protection of their immediate setting, ICOMOS considers this is not just a matter of protection and management but relates to the identification and wholeness of the individual component parts.

ICOMOS considers that the legislative measures are adequate, since all component parts are registered on the National Cultural Heritage List. The laws and regulations that apply to the buffer zones are adequate but need to be strictly enforced.

Adaptations to house modern functions should respect the architectural design of each caravanserai. ICOMOS recommends that the State Party issues general conservation guidelines for the adaptive re-use of the caravanserais but also on how to deal with modern amenities, such as air conditioning, communication towers, toilets and electric generators. ICOMOS considers that maintenance works should be carried out on a regular basis so that necessary interventions are kept to a minimum. All conservation works must be thoroughly documented and based, as much as possible, on the use of traditional building materials and techniques. Any kind of reconstruction should only be justified in exceptional circumstances, when no other options exist, on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation of the individual component parts is best guided, as it stands, by conservation plans. However, for the management of the nominated property as a whole, ICOMOS considers that the content of the management plan, as submitted, is not fit for purpose. Such a document should instead define clear management objectives for the nominated property, detail the governance arrangements and how the different actors coordinate their actions, define decision-making processes, outline the main management challenges and factors affecting the nominated property and include a detailed action plan, with concrete activities, covering areas such as interpretation, research, visitor management and disaster risk-management. This overall management plan for the property should have a clear timeframe, which is articulated with the duration of the individual conservation plans. ICOMOS considers that the content of these different plans must also be better integrated.

The monitoring programme for the nominated property as a whole also needs to be strengthened. Such a programme should be based on a clear, simple to measure and cost-effective set of indicators, in terms of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Given the dispersed geographical locations of the component parts, it is essential that this programme is supported by adequate information systems, which allow easy data aggregation and transmission across different administrative levels. The essential elements of this monitoring system should also be described in the overall management plan for the nominated property.

ICOMOS also notes that there is no information about a common interpretation and presentation for the whole property. According to the information gathered, no cultural routes or circuits have been formulated, developed or implemented to help visitors and tourists to gain a comprehensive understanding of the property as a whole.

**6 Conclusion**

Paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention requires that serial properties include component parts related by clearly defined links, and that each component part contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property as a whole in a substantial, scientific, readily defined and discernible way. ICOMOS considers that, beyond the explanation that caravanserais were associated with historical routes, the clear links between the fifty-six component parts that form the nominated property have not been sufficiently and comprehensibly justified beyond their typology. ICOMOS notes that the historical routes were not the same across the timeframe of almost two millennia reflected by the series as proposed, but varied over time. ICOMOS considers that...
what needed to be clearly explained is how the fifty-six component parts, which comprise the nominated property, are connected.

ICOMOS considers that the process followed to exclude other caravanserais before the final number of fifty-six component parts was reached remains unclear. Hence, it is not possible to assess if the caravanserais proposed are indeed the most representative, in the absence of information about the other caravanserais. ICOMOS considers that the application of selection criteria identified by the State Party has not been applied systematically. For example, whilst the State Party explained that authenticity was a consideration for the selection of the component parts, ICOMOS notes that some of the caravanserais selected have been considerably reconstructed in the past. ICOMOS also considers that it has not been sufficiently explained how each component part contributes to the understanding of the evolution of the caravanserais of Iran as a distinct building typology.

ICOMOS further considers that it has not been sufficiently justified how the Persian Caravanserai could be understood to represent a distinct building typology. Instead, ICOMOS believes that it would be more correct to speak of the caravanserais of Iran. In this regard and in line with the requirements of criterion (iv), the nominated property must illustrate a significant stage in human history, in an outstanding way. ICOMOS considers that the approach taken by the State Party to include caravanserais from different historical periods – intended to demonstrate the evolution of the caravanserais over time – undermines the potential justification for criterion (iv). Instead, as the nomination dossier and the information collected by ICOMOS through its desk review consultation shows, it is the Safavid period, considered to be the golden age of caravanserai construction in Iran, and meeting the conditions of integrity and authenticity, that is to say excluding the caravanserais of Yām and Mādar Shāh;

ICOMOS notes that thirty-one out of the fifty-six component parts (that is, more than half) reflect the Safavid period. However, two caravanserais, Yām and Mādar Shāh, dating from this period, do not meet conditions of authenticity and would need to be excluded from a revised series.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that further work is needed to refocus the proposed justification for Outstanding Universal Value on the caravanserais as outstanding examples of historic roadside inns, during the Safavid dynasty, when a great number of caravanserais were constructed between the main cities, in order to justify criterion (iv);

• Refocus the justification for inscription on the caravanserais as outstanding examples of historic roadside inns, during the Safavid period, considered to be the golden age of caravanserai construction in Iran, and meeting the conditions of integrity and authenticity, that is to say excluding the caravanserais of Yām, and Mādar Shāh;

• Revise the boundaries of the component parts to include the immediate surroundings of the caravanserais and important ancillary buildings related to each;

• Strengthen the monitoring programme for the nominated property as a whole to include clear management objectives, detail the governance arrangements and how the different actors coordinate their actions, define decision-making processes, and include a disaster risk-preparedness, a comprehensive interpretation, and tourism strategies for all component parts;

• Strengthen the management plan for the nominated property as a whole to include a clear, simple to measure and cost-effective set of indicators in terms of data collection, analysis and interpretation, and which allow the easy aggregation of data and transmission across different administrative levels.

ICOMOS further recommends that the name of the property be changed to reflect the revised focus of the justification for inscription and reduced series.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Issuing general guidelines for the adaptation of the caravanserais with regards to modern commercial and hospitality functions,
b) Ensuring that laws and regulations that apply to the buffer zones are strictly enforced,

c) Undertaking maintenance work on a regular basis so that necessary interventions are kept to a minimum, and respecting international conservation principles and good conservation practice;
Gaya Tumuli
(Republic of Korea)
No 1666

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Gaya Tumuli

Location
Daeseong-dong Tumuli
Gimhae City
Marisan Tumuli
Haman County
Okjeon Tumuli
Hapcheon County
Gyeongsangnam-do Province

Jisan-dong Tumuli
Goryeong County
Gyeongsangbuk-do Province

Songhak-dong Tumuli
Goseong County
Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli
Changnyeong County
Gyeongsangnam-do Province

Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli
Namwon City
Jeollabuk-do Province

Republic of Korea

Brief description
Gaya Tumuli is a serial nomination that includes seven archaeological cemetery sites with burial mounds attributed to the Gaya Confederacy, which developed in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula from the 1st to the mid-6th century CE. Through their geographical distribution and landscape characteristics, types of burials, and grave goods, the nominated cemeteries attest to the distinctive Gaya political system in which affiliated polities existed as autonomous political equals while sharing cultural commonalities. The shared development of tumuli by Gaya polities benefited from the systematic trading network that closely linked the Gaya confederacy through diverse ocean, land, and river routes. The introduction of new forms of tombs and the intensification of the spatial hierarchy evident in the seven tumuli sites clearly reflect the structural changes experienced by Gaya society during its history.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of seven sites.

Included in the Tentative List
28 January 2019

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 23 September to 3 October 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 6 October 2021 requesting further information about the Gaya Society in general terms, the selection of component parts, the private ownership, the legal protection, planned developments, monitoring, and the participation of local communities.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 15 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the selection of component parts, the excavation and exhibition of objects and the protection of the sites.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The Gaya Tumuli is a serial property consisting of seven cemeteries created by members of the Gaya Confederacy, which developed from the 1st through the mid-6th century in the southern section of the Korean Peninsula. The seven nominated cemeteries are: (01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli, (02) Marisan Tumuli, (03) Okjeon Tumuli, (04) Jisan-dong Tumuli, (05) Songhak-dong Tumuli, (06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli, and (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli.
Through the geographical distribution of the component sites, the landscape settings of the cemeteries, the types of burial constructions, and grave goods, the nominated property attests to the distinctive Gaya political system in which affiliated polities existed as autonomous political equals while sharing cultural commonalities. The Gaya Confederacy responded flexibly to political shifts in ancient East Asia and contributed to maintaining the balance of power in the region by cooperating internally and taking part in exchanges with neighbouring States.

The seven nominated cemeteries are the burial grounds for the leaders of seven Gaya polities that developed independently across the southern Korean Peninsula. The cemeteries are all located on elevated terrain at the centre of a polity and have densely clustered tombs constructed over a long period of time. This dispersion of monumental and elaborate tomb clusters manifests shared funerary practices and testifies to the existence of multiple powerful and autonomous polities sharing the same culture.

The nominated cemeteries all feature a particular kind of stone-lined burial chamber and have produced a distinctive form of pottery, known as the Gaya type stone-lined chamber burial and Gaya-style pottery. These commonalities contribute to identifying the territorial bounds of the Gaya Confederacy. Individual variations can still be found within these two indicators, allowing the boundaries of each polity to be identified and testifying to their political autonomy. Other grave goods, such as iron weapons, reflect similar levels of military power, and trade goods imported into and exchanged within the Gaya Confederacy demonstrate how the seven polities existed as political equals and maintained a level of internal parity. This political organisation contrasts with the contemporaneous political entities in East Asia that had clearly centralised structures.

The area of the seven component parts totals 189 ha, with buffer zones totalling 964.8 ha.

Additional information on the Gaya Confederacy was requested by ICOMOS in October 2021. The State Party supplied information on the history of research on the Gaya Confederacy, the process of the spatial definition of the seven Gaya entities, the selection of the component parts of the nomination and the dating of the cemeteries. Further information was also provided about the private ownership, the legal protection, planned developments, monitoring, and the participation of local communities. In its Interim report, ICOMOS requested the State Party to further explain how the different sub-entities have been defined, what attributes or combination of attributes are used to identify a cemetery or a grave as belonging to one or another sub-entity. The detailed response improved the understanding of how the nominated property component parts were identified as the cemeteries of the leaders of the seven Gaya entities and what made them stand out from the other cemeteries (in quantitative and qualitative terms).

State of conservation

The generally hilly topography of the component parts has helped to protect the sites from urban development, which remained concentrated in the plains. Archaeological excavation has been kept to a minimum and performed only when absolutely required for academic or conservation purposes. Tombs archaeologically studied in the early 20th century undergo a process of re-excavation in cases where concerns exist about the structural stability of the burial facilities or the aboveground mounds. All these recent excavations within the nominated property have been thoroughly recorded and published so that their findings can be widely used as baseline data for academic study.

After tombs have been excavated, the pit is backfilled using the soil and stones removed from it. Mounds are rebuilt over the burial to the height and circumference of the original construction, as confirmed by the archaeological research. Grass is planted over the burial mound and in the surrounding areas to prevent soil erosion. Footpaths for visitors have been established on most of the sites.

Due to urban development in the past, most of the buffer zones of the component parts include some additional built elements, such as residential areas, apartment towers, school buildings, a theme park, religious facilities, county offices, power lines, roads or the alteration of the topography. At the (04) Jisan-dong Tumuli component part, the Daegaya Royal Tombs Exhibition Hall was constructed in 2000 within the boundary. In general, the State Party is in the process of removing or mitigating the impact of these elements. In some cases, trees screening out the view of intrusive buildings in the buffer zone or setting have been planted. At component part (04) Jisan-dong Tumuli a tunnel-bridge was built to reduce the impact of a road built in the 1910s; and a more recent and very busy road divides the (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli component part. At the (02) Marisan Tumuli heavy rains caused soil erosion in the buffer zone and a stormwater drain was installed.

In some component parts ((02) Marisan Tumuli and (03) Okjeon Tumuli) tombs suffered collapses due to previous excavations or looting trenches. These tumuli are progressively re-excavated and restored.

At all component parts, except (01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli, modern graves are located inside the boundary. Their removal is in progress, but it is a complicated and lengthy process.

Some component parts ((06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli and (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli) contain privately-owned plots of land that are used for agriculture. Other component parts ((03) Okjeon Tumuli and (06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli) are in need of tree removal. Vegetation management plans have been established in consultation with experts for six of the nominated cemeteries. For the remaining cemetery, the (6) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli, a plan is under
preparation. After removing unwanted vegetation, grass is planted in the topsoil to prevent soil loss. Especially in or near wooded areas, animals like wild boars and moles can also cause damage to the tumuli. In response, facilities to prevent wild animals from accessing the tombs are being developed.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the component sites is good.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are linked to urban development that took place before the component parts were protected under the current law. The road at (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli is the most significant factor affecting the property, but the State Party has signalled that a solution is being sought. The privately-owned lands within the component parts are generally used for agriculture or as grave sites. While these uses do not seem to pose a direct threat, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party continue its efforts to acquire these areas.

As mentioned above, some intrusive buildings are located within the buffer zones and the State Party is proposing to relocate all public buildings outside the buffer zones. Privately owned buildings are more difficult to remove, but the municipal governments are actively encouraging residents to move outside the buffer zones. Any future development of privately-owned buildings must adhere to legislated height restrictions.

Other threats, especially in or near wooded areas, are linked to fire, vegetation growth (especially trees) and the activities of wild animals. Soil erosion, due to heavy rainfall, is also considered to be a potential threat.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good and that factors affecting the nominated property are urban development that occurred before the beginning of the legal protection of the property. These are being addressed by the State Party. The most urgent factor affecting the property is the road within the (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli site.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The seven Gaya cemeteries provide eloquent information on this ancient Korean culture and its distinctive political system, a confederacy, which distinguishes it from other centralised East Asian polities.
- The seven cemeteries are all found in highly visible hilltop locations in the political centre of their respective polities, expressing the authority and power of the ruling class and nurturing a sense of belonging among the communities in the surrounding areas. The cemeteries include densely clustered tombs constructed over an extended period of time.
- The Gaya entities are differentiated from surrounding groups by the unique Gaya-type stone-lined elongated burial chamber topped with a circular burial mound made by alternating layers of soil with different qualities.
- The objects located in the high-status graves, especially the Gaya-style pottery found in all seven cemeteries, also testify to the cohesion of the Gaya Confederacy and mark its boundaries. Local variations highlight the autonomy of each one of the Gaya polities and help to mark the internal boundaries. The similar levels of wealth and external connections displayed through the burial goods indicate that the seven entities were political equals.

Based on the nomination dossier the key attributes of the nominated property are the spatial distribution and highly visible locations (hilltops and ridges), the burial mounds with the Gaya-type stone-lined elongated burial chambers and the grave offerings that denote very high social status, unity (e.g. Gaya-style pottery) and autonomy (different trade relations).

The argument developed in the nomination dossier and further supported by the additional information is coherent and based on well-founded investigations. ICOMOS recommends that the differences between the archaeological record left by the Gaya Confederacy and the centralised neighbouring entities be explored more thoroughly in future research that includes quantitative and qualitative data as well as analysis of spatial distribution. This could further highlight the specific status of the confederacy.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed around the following parameters: geographical distribution, location or setting, types of burial, and grave goods. It has examined properties within the region inscribed on the World Heritage List (13), and inserted in the Tentative Lists (2) of States Parties in East Asia. One other property nor on the World Heritage List or Tentative Lists was included.
The selected comparators represent tomb clusters and individual tombs inscribed or proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List under criterion (iii) by itself or in combination with other criteria. The properties are located in the Republic of Korea (5), China (6), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (2) and Japan (3). After excluding properties that are different in terms of the date of construction or their attributes, the comparison concentrated on six sites: the Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Koguryo Kingdom (China, 2004, criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v)), the Complex of Koguryo Tombs (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, 2004, criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)), the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan (Japan, 2019, criteria (iii) and (iv)), the Baekje Historic Areas (Republic of Korea, 2015, criteria (ii) and (iii), particularly the Sungsan-ri Tombs and the Neungsan-ri Tombs), and the Gyeongju Historic Areas (Republic of Korea, 2000, criteria (ii) and (iii), particularly, the Tumuli Park Belt and the Mount. Namsan Belt). Another site, not inscribed on the World Heritage List that was included in the comparative analysis was the Seokchon-dong Tombs, an ancient cemetery in the Republic of Korea. All of these tombs were for political leaders of centralised East Asian states contemporaneous with Gaya.

It is stated that tombs constructed in the Three Kingdoms of Korea (Goguryeo (Koguryo), Baekje, and Silla) and in Japan over the 1st through the 6th centuries attest to political centralisation and to a hierarchical relationship between the centre and the periphery. The comparison of the geographical distribution, location, types of burial, and grave goods of these sites with the nominated property demonstrates that the Gaya polities shared cultural commonalities but, in contrast to the other centralised political entities, maintained their individual autonomy and equitable relations and did not coalesce into a larger state. Gaya maintained a federated political system throughout its history, while responding flexibly to the political shifts taking place around East Asia and contributing to maintaining the balance of power within the region. The seven cemeteries are nominated as exceptional testimony to this distinctive political system. ICOMOS considers that the argument put forth by the State Party is adequate. The Gaya Tumuli bear exceptional testimony to Gaya, a unique ancient East Asian civilisation that coexisted with its more strongly centralised neighbours but maintained a distinct federated political system.

ICOMOS considers that the argument developed by the State Party is adequate. The Gaya Tumuli bear exceptional testimony to Gaya, a unique ancient East Asian civilisation that coexisted with its more strongly centralised neighbours but maintained a distinct federated political system.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

**Criteria under which inscription is proposed**

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii).

**Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;**

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Gaya polities are organised in a confederacy, unlike the other contemporaneous East Asian political entities that are centralised.

ICOMOS considers that this property for the World Heritage List.

**Integrity and authenticity**

**Integrity**

Since the focus of this nomination is the existence of a confederacy of different polities of the Gaya culture, the evaluation of the property’s integrity is based on the inclusion of all the elements necessary to support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and the protection of the selected sites.

The boundaries of the component parts of the property contain the tombs and their settings, including the hilly areas in which they are located. The delineated sites are large enough to demonstrate the topographical and spatial characteristics of the nominated property and the process of its development.

Even though there are no written records from the Gaya culture itself, texts from other contemporaneous or later cultures describe the existence of a group of small polities in the southern portion of the Korean Peninsula from the 1st through the mid-6th century that loosely united to form a greater political entity known as Gaya. Archaeological remains of the culture known today include shell mounds, residential areas, and burial sites, with the latter sites...
being the largest in number and the most thoroughly researched group of remains. No detailed reference is made to any of the other types of sites in the nomination dossier. Research at approximately 780 burial grounds as well as the historical records point towards the existence of seven polities belonging to the Gaya Confederacy: Geumgwangaya, Aragaya, Daraguk, Daegaya, Sogaya, Gimunguk, and Bihwagaya. The State Party states that the seven component sites comprising this nomination are each located in what used to be the political centre of the pertinent Gaya polity. It is also argued that the seven cemeteries represent all stages of development in Gaya burial traditions and bear witness to the extent of Gaya culture and influence.

ICOMOS considers that the impacts of intrusive built elements (e.g. roads, graves, modern buildings) within the component parts or their buffer zones are being addressed by the State Party.

The comprehension of the Gaya society as a whole would benefit from the inclusion of data from other types of Gaya archaeological sites (e.g. shell mounds, residential areas and commoner graves) as contextual information. Nevertheless, the cemeteries selected by the State Party support the argument for the Outstanding Universal Value and can be considered without this further contextual information. For that reason, ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series as well as the integrity of each of the component parts has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

In the case of the Gaya Tumuli the State Party has concentrated the archaeological excavations on sites that needed intervention for reasons of conservation. When a damaged mound is identified, it is excavated and the mound, the burial chamber and the grave goods are recorded. Afterwards the structural remains are reburied and the mound is reconstructed, if sufficient information could be gathered to do so in an authentic manner. The excavated artefacts from the sites are recorded, conserved and stored by the relevant institutions. The archaeological explorations are conducted by expert institutions and the resulting data is published. Repair work at the nominated properties is only conducted by licensed heritage conservators.

The tumuli on the hills were constructed to be viewed from the residential areas below. While there were changes in the wider setting of the cemeteries, due to urban development, the location and topography of the sites themselves have changed little, presenting generally the same aspect as at the time of their construction. A threat to the authenticity of these views is the growth of trees on some of the cemeteries that obscure the tumuli. However, the State Party is in the process of addressing this problem.

ICOMOS considers that the condition of authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts in terms of the form, material, design, substance, location and setting have been met.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

Boundaries

The proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the Gaya Tumuli is linked to the high-status burials of the seven Gaya polities. Archaeological test pits and, in some cases, geophysical surveys were used to identify the areas with graves. The boundaries for each component part were chosen to incorporate the area of burials and the extent of the raised landform upon which they are located. They are also designed to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the property. Nobody lives within the boundaries of the component parts.

On site, the boundaries are marked by fences (e.g. (05) Songhak-dong Tumuli), stormwater drains (e.g. (05) Songhak-dong Tumuli, (06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli), or small red flags and rope fences (e.g. (01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli). In some cases, the component parts can be accessed from several points (e.g. (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli).

The buffer zones are defined to ensure the integrated protection of the component parts and their settings. The boundaries of the buffer zones have been established in accordance with the perimeters of surrounding natural features, such as ridges and rivers, as well as the limits of artificial structures such as roads and housing. The area comprising the buffer zones is also subject to government protection under the Cultural Heritage Protection Act and other pertinent laws. The buffer zones surround the property to ensure that activities in the adjacent areas will not negatively impact the proposed Outstanding Universal Value (e.g. through urban development). In the case of the Gaya Tumuli an important objective of the buffer zones is to maintain the visibility of the mounds. Due to the fact that some of the component parts are located in densely populated areas, the number of inhabitants of the buffer zones reached 39,719 in 2019. For the single components this number varies between 177 ((06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli) and 17,889 ((01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli) inhabitants. Apart from the buffer zones a 500 met radius from the outer boundary of the Heritage Area is designated a Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Area with different levels of development control. The buffer zones of the nominated cemeteries are mainly encompassed within the Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Areas.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated areas and the buffer zones are adequate.
Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the rationale for the selection of component parts has been established, and the comparative analysis together with the justification of criterion (iii) support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. No problems that are not being addressed already by the State Party have been detected concerning the integrity and authenticity of the property.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

There are no surviving historical records that reveal the full history of Gaya. However, there are fragments of information about the historical entity of Gaya that can be found in documents from contemporaneous or later states in East Asia.

The archaeological investigation of the Gaya Tumuli started in 1910 under Japanese rule. Several books were published on the subject and the National Museum of Korea holds more than 30,000 glass plates showing Korean historic sites. After the end of the colonial rule archaeological research was reinitiated in the 1970s and intensified in the 1980s. In the 1990s museums were built close to some of the Gaya sites, and in the 2000s the increased use of archaeometric methods enhanced the knowledge of the Gaya culture. The State Party highlights that all excavations at the nominated property have been thoroughly recorded and published, in order for the findings to be used as baseline data for academic study. Records on the management, conservation, monitoring, and repair activities that have taken place at the nominated property are also preserved.

At the moment the majority of the documentation seems to be distributed between the different institutions and organisations involved in the research, maintenance and management of the different component parts of the property. The conservation team of the Gaya Tumuli Conservation and Management Foundation (to be established after inscription) will be tasked to establish centralised archives of materials on the Gaya Tumuli.

Conservation measures

The State Party has established national standards on tomb management, contained in the Tumuli Conservation and Management Manual (2011) and the Act on Protection and Inspection of Buried Cultural Heritage (2010, revised 2019). The principles established in these documents have been used to develop site-specific Comprehensive Maintenance Plans (CMP) (or Comprehensive Conservation Management Plans (CCMP)) for each of the component cemeteries. The English versions of these documents do not exist, but they are considered to be detailed and fit for purpose. Revision of each CMP is periodically undertaken and the oldest plan is from 2013 ((02) Marisan Tumuli). The State Party commits to a three-yearly revision of each CMP.

In general, the principle of minimal intervention is applied at the sites. When necessary, e.g. due to deteriorating conditions, conservation activities are paired with archaeological investigation and documentation. In situ archaeological features are not left exposed. Remains are reburied and, if enough information was available, the mound over the burial is reconstructed and covered with grass.

The settings of the tumuli are conserved by actively pursuing the removal of intrusive elements from the buffer zones (e.g. modern structures and infrastructure) or the property (private modern graves, agricultural uses). In order to re-establish the visibility of the tumuli and avoid damage caused by root growth, trees and invasive vegetation are carefully removed from the properties (e.g. (03) Okjeon Tumuli, and (06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli). When trees are cut down, their stumps are left to rot naturally in the ground to ensure minimal impact to subsurface deposits. As a result, this process can take several decades.

Other activities concentrate on the prevention of soil erosion and the enhancement of rainwater drainage. In case of damages the local governments respond in accordance with the respective Heavy Rain Response Manuals.

In agreement with the Cultural Heritage Protection Act, the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) and the pertinent local governments are making various institutional efforts at effectively preventing and responding to fires, e.g. fire-prevention drills and training programmes are held regularly.

The financial resources required for the management and protection of the nominated property are provided by both the CHA and the pertinent local governments. The funds are used in accordance with the CMPs. The management of the burial goods excavated from the cemeteries is funded by the annual budgets of the national and local museums holding them in their collections.

Generally speaking, the CMPs lay out the responsibility of the local governments for daily maintenance and management measures at each site, including dedicated on-site staff, monitoring protocols, and the ongoing implementation of the site’s conservation strategies. The CMPs provide sufficient flexibility for the site managers to implement important management measures on a day-to-day basis.

Monitoring

The Cultural Heritage Administration's (CHA) National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage conducts surveys of the seven cemeteries and other Historic Sites every three years in accordance with the Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Article 44). The pertinent municipal governments and associated museums carry out daily or regular monitoring activities. The World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli also conducts regular monitoring of the seven nominated cemeteries to support their integrated management. As part of its efforts to further engage local
Based on the observations and judgments of the personnel State Party include the installation of moisture probes in surface, or elevation. Other options being considered by the software designed to identify change in vegetation, ground imagery of the site, which will then be interrogated by the nominated property.

Soil acidity.

Tumuli to identify potential landslip, or equipment to monitor implementing the monitoring. While modern technology is used (dedicated CCTV facilities with motion tracking, movement sensors, high-resolution video) most of the monitoring processes are based on the observations and judgments of the personnel implementing the monitoring.

The State Party stresses that the indicators developed by the World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli are closely related to the proposed attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity, and integrity of the nominated property.

While modern technology is used (dedicated CCTV facilities with motion tracking, movement sensors, high-resolution video) most of the monitoring processes are based on the observations and judgments of the personnel implementing the monitoring.

The State Party is currently exploring options for making the monitoring process more objective. For example, an automatic drone monitoring programme is being established for (02) Marisan Tumuli, where the drones will make hourly flights across the site, capturing high-definition imagery of the site, which will then be interrogated by software designed to identify change in vegetation, ground surface, or elevation. Other options being considered by the State Party include the installation of moisture probes in tumuli to identify potential landslip, or equipment to monitor soil acidity.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring activities have supported the good state of conservation of the selected component parts. However, it is necessary to integrate the monitoring efforts at all the component sites as soon as possible. Furthermore, it seems necessary to develop quantifiable indicators (e.g. on soil movements, changes in soil acidity, number of rodent burrows, etc.) that are directly linked to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value but do not depend solely on the perceptions of staff members or experts. ICOMOS also recommends that the monitoring system is revised for easy integration of outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

In 1962, the Cultural Heritage Protection Act (CHP Act) was enacted as a framework law for heritage protection (last reviewed in 2020), laying a legal foundation for government-led research and conservation of heritage sites and artefacts.

All seven component parts are designated Heritage Areas with the title "Historic Site" under the CHP Act. Any activities within a Heritage Area that have the potential to impact its state of conservation are severely restricted and may only take place after review by the Cultural Heritage Committee of the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) and approval by the head of the CHA.

Under the same legislation another layer of protection is added by designating a Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Area, defined through consultation between the CHA and the pertinent local governments. In consideration of the historic, artistic, academic, and landscape importance of the Heritage Area, the additional conservation area is defined to include a 500 metres radius from the outer boundary of the Heritage Area. This additional protection area can be subdivided into zones with nine different protection levels, a set of development restrictions called “standards for permitting the alteration of the current state of heritage”. Special emphasis is given to height restrictions for new constructions and renovations of existing buildings.

All archaeological sites in the Republic of Korea fall under the Act on Protection and Inspection of Buried Cultural Heritage, which regulates when archaeological research can be undertaken (only at sites of the greatest academic significance or those that need emergency conservation interventions).

The Act on Cultural Heritage Maintenance (2010; reviewed in 2020) regulates maintenance, repair, and restoration projects at the nominated property.

Should the property be inscribed on the World Heritage List, it will also be protected by the Special Act on World Heritage Conservation, Management and Utilization (2021). This national law was developed in order to embed the requirements of the World Heritage Convention within the domestic legal framework. For the nominated property this means that all nominated component parts would be protected as a State Designated Heritage Area, overruling any previous and potentially smaller Heritage Area. The same will be true for the implementation of a 500 metres Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Area, regardless of the original size of the buffer zones. The law also sets out provisions on the promotion of international collaboration in the World Heritage area, establishment of a national World Heritage plan, implementation of regular surveys and monitoring, compiling of World Heritage databases, founding of steering committees, and setting up of a process for collecting local opinions. The law provides financial support for the management of the nominated

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property and prescribes the participation of local residents and other stakeholders in its conservation.

Additional ordinances and guidelines concerning the protection and management of the nominated property have been drawn up by the pertinent local governments and the CHA based on national laws. Other national laws affecting the nominated property include the National Land Planning and Utilization Act (2002; 2019), the Forest Protection Act (2009; 2020), and the Framework Act on the Management of Disasters and Safety (2004; 2020).

The nominated component parts are mostly under state ownership, and only a small portion is owned privately (14.57% in total, with the largest percentage of non-government owned land at the (03) Okjeon Tumuli component [42%]). The State Party advises that the land plots in private ownership are legally protected to the same degree as those in state ownership. Furthermore, the process of acquisition of the privately-owned plots is advancing, depending on the availability of funds. The buffer zones are mainly comprised of privately-owned land plots, but are protected as Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Areas that avoid uncontrolled development.

While looting seems to have been a problem in the past (as several looting trenches indicate), since the introduction of more severe penalties in the Cultural Heritage Protection Act in 1973 robberies have gradually diminished to reach almost none at present. This is probably also assisted by the CCTV coverage at the nominated component parts.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated property is adequate. The additional information supplied by the State Party in February 2022 added important information and more details on legal protection and showed how the legislation evolved in order to avoid damages to undetected sites or features by introducing legislation for the compulsory excavation of a building site prior to the initiation of construction in the 2000s. Current efforts are made to include Heritage Impact Assessments into the domestic legal protection system. Furthermore, the new World Heritage law (the Special Act on World Heritage Conservation, Management and Utilization, enacted in 2021), which will apply to the nominated property if it is inscribed on the World Heritage List, is designed to integrate World Heritage conservation principles and methods into domestic laws. ICOMOS recommends that the State Party should continue the process of acquisition of privately-owned lands and provide updated information.

Management system
The World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli was established in 2017. The Nomination Office consists of three sections: the Nomination Committee, a deliberation and decision-making organ; the Advisory Committee, which comprises experts in heritage conservation and utilisation; and the Secretariat. The Secretariat is made up of researchers and civil servants seconded from pertinent provincial governments.

As the cemeteries included in the nomination are all designated Heritage Areas at the national level, the role of supervising the protection and management of the property falls to the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA), which is the central government agency in charge of heritage conservation in the Republic of Korea. This administrative branch prepares the broadest level of plans for the conservation of cultural heritage: the five-year Master Plan for Heritage Conservation, Management, and Utilization (2017-2021) and the Medium and Long-term Comprehensive Research Plan of the Gaya Area (2019).

Based on these plans, the pertinent municipal governments, in close consultation with the provincial governments, draw up a Comprehensive Maintenance Plan (CMP) for each nominated cemetery, which has to be revised and approved by the CHA. Following the CMPs, the municipal governments then carry out on-site conservation activities. The activities at the sites are also directed by the existing manuals elaborated by the CHA: the Tumuli Conservation and Management Manual (2011), the Research on Tumuli Repair and Conservation Principles (2011), and the Repair Guidelines for Historic Sites (2011).

In the additional information supplied by the State Party in February 2022 the processes of conservation treatments, inventorisation, storage, management and public display of archaeological finds is detailed. Archaeological research as well as conservation and restoration efforts for the nominated property component parts are carried out by licensed groups and individuals, focused on maintaining the authenticity and integrity of the property. A report on the archaeological excavation has to be filed at the latest two years after its completion. Burial goods from the cemeteries are vested with the State and housed at museums and other research institutes. Part of the report mentioned above is an inventory of the excavated objects, entered into the Electronic Administration System for Cultural Heritage, a centralised online platform established by the CHA in 2011 for facilitating cooperation and sharing of information among the central government, local governments, and private partners such as archaeological research institutes. The management of the burial goods excavated from the cemeteries is funded by the annual budgets of the national and local museums holding them in their collections.

Disaster-prevention facilities have been installed at each component part, especially in preparation for forest fires and strong rains. All of the relevant organisations are linked in a network in order to facilitate cooperation. Heritage interpretation and monitoring activities at the cemeteries are carried out with the participation of local residents.

The CHA, together with the pertinent local governments, provides the financial resources required for the management and protection of the nominated property. Following the guidance provided by the Comprehensive Maintenance Plans the funds are used for carrying out such activities as purchasing plots of land currently under
private ownerships, implementing repair projects, and conducting academic research. The budget estimated until 2023 includes an annual rate of increase of five percent based on the 2020 budget.

At a more general level, the heritage protection and management are articulated with national land and tourism development plans prepared by the national government. Based on these federal plans, urban and tourism development plans have been prepared at the provincial level, which in turn provide a basis for relevant plans at the municipal level. In case of conflict between these development plans with the Cultural Heritage Protection Act the latter takes priority in all matters concerning the protection and management of the nominated property.

If the nominated property is inscribed on the World Heritage List, the World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli will be converted into the Gaya Tumuli Conservation and Management Foundation in order to improve the capacity for the implementation of the integrated management plan. This step is stipulated in the Special Act on the Conservation, Management, and Utilization of World Heritage (2021) as well as in the provincial and municipal ordinances on World Heritage.

The National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (the research branch of the CHA), the Korean National University of Cultural Heritage (the educational branch of the CHA), the National Museum of Korea, the Heritage Repair Association, and the Korea Cultural Heritage Association offer the expertise and training required for the management and conservation of the nominated property. Staffing levels at the component parts range from a minimum of sixteen ((05) Songhak-dong Tumuli) to a maximum of forty-one ((01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli).

ICOMOS considers that the management system effectively integrates the different levels of government, making coordinated action possible. While the management system is sufficient to ensure a common vision is shared by all actors, it allows for local differences. The planning instruments are already being implemented successfully at different levels of government and have proven to be useful tools in the effort to protect the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Improvements, for example the inclusion of Heritage Impact Assessment processes in the legislation, are foreseen in the future.

Visitor management
The annual average number of combined visitors to the seven nominated cemeteries from 2015 to 2019 was around 650,000. Visitor facilities and infrastructure at the nominated component parts can be classified into five categories (specified in the Guidelines on the Design of Public Spaces at Cultural Heritage, prepared by the CHA in 2011). The visitor facilities established at the nominated cemeteries have the capacity to accommodate not only the current number of visitors, but also the number estimated in case of inscription (calculated at about 1.6 million annually). However, at present, there is a clear concentration of tourists at three of the component parts ((01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli, (02) Marisan Tumuli, and (04) Jisan-dong Tumuli), which together account for more than 85% of all visitors to the nominated property. ICOMOS recommends that the State Party consider the future development of strategies to promote the other sites, in order to disperse the visitor levels more evenly.

Community involvement
The Gaya period is an important part of Korean history, and children are taught about Gaya culture in school. Local residents at the nominated component parts are both proud and knowledgeable about the period.

In each of the seven municipal-level localities, a residents' council, sometimes referred to as 'Gaya Guardians', has been organised. These councils consist of local residents who volunteer to study the history of Gaya, care for the environment surrounding the nominated site, conduct promotional programmes, and participate in monitoring activities. This programme is aimed at placing heritage at the centre of community building. In August 2019, the World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli prepared a set of rules on the management and operation of these residents’ councils.

With a slightly different objective from the Heritage Guardians, the Heritage Caretakers programme hires ordinary civilians for everyday conservation activities such as cutting grass, tidying up the natural environment, cleaning drains, and monitoring potential damage from various sources. Local residents also work as tourist guides at the heritage sites.

The pertinent municipal governments are implementing a range of educational, cultural, experience, and tour programmes for the cemeteries and their surrounding areas.

ICOMOS considers that the State Party is applying successful programmes for community involvement in heritage protection, maintenance and promotion. Nevertheless, greater efforts could be made to ensure that local communities are included in decision-making processes.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection and the management of the proposed property are well organised and already operational. Visitors are well attended at the nominated component parts and the local community has embraced the heritage sites. ICOMOS recommends that further efforts are made to involve the members of local communities in the decision-making processes.
6 Conclusion

Gaya Tumuli is a serial nominated property that includes seven archaeological cemeteries with burial mounds placed in highly visible hilltop settings. Through their geographical distribution and landscape characteristics, types of burials, and grave goods, the nominated cemeteries attest to the distinctive political system, the Gaya Confederacy, in which affiliated polities were allowed to exist as autonomous political equals, while sharing cultural commonalities. This organisation contrasts with that of very centralised contemporaneous political entities in East Asia.

The legal protection, good state of conservation, and fully functional management system of the component parts are strengths of this nomination.

ICOMOS considers that the property meets criterion (iii). The selection of component parts is well described and the comparative analysis together with the justification for criterion (iii) support the argument presented for the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial property. No problems that are not being addressed already by the State Party have been detected concerning the integrity and authenticity of the property.

The monitoring activities have supported the good state of conservation of the selected component parts. However, it is necessary to integrate the monitoring efforts at all the component sites as soon as possible. Furthermore, it is recommended to develop quantifiable indicators that are directly linked to the Outstanding Universal Value but are not reliant on the perceptions of staff members or experts. The monitoring system should be revised for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

The legal protection and the management of the proposed property are well organised and already operational. Visitors are well attended at the nominated component parts and the local community has embraced the heritage sites. ICOMOS recommends that further efforts are made to involve the members of local communities in the decision-making processes.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the Gaya Tumuli, Republic of Korea, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iii).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Gaya Tumuli are a serial property consisting of seven cemeteries created by members of the Gaya Confederacy, an ancient collection of several polities that persisted from the 1st through the mid-6th centuries CE in the southern section of the Korean Peninsula. The seven cemeteries are the Daeseong-dong Tumuli, Marisan Tumuli, Okjeon Tumuli, Jisan-dong Tumuli, Songhak-dong Tumuli, Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli, and Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli.

Through its geographical distribution, locational characteristics, types of burials, and contents of grave goods, the property attests to the distinctive Gaya political system in which affiliated polities were allowed to exist as autonomous political equals while sharing cultural commonalities. The Gaya Confederacy responded with flexibly to political shifts in ancient East Asia and contributed to maintaining the balance of power in the region by cooperating internally and taking part in exchanges with neighbouring states.

The seven cemeteries are the burial grounds for the top leaders of seven Gaya polities that developed independently at different sites across the southern portion of the Korean Peninsula. The cemeteries are all located on elevated terrain at the centre of a polity and are home to densely clustered tombs constructed over a long period.

This dispersed distribution of equally monumental and elaborate tomb clusters manifesting shared practices for locating and building high-status tombs testifies to the existence of multiple equally powerful and autonomous polities living under the influence of the same culture.

The cemeteries all feature a particular kind of stone-lined burial chamber and have produced a distinctive form of pottery, respectively known as the Gaya-type stone-lined chamber burial and Gaya-style pottery. These commonalities contribute to identifying the territorial bounds of the Gaya Confederacy. Individual variations can still be found within these two indicators, allowing the boundaries of each polity to be identified and testifying to their political autonomy. Other grave goods, such as iron weapons reflecting similar levels of military power and trade goods imported into and exchanged within the Gaya Confederacy, demonstrate how the seven polities existed as political equals and maintained a level of internal parity.

Criterion (iii): The Gaya Tumuli bear exceptional testimony to Gaya, a unique ancient East Asian civilisation that coexisted with its more strongly centralised neighbours but maintained a distinct confederated political system. The property is important evidence of the diversity found among ancient East Asian civilisations.

Integrity

The Gaya Tumuli comprehensively manifest the distinct political system of Gaya, incorporating within the boundaries of the component parts all the attributes necessary to convey its Outstanding Universal Value, such as geographical distribution, locational characteristics, types of burial and grave goods.
The archaeological attributes of the property are mostly conserved in good condition. The component areas are large enough to demonstrate the topographical and spatial characteristics of the property and the process of its development.

The property is under rigorous government protection according to the Cultural Heritage Protection Act and is unlikely to suffer from adverse effects of either development or neglect. Some of the cemeteries have been affected by nearby urbanisation, but not to an extent that would have an adverse impact on their attributes.

Authenticity

The seven cemeteries meet the conditions of authenticity in terms of form and design, materials and substance, and location and setting.

Excavation within the property has been conducted to the minimal possible extent and only for academic or conservation purposes by expert institutes. The excavations conducted to date have confirmed the authenticity of the burial structures, burial-mound construction methods and building materials. Repair work within the component parts’ settings is conducted by nationally licensed heritage professionals and ensure that there are no impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value. It is based on the findings of archaeological research and takes place only after a thorough analysis of the original form, structure, material, and construction methods.

Although the wider settings of the property component parts have evolved to a certain extent, there has been little change in location and topography, the major attributes conveying the Outstanding Universal Value.

Management and protection requirements

The property is safeguarded by the Cultural Heritage Protection Act and other rules and regulations. Each of the seven cemeteries has been nationally designated as a Heritage Area with the title “Historic Site.” The buffer zones are mostly included in the Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Area for each cemetery (an additional layer of protection offered to a Heritage Area) and therefore benefits from strict development restrictions.

The authorisation of any change in the current state of the property falls under the responsibility of the Cultural Heritage Administration and on-site management is carried out by the pertinent local governments. Archaeological research and repair efforts on the property are conducted by professionally certified groups and individuals under the overriding principle of maintaining the authenticity and integrity. Grave goods from the property are vested with the State and housed at museums and other research institutes. Funds required for the management and conservation of the property are provided by the Cultural Heritage Administration and the pertinent local governments.

A conservation plan has been prepared for each cemetery. The World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli is leading the efforts at monitoring the property in an integrated manner. The Nomination Office has also established an integrated management plan. Disaster-prevention facilities have been installed at each site. A network of close cooperation for disaster prevention has been established at each cemetery with relevant organisations. Local residents are participating in heritage interpretation and monitoring activities.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Continuing the process of acquisition of the privately-owned land plots within the component parts,

b) Mitigating the impact of intrusive elements in the buffer zones and on the property, especially the road that is dividing the (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli component part,

c) Developing strategies to promote all the sites, in order to disperse the visitor levels more evenly amongst the component parts,

d) Establishing an integrated monitoring system based at least partly on quantitative data,

e) Further involving local communities in the decision-making processes;
Map showing the location of the nominated components
Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor
(Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)
No 1675

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor

Location
Sughd Region
Republic of Tajikistan

Lebap Region
Mary Region
Turkmenistan

Bukhara Region
Navoi Region
Samarkand Region
Republic of Uzbekistan

Brief description
The Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor is one of the key sections of the Silk Roads in Central Asia that connects other corridors from all directions. Comprising thirty-four sites located in rugged mountains, fertile river valleys, and uninhabitable desert, the 866-kilometre corridor runs from east to west along the Zarafshan River and further southwest following the ancient caravan roads crossing the Karakum Desert to the Merv Oasis. Channelling much of the east-west exchange along the Silk Roads over the whole period from the 2nd century BCE to the 16th century CE, a large quantity of goods was traded along the corridor and famous local products kept feeding the desires of peoples afar. People travelled, settled, conquered, or were defeated here, making it a melting pot of ethnicities, cultures, religions, sciences, and technologies. The control of these corridors was of vital significance to many of the great Silk Roads empires, such as the Sogdian, the Parthian, the Sassanian, the Timurid and the Seljuk, as they were fundamental to long-distance exchange along the Silk Roads. Over the millennium and a half that it flourished, the nominated Corridor experienced three prosperous periods resulting from the rise of Sogdian merchants between the 5th and 8th centuries CE; trade with the Muslim world and outside flourished between the 10th and 12th centuries CE, and under Mongol rule from the 13th century to the 17th century CE when science, culture, urban planning, and economics significantly developed, and the vast territory of the empire facilitated long-distance trade.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial transnational nomination of thirty-four sites.

Included in the Tentative List
21 January 2021 (Republic of Tajikistan)
20 January 2021 (Turkmenistan)
18 January 2021 (Republic of Uzbekistan)

Background
A previous nomination was submitted in 2013, by the States Parties of the Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Uzbekistan, under the name of the Silk Roads: Penjikent-Samarkand-Poykent Corridor.

The World Heritage Committee examined the nomination at its 38th Session (Doha, Qatar, 2014):

Decision: 38 COM 8B.30

The World Heritage Committee,
1. Having examined Documents WHC-14/38.COM/8B and WHC-14/38.COM/INF.8B1,
2. Refers the nomination of the Silk Roads: Penjikent-Samarkand-Poykent Corridor, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, back to the States Parties, in order to allow them, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to:
   a) Augment the internal comparative analysis to broaden the selection of sites considered in relation to the re-appraised Outstanding Universal Value,
   b) Provide more detailed information on each of the nominated sites in order to allow a fuller understanding of their structures and the way they have developed over time;
   c) Also provide more detailed and accurate maps that show the precise location of the boundaries of the sites in relation to the topography;
   d) Reconsider the boundaries of Penjikent and Poykent to allow the sites to include all the key archaeological areas, and extend the buffer zones in order that they provide adequate protection for the context and setting of the sites;
   e) Develop conservation plans for the consolidation and/or back filling of the highly damaged and vulnerable excavated areas of Penjikent and Poykent and seek means and resources for the implementation of these plans;
   f) Provide clarity as to how the already inscribed properties of Samarkand and Bukhara contribute to the value of the series, and whether Bukhara should be included in the title;
   g) Strengthen the management arrangements to allow coordination between the component parts in the series on a national basis.
3. Recommends the States Parties, if necessary, to invite an ICOMOS Advisory Mission in the framework of the Upstream Processes to advise on the implementation of the above recommendations;
4. Invites the international community to consider support for projects to conserve and consolidate the excavated areas in Penjikent and Poykent that are currently threatened by severe erosion.

Following the World Heritage Committee recommendations, the States Parties of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan invited an ICOMOS advisory
mission in June 2016. The main aim of this mission was to offer advice on the revision of the nomination dossier, with emphasis on defining the potential Outstanding Universal Value, on the selection of component parts, and on improving documentation, conservation, and management. The advisory mission recommended that the States Parties should: revise the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, re-select the component parts, improve the narratives to focus more on the significance, develop management plans for each component part, establish a coordination mechanism for the Corridor as a whole, and develop an interpretation plan for the whole Corridor.

The advisory mission also expressed the concern that given the amount of work to be accomplished within the timeframe for re-submitting the referred nomination dossier (1 February 2017), time was very short to address all these issues. Furthermore, the revision of the nomination implied that a technical evaluation mission was needed to assess the conservation and management of newly added sites to the nomination, as well as to consider how issues that were identified by the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission in 2013 relating to sites of original nomination have been addressed.

In 2021, the States Parties of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan jointly submitted a new serial transnational nomination, with the total of component parts expanded to thirty-four, including the twelve sites of the previous nomination.

Considering that the current nomination was submitted after the closing date set out for the referred back nominations, according to paragraph 159 of the Operational Guideline for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, it is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members, and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the sections of the nominated property in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan from 26 September to 10 October 2021 and another ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the section in Turkmenistan from 1 to 10 October 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the States Parties on 12 October 2021 requesting further information about integrity, existing World Heritage properties in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, protection, conservation, management, monitoring, presentation and interpretation.

Additional information was received from the States Parties on 15 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the States Parties on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report on: potential Outstanding Universal Value, management plan for each component part, future extension of the water management system, capacity building, interpretation, and possible roadmap.

Additional information was received from the States Parties on 25 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history, and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The Silk Roads

The Silk Roads were an interconnected web of routes linking the ancient societies of Asia, the Subcontinent, Central Asia, Western Asia, and the Near East, and contributed to the development of many of the world's great civilisations. They represent one of the world's preeminent long-distance communication networks stretching as the crow flies to around 7,500 kilometres but extending to over 35,000 kilometres along specific routes. While some of these routes had been in use for millennia, by the 2nd century BCE the volume of exchange had increased substantially, as had the long-distance trade between east and west in high-value goods, and the political, social, and cultural impacts of these movements had far-reaching consequences upon all the societies that encountered them.

The routes served principally to transfer raw materials, foodstuffs, and luxury goods. Some areas had a monopoly on certain materials or goods: notably China, who supplied Central Asia, the Subcontinent, West Asia and the Mediterranean world with silk. Many of the high value trade goods were transported over vast distances – by pack animals and river craft – and probably by a string of different merchants.

There were a number of major transformative impacts from this extensive network of interactions:

- The development of cities along these routes, which gained power and wealth from the trade, providing the infrastructure of production and redistribution, and policing its routes. Many became major cultural and artistic centres, where peoples of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds intermingled.
• The development of religious centres, which benefited from the patronage of political systems and wealthy individuals.

• The movement of technologies, artistic styles, languages, social practices and religious beliefs, transmitted by people moving along the Silk Roads.

By 2014, the overall Silks Roads from China to the Mediterranean have been the subject of extensive study over eight years by a group of fifteen countries, mainly from Central and East Asia. The broad synthesis of the results has been published in an ICOMOS Thematic Study on the Silk Roads. This identified fifty-four ‘corridors’ along the routes that are distinctive from other sections of the Silk Roads, in terms of the quantity and quality of surviving ensembles of sites that reflect long-distance trade and the complex socio-cultural-political systems that supported the trade. Each of these corridors might have the potential to be put forward as a serial nomination. The Silk Roads period as defined in the ICOMOS Thematic Study is between the 2nd century BCE and 16th century CE.

In 2014, Silk Roads: The Routes Network of Chang’-an-Tianshan Corridor, the first Silk Roads property jointly nominated by the States Parties of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, was inscribed on the World Heritage List. This nomination covered Corridors No. 8, 9, 17, 18, 19, 22, and 47 as identified by the ICOMOS Thematic Study on the Silk Roads (2014). The current nomination covers Corridors No. 4 and a part of No.5.

The Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor

Extending over 866 kilometres in Central Asia and spanning from the 4th century BCE to the 19th century CE, the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor comprises thirty-four component sites, of which nine lie in the Republic of Tajikistan, sixteen in the Republic of Uzbekistan, and nine in Turkmenistan. The Corridor comprises into three main geo-cultural areas: the mountain section in the east, the plain section in the centre, and the desert section in the west.

The dramatic landscape setting of the Corridor covering highlands, piedmonts, plains, artificially irrigated oases, wormwood-steppes and deserts not only defined the orientation and routes of the Corridor, but also nourished the lands as a melting pot of political, economic, cultural, and religious influences.

Starting in the east from Khisorak Settlement, a 7th to 8th century CE strategic fortified city in the upper valley of the Zarafshan River, the Corridor runs westward following the Zarafshan River all the way down to the plain of the river basin in which major Central Asian metropolises such as Samarkand and Bukhara are located. The Corridor bends toward the southwest after passing through the Bukhara oasis, crosses the Amu Darya River and continues into the Karakum Desert following the caravan trail, and eventually reaches Kushmeihan, a 2nd to 13th century CE market town and strategic centre in the Murghab Delta of the Merv Oasis.

Being an artery of trade in the heart of the Silk Roads network, the Corridor connects the Tianshan Corridor in the north, the Fergana Valley Corridor in the east, the Amudarya Corridor in the south, and via the Southern Aral Sea the Caspian Corridor in the West. It also links to the Khurasan Corridor or the Great Khorasan Road via Merv.

Over its history, the region had been sequentially controlled by several great empires, but has managed to maintain its relative independence. This pivotal location, coupled with a stable political environment and in the centre fertile lands, attracted many people to travel and settle, including Iranians, Turkic peoples, Mongolians, Semites, Greeks, Indians, Slavs, Sino-Tibetans, and Chinese. Brought with them were various religions, such as Zoroastrianism, Islam, Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, Manichaism, and Judaism. Many languages from ancient times are still spoken in the region today.

Famous scholars and inventors lived in or travelled through the towns and cities of the Corridor. An Shigao and Kang Senghui who translated Buddhist Canon into Chinese, several generations of the He family of the Sogdians from the region had served as high-ranking officials in the Chinese court, great collector Muhammad al-Bukhari, the first Persian poet Abu Abdallah Rudaki, astronomer and mathematician Mirza Ulugbek, biographer as-Sam’ani, and Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna), the author of the Canon of Medical Science, were among the great figures associated with the Corridor.

Along with the exchange of religions and ideas were technologies and arts. Glass-making, wine-making, horse-breeding, and schools of toreutics (artistic metal-working) were transferred from the region to China; Sogdian musicians and singers were famous in China, and their remaining tunes are still performed in Japan. The Far Eastern lute (Pipa in Chinese, Biwa in Japanese) was also exported from Central Asia through the Corridor to China and Japan. Other technologies went from China to Central Asia and further West, such as paper production and ceramic technology.

Trading goods along the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor were mainly silk, metalwork, leather, wool, gemstones, metals such as silver and gold, a large variety of spices, fruit and grains, and racehorses. The Corridor not only served to moving imported goods but rich products were also manufactured in its towns and cities, contributing significantly to international trade. Some of the products from this region had gained international fame, such as Sogdian silverware, Zandaniji wool fabric, silk, Samarkand paper, and glazed pottery.

The series as a whole has been selected to reflect how certain towns and settlements were established to control mountain passes of the trade routes, how caravanserais were organised by states to protect travellers and merchants, how the Sogdians became the major
intermediaries of international trade between the East and the West in the 8th and 9th centuries CE, how peoples travelled and settled in towns and cities, such as Penjikent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Merv, and how cultures, religions, technologies, arts, and literature were exchanged in this section of the Silk Roads.

Based on the categorisation of the nomination dossier, the nominated property consists of archaeological sites, architectural monuments, architectural complexes, archaeological complexes, and of one necropolis. From the point of their historical functions, the Corridor comprises rural settlements, transportation and defence facilities, religious sites, central towns and trading settlements, irrigation systems and water supply sites.

The nomination sets out very clearly the rationale for including each of the sites and how each contributes to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Detailed information of each component part is also provided on its features, and the artefacts obtained from archaeological excavations.

Shortage of space has not allowed this report to include full details of each of the sites, nor how each relates to the whole. Groups of sites are considered within the three sections divided according to their geo-cultural areas.

Mountain section

Eight component parts are located in the upper valley of the Zarafshan River in Tajikistan, where steep mountain slopes formed narrow paths along the river. The high altitude, rugged valley and ravines dictated the way that this section served mainly as trade routes, with small-scale settlements at the relevant flat areas to sustain the caravans and travellers. Several mountain trade paths traverse the main valley route. The nominated component parts are mainly located at these junctions for controlling the routes and for protecting and sustaining the caravans in the past.

The component parts in this section reflect how the highland strategic fortified towns and rural settlements acted in the international trades, the rich and diverse cultural, economic, and religious activities once occurred at these settlements, the events that changed the history of the region, the ingeniously designed irrigation system adapting to local geographical conditions which still function today, and how the highland peoples lived, prayed and thrived, particularly how the Sogdians merchants became the main intermediaries in the international silk trade, and how the process of Islamisation progressed in the region, profoundly changing the lives and faiths of the people in the valley.

Following is the list of the component parts, all are located in Tajikistan:

TJ-01 Khisorak Settlement
TJ-02 Castle on Mount Mugh
TJ-03 Kum Settlement

Plain section

Seventeen component parts are located in this section from the lower reaches to the wide hydrological basin of the Zarafshan River. The fertile land coupled with plenty of water and sophisticated artificial irrigation systems, as well as rich deposition of minerals, created favourable conditions for agriculture and handicraft. Dry steppe and highland areas provided the nomads with meadows. This region has been regarded as the place of rest and exchange for the merchants after their exhausting journeys through extreme geographic and climatic conditions of high mountains in the east and lifeless desert in the west. The relatively stable political and climatic environment attracted people to settle down or trade there, which made this area one of the richest regions in Central Asia.

The component parts in this section reflect how the many towns, cities, and metropolises grew with international and regional trade, and at the same time shaped the political, economic, cultural, and religious landscapes of the region. how the powerful and relatively independent city-states under the rules of major empires in history maintained, promoted, and secured the trade, and subsequently forged this section as an important crossroad of international communication in the network of the Silk Roads, and what products were offered from the region to the international markets. This section also witnessed the high achievements of science, technology, art, architecture, craftsmanship, and religious evolution in the region. Interaction between the nomads and the settled population added diversity of cultures, religions, and products to the section.

Following is the list of the component parts, of which the TJ-09 Town of Ancient Penjikent component part is located in Tajikistan, while the other sixteen are located in Uzbekistan:

TJ-09 Town of Ancient Penjikent
UZ-01 Jartepa II Temple
UZ-02 Suleimantepa
UZ-03 Kafirkala Settlement
UZ-04 Dabusiya Settlement
UZ-05 Kasim Sheikh Architectural Complex
UZ-06 Mir Sayid Bakhrom Mausoleum
UZ-07a Rabati Malik Caravanserai
UZ-07b Rabati Malik Sardoba
UZ-08 Deggaron Mosque
UZ-09 Chasmas-i Ayub Khazira
UZ-10 Vardanze Settlement
UZ-11 Vobkent Minaret
UZ-12 Bahouddin Naqshband Architectural Complex
UZ-13 Chor Bakr Necropolis
UZ-14 Varakhsha Settlement
UZ-15 Paikend Settlement

Desert section

Nine component parts are located along the ancient route across the Karakum Desert. This route was the shortest way to cross the desert, a journey which took five days from the crossing of the Amu Darya River to the edge of the Merv Oasis. Stations and caravanserais, together with wells and sardobas (water reservoirs), were established along the routes at relatively regular intervals, often at a one-day trek distance, which provided vital food and water to the travellers, and protected them from extreme weather conditions and other unexpected incidents.

The component parts in this section reflect the efforts of state powers and local people along the route to create and maintain a sophisticated infrastructure system that supported the trade and travel along the Silk Roads over the centuries. The size of the component parts varies from ordinary caravanserais, kōshks (stations) and rabats (small settlements outside caravanserais), to towns, representing a wide range of desert supply infrastructure which was essential for maintaining the functions of this important trade route in the past. The town planning and architectural design were based on the cosmological perceptions of the time, while the buildings and infrastructure were adapted to the local conditions. This section bears witness to the evolution of caravanserais in Central Asia.

Following is the list of the component parts, all of which are located in Turkmenistan:

TM-01 Amul Settlement
TM-02a Mansaf Caravanserai
TM-02b Mansaf Caravanserai
TM-03 Konegala Caravanserai
TM-04 Tahmalaj
TM-05 Akja Gala Caravanserai
TM-06a Gyzylja Gala Caravanserai (Rabad al-Hadid)
TM-06b Gyzylja Gala Caravanserai (Rabad al-Hadid)
TM-07 Kushmeihan (Dinli Kishman)

History and development

The territory of the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor has been inhabited since Palaeolithic times. Oxus civilisation and nomads of the Andronovo culture appeared from the late 3rd to the 2nd millennia BCE. In the early Iron Age, Sogdiana and Margiana belonged to the Eastern Iranian lands, where the Zaraothustra doctrine originated. From the 6th century BCE onward, Central Asia was occupied by various empires such as Achaemenid, Macedon, and Parthia. Around 125 BCE, the Chinese envoy Zhang Qian visited the states to the west of China and established the first official trade links with the regions in Central Asia.

In the next centuries, the regions belonged first to the Parthian and then the Sasanian Empire. During the 7th century CE, Muslim troops captured the regions, and the population was converted to Islam. The regions flourished during the following centuries until 1220 CE when Genghis Khan captured Transoxiana and Khorasan and caused extensive destruction which led to a radical decrease in the population. The areas gradually recovered under the Mongol Muslim dynasties, while the vast scale of the Mongol Empire facilitated cultural and commercial ties throughout Eurasia. The rules of Timur and his successors brought prosperity to the regions once more. In 1507 CE, the nomadic Uzbeks of Sheibani Khan from the Volga region captured Transoxiana. The Zarafshan Valley was then controlled by the Uzbek dynasties of Bukhara emirs, and at the same time, the self-governing Turkmen tribes continued to live on the territory of the Merv Oasis.

From the second half of the 19th century CE, Samarkand and Merv were annexed by the Russian Empire, and later as a part of the Soviet Union. In 1991, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan became independent countries.

The nominated Corridor thus had three main prosperous periods from the 2nd century BCE to the end of the 16th century CE, the acknowledged functioning period of the Silk Roads. The first period was from the 5th to the 8th century CE when the region was under Hephthalite, Turkish, Chinese and Arab rule, and the role of Central Asian merchants increased significantly. During this period, the Sogdians merchants rose to become the main intermediaries in the international silk trade. The Sogdians also developed a unique sophisticated culture in and near the Zarafshan Valley and brought this with them to their colonies and settlements along the Silk Roads. Rich evidence of Sogdian culture and religion still survives today in China, Japan, and other countries. The second period was between the 10th and the 12th centuries CE, when the cities and urban culture in Maverannahr, Transoxiana thrived, and trade with the Muslim world and beyond flourished. The last period was from the 13th to the 17th centuries CE under Mongol rule, when science, culture, urban planning, and economics significantly developed, and the vast territory of the empire facilitated long-distance trade.

The property area of the thirty-four component parts totals 669.679 ha, with buffer zones totalling 1,750.042 ha.

State of conservation

The conservation activities for archaeological sites were overall very limited, with the most common one being the backfilling after excavations. Since three quarters of the component parts are archaeological sites, this measures effectively prevented the sites from further deterioration. The artefacts extracted from the sites were stored in museums for conservation treatment and display.

Most architectural conservation activities before 2000 were maintenance and regular repairs to keep the buildings functioning. These interventions have caused the loss of some of the original ornaments and materials, but the structures and original designs are kept mostly intact.
During the periods between 1999 and 2004, 2006 and 2007, 2017, and 2019, several major conservation and restoration projects were conducted in Uzbekistan at the UZ-05 Kasim Sheikh Architectural Complex, UZ-06 Mir Sayid Bakhrom Mausoleum, UZ-07a Rabati Malik Caravanserai and UZ-07b Rabati Malik Sardoba, UZ-08 Deggaron Mosque, UZ-09 Chasma-i Ayub Khazira, UZ-11 Vobkent Minaret, UZ-12 Bahouddin Naqshband Architectural Complex, and UZ-13 Chor Bakr Necropolis component parts. The interventions involved structural reinforcement and stabilisation, restoration, environmental improvement, and landscaping. These projects have transformed the once derelict and fragile state of the buildings into one that is safe and functional. Some of the building complexes have become, once again, the religious centres for local communities and international pilgrims.

The current states of conservation of all the component parts are ranked in the nomination dossier as fair to good.

Tajikistan

Of the nine component parts, five are in a good state of conservation due to their remote and uninhabited locations and difficult access. The other four sites are ranked as fair for the following reasons: surface water washing away materials at the base of the walls at the TJ-04 Gardani Khisor Settlement component part, inappropriate past repair of the buildings at the TJ-06 Mausoleum of Khoja Muhhammad Bashoro component part, past partial reconstruction of the ancient irrigation system at the TJ-07 Toksankoriz Irrigation System component part, and recent partial collapse of two arches at the TJ-08 Sanjanshakh Settlement component part. Eight component parts were partially excavated and backfilled, which protected the sites from further deterioration.

Uzbekistan

Of the sixteen component parts, twelve are in a good state of conservation. The other four are ranked as fair due to erosion and weathering of uncovered parts of the archaeological sites at the UZ-01 Jartepa II Temple, UZ-03 Kafirkala Settlement, UZ-04 Dabusiya Settlement, and UZ-14 Varakhsha Settlement component parts. In addition, vegetation growth and rising damp affect the foundations of the structures of these sites.

Turkmenistan

All the nine component parts are ranked in a fair state of conservation because of wind erosion, although most of the sites are buried and stable. Past inappropriate use occurred at the TM-01 Amul Settlement component part, such as brick-making, agricultural activities, garbage dumping, and building encroachment. Since 2012, the legal protection was implemented and the brickworks were closed and cleared, the garbage was removed, and the perimeter of the citadel was demarcated.

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the damages to the component parts occurred mostly in the past. Based on the information provided by the States Parties and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation missions, although many archaeological sites are in the ruined state and suffer from lack of regular maintenance, their current conditions are overall stable. The past conservation interventions have led to some losses of authenticity to the architectural heritage. However, recent works have been conducted more sensitively. Currently, the architectural heritage is well maintained as living heritage with a good state of conservation. ICOMOS considers that the overall state of conservation of the nominated property is good.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation missions, ICOMOS notes that the component parts are located in distinctive geographic and climatic areas and, therefore, considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property vary considerably.

In Tajikistan, the main factors affecting the component parts are temperature fluctuation, surface water, and rising damp. Located in the harsh mountainous areas exposed to the elements, all the sites are subject to progressive deterioration by high temperature fluctuation and heavy rainfall. Rising damp is the main cause of damage to the lower portion of building structures.

In Uzbekistan, the main factors affecting the component parts are surface water and rising damp. Located in the river valley plain with a relatively mild environment, flooding and moisture from groundwater are the main causes of deterioration of the lower portions of the buildings.

In Turkmenistan, the main factor affecting the component parts is wind erosion. Located in the desert environment all the sites are subject to wind erosion.

In addition to these factors associated with the geographical and climatic conditions, development and uncontrolled visitation are general factors affecting the overall nominated property.

Development includes road constructions, encroachment, and agricultural and grazing activities. Road constructions near the component parts may cause physical damage through vibration and pollution. Encroachment through the illegal constructions of houses, and religious and tourism facilities in the property area or its buffer zones may affect the integrity of the sites. Agricultural and grazing activities may damage the archaeological remains. Uncontrolled visitation at archaeological sites that are lacking of a visitor management system may cause damage to the vulnerable parts, while over-visititation at some religious monuments also causes damage to their fabric and settings.
The States Parties have started to address these factors by enforcing laws on the nominated property and its buffer zones, fencing off the archaeological sites, organising awareness raising workshops for the local communities, and improving planning at the national level.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is overall good, and that factors affecting the nominated property are largely under control. ICOMOS considers, however, law enforcement and a more vigilant monitoring mechanism are critical for addressing the problems of uncontrolled visitation, illegal construction, and inappropriate road constructions.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the States Parties to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Being one of the central sections connecting other corridors, the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor plays an important role in the network of the Silk Roads. It links the Tianshan Corridor in the North, the Fergana Valley Corridor in the East, the Amudarya (Amu Darya) Corridor in the South, and via the Southern Aral Sea to the Caspian Corridor in the West. It also connects, via Merv, the Khorasan Corridor, also called the Great Khorasan Road in the early Islamic period.
- The three prosperous periods of the Corridor contributed significantly to the historical development of Central Asia. The first period was the blossom of pre-Islamic Sogdian culture from the 5th to the 8th centuries CE, during which the Sogdians merchants became the main intermediaries in the international silk trade, and developed a unique sophisticated culture in and near the Zarafshan Valley. The second period was between the 10th and the 12th centuries CE when the cities and urban culture in Maverannahr, Transoxiana actively developed, and trade with the Muslim world and beyond flourished. The last period was from the 13th to the 17th centuries CE under the Mongol rule, when science, culture, urban planning, and economics significantly developed.
- The component parts of the series are eloquent testimony to the economy, culture, and art of Central Asia, as demonstrated by the long-lived cities; Sogdian monuments, cities, fortifications, palaces, and artworks; sites during the Muslim conquest and Islamisation; Islamic cities; pre-Mongol and post-Mongol architectural monuments; sacred sites; Muslim Sufi necropolises; water-management systems; infrastructure and facilities along the roads; and sites sustaining economic interactions between the East and the West.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are the orientation and the geographical setting of the Corridor, and the thirty-four proposed component parts and their immediate and wider settings.

As mentioned in the Interim Report, ICOMOS notes that the justification for the inscription of the nominated property as put forward in the nomination dossier lacks specificities related to this Corridor and how it is distinct from the other sections of the Silk Roads. In the additional information provided in response to this query, the States Parties state that the nominated property was one of the most important and distinctive stretches of the Silk Roads in Asia. It channelled much of the east-west exchange along the Silk Roads over the whole period from the 2nd century BCE to the 16th century CE. Along with the long-distance trades were the growth of urban centres, towns, caravanserais, as demonstrated by the scale of the urban market centres, elite and religious buildings. The control of this vital link between Central Asia and the Murgab Delta provided the administrative and cultural base for many major Silk Roads empires, such as the Sogdian, the Timurid, the Parthian, the Sassanian, and the Seljuk. ICOMOS considers that this response provides the specificity and clarity that is needed to distinguish the nominated property from other Silk Roads sections.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed following three parts: comparisons with cultural routes inscribed on the World Heritage List, comparison with other Silk Roads Corridors, and comparison with other similar sites along the nominated property. The last part is in fact the internal comparison among the nominated sites for justifying the selection of the nominated component parts.

In the first part, eleven World Heritage cultural routes are compared following the parameters: cultural route, pilgrimage route, transnational property, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), and (vi), under which the nominated property is proposed for inscription, regional and chronological framework, and geographical extent (the total length of the routes).

The comparison concludes that the nominated property is the only one that is both a cultural and a pilgrimage route. It belongs to different geo-cultural and chronological frameworks representing a unique complex interchange of both human values and influences, encompassing trade, social and economic values, architecture and urban planning, culture and arts, science and technology, between the peoples of the East and the West from the 2nd century BCE to the 16th century CE. The nominated property has the greatest variety of trading products as reflected in the characteristics of cities, settlements and complexes, in comparison to other cultural heritage routes, and demonstrates the most diverse type of architecture.

In the second part, three Silk Roads corridors are compared in terms of distance (total length), eco-geographical features, and cultural features. These corridors are the Silk Roads: The Routes Network of Chang’an-Tianshan Corridor (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, 2014, criteria (ii), (iii), (v), and (vi)), the
Fergana-Syrdarya Corridor of the Silk Roads (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, nomination in progress), and the South Asian Silk Roads (Nepal, Bhutan, China, India, nomination in progress). No conclusion is provided in the nomination dossier for this part of the comparative analysis because of the lack of information on the two corridors which nominations are not completed yet.

In the third part, the comparison is made among the candidate sites within each State Party. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan adopted a common methodology: each site is assessed in terms of its values associated with the nominated property as a whole, the quality of its authenticity and integrity, and its level of documentation and research in the past. There are many parameters for the assessment, which are categorised into five groups: (1) geographical location; (2) reliability of information sources; (3) functional type; (4) relevant values; and (5) authenticity and integrity. Each group is further divided into a number of sub-groups. These groups and subgroups of parameters form a matrix against which the assessment is made. With this methodology, 77 sites in Tajikistan and 119 sites in Uzbekistan are assessed. Furthermore, additional comparisons are made for both the oasis wall of Bukhara (the remnant of the protective walls once constructed along the perimeters of the Bukhara oasis) and the remains of water management structures. As the result, nine and sixteen component parts are selected in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan respectively. The State Party of Turkmenistan takes a different approach for internal comparison by tabulating 20 archaeological sites against parameters such as urbanisation, trade, wealth, culture, ethnicity, communities, control of empires, power, warfare, transport, travel infrastructure, outcomes/impacts, religious interchange, production, infrastructure development, and other factors. As the result, nine component parts are selected.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis in part one is adequate, although the seventy-two-kilometre circular route of the Mount Wutai (China, 2009, (ii), (iii), (iv), and (vi)) is not for leading pilgrims to the sacred place, rather it is a route for Buddhist believers to circulate around the sacred place in order to accumulate virtues. Part two of the comparative analysis is also considered adequate as each corridor is an integral part of the Silk Roads, and all the corridors are equally important within the Silk Roads network. Finally, ICOMOS considers that in part three, the selection of the component parts is overall justified and the methodology adopted for component selection is sound.

ICOMOS notes that the religious value of the nominated property is not sufficiently elaborated. There have been diverse religious expressions throughout history, particularly in the Sogdian and Samanid periods, illustrating the flow of ideas along the routes. While Sufism is well reflected in the current nomination dossier, and is further reinforced by the three associated World Heritage Sites, Bukhara in particular as the largest centre for Muslim theology in the Near East, evidence for other religions such as Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Judaism is not explored.

In addition, ICOMOS considers that the water management systems along the nominated property were essential in shaping both the routes and the ways of life of the populations, and are an integral part of the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor. However, this aspect is under represented in the current nomination dossier. As indicated in the additional information provided in November 2021 by the States Parties, new research and many discoveries happened in recent years. ICOMOS welcomes the commitment of the States Parties, as indicated in the additional information provided in February 2022, on the continuous research on irrigation systems in the region in the view that, when conditions would allow it, more irrigation systems including lakes and canals should be added as extensions to the current nominated property.

In relation to this aspect, ICOMOS notes that the Sheibanikhhan Water Divider Bridge is excluded from the nomination as the result of the internal comparison, because only one arch of the three documented in the mid-19th century remains, therefore the integrity of the bridge is low. ICOMOS considers that, however, the incompleteness of the bridge is not a valid reason for excluding it from the nomination since all the component parts of the nominated property are incomplete to some degree. ICOMOS considers that from the point of view of the nominated Corridor as a whole, it testifies the ambition, scale and technology of water management in the region, and demonstrates the active response of the local people to the existing geographic and hydrological conditions. ICOMOS therefore recommends to consider its inclusion in the nomination when conditions would allow it.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. ICOMOS considers that the selection of the component parts is justified.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), and (vi).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that the nominated property is an exceptional integral system of interchange of goods, human values, and influences among the people of the East and the West of the Silk Roads between the 2nd century BCE and the 16th century CE. It reflects outstanding developments in architecture and technologies, monumental arts, town planning, and landscape design, which is evidenced by the longevity of cities including Sogdian cities and artworks, Islamic cities, Pre-Mongol and Post-Mongol
ICOMOS considers that the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor exhibit an important interchange of human values over a span of eighteen centuries in the heart of Central Asia as demonstrated by the architecture, monuments, town planning, landscapes, arts, and technology of its component parts which reflect diversified cultures, ethnic traditions, beliefs, and technologies in both distinct and fused ways. Being one of the key sections at the centre of the Silk Roads network linking multiple ethnic regions, and being alternatively controlled by nearby great empires, the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor clearly demonstrates the diversity of populations, and the cultures and traditions, ideas and beliefs, as well as knowledge and technologies associated with them. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that the nominated property is an exceptional testimony of cultural traditions, with a comprehensive exchange between the 2nd century BCE and the 16th century CE during the three historic periods: Sogdian, Samanid-Karakhanid, and Timurid-Shaybanid, when the route was flourishing. It witnessed the development of cities, early Sogdian monuments, the effects of Islamisation, and the existence of local versions of Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam over the course of its history.

ICOMOS considers that the territory of the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor is overlaid by rich layers of cultural depositions throughout history, which is an exceptional testimony to the cultural traditions of the societies that were shaped by the trade and exchange along the Corridor. These are evidenced by the wealth of the Sogdian merchants as displayed by their luxurious residences, Sogdian temples with fire altar and murals, the Achaemenid citadels, early Islamic hypostyle mosques with large minarets, the rich Sufism buildings after the Great Arab Conquest, the advanced irrigation systems, as well as the wide spectrum of the caravan service facilities that had been provided and maintained by the successive empires controlling the Corridor. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that the nominated property is an outstanding example of urban planning, architectural art, and technological processes between the 2nd century BCE and the 16th century CE in Central Asia. It is reflected by pre-Islamic sites and individual buildings, masterpieces of Islamic Pre-Mongol and Post-Mongol architecture, and infrastructure and facilities along the Corridor.

ICOMOS acknowledges that the caravanserais in the Karakum Desert, the Islamic tumuli and religious buildings in Uzbekistan, and many settlements in the upper Zarafshan River Valley had a lasting impact on the architectural designs in the region and constitute outstanding examples of the types of buildings and technological ensembles of the area. ICOMOS considers that, however, these outstanding qualities are only demonstrated at the level of individual component sites. What the nominated property has not justified is how the Corridor as a whole, is an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape that illustrates a significant stage in the history of the Silk Roads network. ICOMOS considers, therefore, that this criterion is not demonstrated.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that the nominated property reflects the unique example of human interaction with the natural environment of the highlands, piedmonts, dry steppes, oases and fertile valleys, and arid-desert zones. This is illustrated by Sogdian sites located in a hostile mountain environment, water-management constructions, and infrastructure and services along the Corridor facilitating appropriate conditions for the functioning of the trade route.

On the one hand, ICOMOS considers that the diverse geographic and climatic conditions had definitely dictated the selection of trading routes, town planning, architectural designs, agricultural and other production activities. On the other hand, ICOMOS considers that the local populations not only passively accepted what nature had offered to them, but also actively responded to the natural conditions. It was the people’s determination, initiatives, and ingenious design that had physically transformed many parts of the land in the region into the places that allowed the populations to thrive. It was these two-way interactions between human and nature that had shaped the landscape into the one that is nominated today, as demonstrated by the construction of the mountain castles and settlements, the growth of the megacities and towns, the development of the sophisticated irrigation systems, and the establishment of the chains of caravanserais across the lifeless desert. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion
should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that the nominated property played a relevant role in the spread of various faiths and religious beliefs among the peoples inhabiting these territories. Literary plots of Sogdian monumental arts, sites related to different religions, particularly the development of Sufi Islamic mysticism, as well as handicrafts, arts, and scholarship in Islamic cities are outstanding examples. The Corridor provides a space for cultural dialogue and tolerance between the societies, which is still alive in modern Central Asia. The remnants of ancient beliefs and practices, clearly indicate the continuity of the living cultural traditions of the region, and associations can be seen in the customs and traditions of present-day people in music culture, folk festivals, religious and ritual practices.

ICOMOS considers that while all these claims are evident, nevertheless, how significant these ideas or associations are, and how these are conveyed in the nominated property in an outstanding manner, remain unclear. Furthermore, many of these associations such as cultural dialogue and tolerance, folk festivals, and music cultures are irrelevant to this criterion. ICOMOS considers, therefore, that this criterion is not justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (v) whereas criteria (iv) and (vi) are not justified. ICOMOS considers that the series approach is adequate.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property can be assessed at two levels: the corridor level and the site level. At the corridor level, the diversity of forms and functions of the selected component parts, including mausoleums, sardobas, caravanserais, minarets, mosques, religious complexes, settlements, and remains of ancient towns and cities, fully demonstrate the important role the nominated Corridor once played in history as a nodal section, which not only connected other corridors of the Silk Roads, but also contributed to the trade with locally produced merchandises. The series as a whole also showcases the exchange of ideas and knowledge along the Silk Roads as the result of the movement of people and goods. All the attributes that are needed for expressing the proposed Outstanding Universal Values are within the nominated property.

At the level of individual sites, the integrity of most of the component parts is adequate. As indicated by the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, the boundaries of the TJ-07 Toksankoriz Irrigation System component part were incorrect. The States Parties have provided an updated official document in their additional information of November 2021, in which the boundaries have been verified based on the historic documents and field investigation. These new boundaries have been approved by the government of Tajikistan. ICOMOS considers that the revised boundaries cover only a part of the whole irrigation system. ICOMOS recommends that in the future, more investigation should be undertaken to understand the entire irrigation system and consideration should be given to extend the boundary of this component through minor boundary modification request if relevant.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission also noticed that outside the buffer zone of the TJ-06 Mausoleum of Khoja Mukhammad Bashoro component part there are a necropolis, a sacred spring, and a stretch of pilgrim route that are spiritually associated with the mausoleum. ICOMOS considers that further investigations and value assessment should be undertaken to justify whether these elements should be included in the complex of the Mausoleum of Khoja Mukhammad Bashoro in the future through a minor boundary modification request.

ICOMOS noticed that there are three World Heritage sites within the boundaries of the nominated Corridor, which are not included as part of the current nomination dossier. They are the State Historical and Cultural Park “Ancient Merv” (Turkmenistan, 1999, criteria (ii) and (iii)), the Historic Centre of Bukhara (Uzbekistan, 1993, criteria (ii), (iv), and (vi)), and Samarkand-Crossroad of Cultures (Uzbekistan, 2001, criteria (i), (ii), and (iv)). In the past, these ancient metropolises were the most important political, economic, cultural, and religious centres of the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor. ICOMOS, in its letter to the States Parties in November 2021, requested to clarify why these sites were not included in the current nomination. The States Parties responded that there are four reasons for not having included these sites: (1) the current nomination acknowledges the contribution of these sites to the potential Outstanding Universal Value; (2) the typology of the component parts covers those of the three World Heritage sites; (3) to include the three World Heritage sites would imply the alteration of the existing boundaries due to the different attributes identified based on the new Outstanding Universal Value, which is difficult to achieve in the near future, and (4) the thirty-four component parts outside these big cities provide a much fuller narrative to the history of the region than the one provided by these three World Heritage sites only. Therefore, the States Parties have decided not to include them in the current nomination. ICOMOS considers that these reasons are valid. ICOMOS also considers that while these three World Heritage sites have been listed individually, their Outstanding Universal Value is closely related to the Silk Roads as a whole and to the current Corridor in particular. ICOMOS recommends that although not included in the current nomination, these World Heritage sites should be integrated into the management and interpretation mechanism of the current nomination, in order to preserve and present the Corridor in a holistic manner.

ICOMOS considers that, overall, the nominated Corridor meets the condition of integrity.
Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property resides at both the corridor level and individual component part level. At the corridor level, the orientation of the route, the geographical conditions, and the landscape settings that shaped the Corridor remain relatively unchanged over time. At the component part level, the locations, planning, and layout of the sites remain unchanged. Many stretches of roads are still used for transportation as they were in the past, and most of the religious buildings and cemeteries still perform their original functions today. While many archaeological sites have been excavated, the great majority of the portion still remains untouched, providing an opportunity for future research and the recovery of authentic data. Conservation interventions of the architectural heritage conducted in the past have led to some losses of authenticity such as the use of modern materials, over-restoration, and excessive reconstructions. Conservation interventions conducted recently observed internationally accepted principles such as minimal interventions, thus respecting their authenticity. Most reconstruction works were undertaken in such a way that the reconstructed parts are distinguishable from the original structures and materials.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of authenticity of the whole series and the individual components parts have been met. ICOMOS considers that, however, improvement should be made in the vulnerable aspect such as the use of modern materials, and excessive restoration and reconstructions.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met, and that the conditions of authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met, although it is vulnerable in places.

Boundaries

The number of permanent inhabitants in the nominated property and its buffer zones is overall low, and varies from site to site.

In Tajikistan, of the nine component sites, three are uninhabited. The TJ-07 Toksankoriz Irrigation System component part is the only site with inhabitants living in the property area, with the total number being 16. The total number of inhabitants living in the buffer zones is 1,164. The TJ-09 Town of Ancient Penjikent component part is the most populated site with 652 inhabitants living in the buffer zone.

In Uzbekistan, four sites are uninhabited. All the property areas are free from habitation. The number of inhabitants in the buffer zones is 3,916. The two most populated buffer zones are those of the UZ-11 Vobkent Minaret component part with 1,152 inhabitants and the UZ-12 Bahouddin Naqshband Architectural Complex component part with 1,096 inhabitants.

In Turkmenistan, the TM-07 Kushmeihan (Dinli Kishman) component part is the only occupied site with 112 inhabitants living in the buffer zone.

The rationale behind the boundaries' delineation is to take into consideration the integrity of the individual component parts, as well as conservation and management needs. The boundaries of the property area and buffer zones have been meticulously surveyed, measured, researched, demarcated, with protection policies associated with them. Official documentations are annexed to the nomination dossier, clearly indicating the boundaries of both the property areas and the buffer zones, with associated legal provisions for each of the sites.

Based on the information provided by the States Parties and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation missions, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and its buffer zones are overall adequate.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis is adequate to support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, and that criteria (ii), (iii) and (v) are justified, whereas the conditions for criteria (iv) and (vi) are not met. The conditions of integrity are met, but improvement can be made. The conditions of authenticity are met. The boundary delineation is logical and justified, and the overall property areas and buffer zones provide the nominated property with adequate legal protection.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

Documentation using technologies such as Digital Terrain Model (DTM) generated from unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) photographs, orthophotographs, 3D modelling, and architectural drawings has been made to establish the baseline information of all the component parts of the nominated property. These activities were performed mainly by the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS), which is based in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. The IICAS facilitates the sharing of information among the countries during the nomination and management processes. It also acts as the secretariat for the World Heritage nomination of the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor. Additional documents are kept at the ministries of culture of the nominating States Parties.

ICOMOS considers that the quality of the documentation has been greatly improved as compared with those of the previous nomination. This is the positive reward to the persistent capacity building conducted by the States Parties in collaboration with international partners over the last decade. ICOMOS considers that the baseline
documentation is accurate, well detailed and adequate for the monitoring and management of the component sites.

**Conservation measures**

The archaeological sites that are under excavation are normally partially backfilled at the areas where the excavation is completed. For the exposed parts that are subject to further excavation, temporary consolidations and drainage systems are installed to protect the parts from heavy rainfall and progressive deterioration. Once the full-scale excavation is finished, backfill of the entire site is conducted for its protection.

For the architectural conservation, interventions were carried out in the past. The current measures are mainly maintenance and monitoring.

The conservation interventions, in general, respected the international established principles such as minimal intervention, using traditional materials and techniques. Rising damp coupled with salt activities has been one of the major causes of deterioration of the lower portion of the buildings and constructions. Unsolved in the past, this problem will cause new damage to the restored parts as the photographs provided in the nomination dossier already evidenced. This is a common problem in the region that needs to be solved in the future.

**Monitoring**

The monitoring indicators are divided into four categories: conservation, use and interpretation, environmental quality, and management. Each category is further divided into a number of themes such as protection, state of conservation, development pressure, tourism, local community, corridor awareness and interpretation, climate change, component parts management, and risks. The frequency of the monitoring spans from every fifteen years for the long-term planning to daily monitoring for the number of visitors, with the main frequency being every two to six years. At the corridor level, monitoring is undertaken by the Coordination Committee of the three nominating States Parties, while at the component part level, the monitoring activities are performed by the site manager. The annual monitoring reports on the state of conservation of the component parts including their buffer zones are prepared by the regional inspectorates or branches. The IICAS provides technical support to the monitoring activities.

ICOMOS considers that while the monitoring mechanism at the corridor level is adequate, it is the monitoring at each component part that is crucial to the effectiveness of the protection of the site. The component parts of the nominated property demonstrate great diversity in forms of buildings and materials, they are located in different geographical areas, under varied climate conditions, with distinct uses, and are facing different social and economic development pressures. ICOMOS considers that in order for the monitoring to be effective, indicators for each component part should be defined and monitoring arrangements made accordingly. This site-specific monitoring mechanism should be an integral part of the management plan developed for each component part.

ICOMOS considers that the current baseline documentation is adequate and can serve the purpose of conservation, management, and monitoring. The conservation measures are based on internationally accepted principles, and the monitoring mechanism for the series as a whole is adequate. ICOMOS considers that a monitoring system for each individual component part should be established and integrated into its management plan. Furthermore, ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is further developed to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

### 5 Protection and management

**Legal protection**

The legal protection of the nominated property operates at three levels: international, national, and component part levels.

At the international level, the Agreement between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan for common promotion, management and protection of the components of the Serial Transnational Nomination “Silk Roads: Zeravshan-Karakum Corridor” for the World Cultural and Natural Heritage List of UNESCO (hereinafter, the Agreement) was signed among the nominating States Parties in 2020 as the legal basis for the protection and management of the nominated property. The full text of the Agreement is annexed to the nomination dossier.

At the national level, all thirty-four component parts are state-owned and are listed under the state-level legal designations.

At the component part level, boundaries of the property and buffer zone of each part have been established following legal provisions on land use, planning regulation, and other conservation requirements.

ICOMOS considers that the current legal protection of the nominated property is adequate. As noted by the ICOMOS technical evaluation missions, with the establishment of these legal protection systems, illegal encroachments at the component parts have been effectively stopped. ICOMOS considers that legal enforcement is essential to protect the component parts from encroachment in the future.
Management system
The nominated property is managed at the transnational, national, and component part levels. At the corridor level, the management is regulated by the Agreement, which was signed by the nominating States Parties. The Agreement establishes a Coordinating Committee and a Working Group for the overall protection and management of the nominated property. The Coordinating Committee conducts meetings with relevant stakeholders to resolve arising issues on the protection and management of the nominated property. The Coordinating Committee, together with the local authorities, provide the necessary tools and training to the managers and inspectors and encourage research and joint activities for the protection and promotion of the Silk Roads Corridor. The Working Group conducts meetings to discuss issues on the protection and management of the component parts at the request of the Coordinating Committee. The Working Group is also responsible for the monitoring of the state of conservation of the component parts and informs the Coordinating Committee on adopted decisions. IICAS acts as the secretariat for the World Heritage nomination of the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor.

At the national and component parts levels, each State Party has its own management arrangement, which is considered in the following paragraphs.

Tajikistan
The government department for cultural heritage protection is the Ministry of Culture who registers the monuments, administers and implements the legal norms related to historical and cultural monuments, develops and coordinates projects and programs for research, conservation, and restoration of cultural heritage. It also manages the funds.

The Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography of Tajikistan Academy of Sciences and the Interorganisational Commission provide expertise with regard to cultural heritage sites. Individual component parts in Tajikistan are managed by these two institutions. The inspection of the state of conservation of cultural heritage sites is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Culture, regional inspectors, museum reserves, museums, and local authorities. The funds are from the national budget and are complemented by additional extra-budgetary funds from the regional budget and sponsors on annual basis in accordance with the legislation.

Uzbekistan
The Cabinet of Ministers is the main government institution responsible for cultural heritage conservation. The Ministry of Culture under the Cabinet is in charge of managing cultural heritage sites through its Department of Cultural Heritage. The local branches of the Department are the managers for the component parts in Uzbekistan. They have the authority and responsibility to ensure that all the stakeholders involved in the management, protection, and conservation of the nominated property act in accordance to the World Heritage requirements. The site managers are also responsible for the required coordination with the World Heritage Centre through the Department. IICAS is a technical institution that supports the management of the component parts.

The national funds are allocated for the administration and implementation of long-term state programmes on preservation of cultural heritage sites, aided by regional and local budgets. Sponsorship and investment of non-governmental funds are allocated to solving separate issues on preservation, conservation, and use of the component parts. Funds from the state budget are allocated to mitigate emergencies.

Turkmenistan
The main governmental institution for cultural heritage is the Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan. The National Department for the Protection, Study and Restoration of Cultural Heritage Properties under the Ministry has two state historical and cultural reserves: Kerki (established in 1991) and Ancient Merv (established in 1987), which are the site managers of the component parts in the country. The reserves exercise the rights of permanent users of these cultural heritage sites and take the necessary measures to protect, preserve, manage, restore and monitor the state of conservation of the component parts.

The monitoring, conservation, and maintenance of the component parts are funded from a state budgetary and extra-budgetary basis annually.

In all nominating States Parties, the staff expertise includes site management, archaeology, documentation, conservation, monitoring, interpretation, and risk management. The overall staff level is adequate, but at the component part level, the number of staff on-site is generally low. The staff has access to capacity-building opportunities. In the past decade, with international support, capacity building has been intensively carried out on documentation, condition survey, and site management. The governments, in collaboration with universities and institutions in the nominating States Parties, also undertook a number of training courses on conservation and restoration and conducted some research projects.

Currently, individual component parts are lacking a management plan. However, in Annex III of the nomination dossier, four management objectives were developed for the future of the nominated property. These objectives are: (1) Conservation and Maintenance; (2) Protection and Management; (3) Tourism and Interpretation; and (4) Education and Local Community.

There is also a section in the management system’s action plan (Project Network) and Implementation Methods, in which it is indicated that Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) must be conducted in accordance with paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines for
the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments before implementing any development activities and major restorations within or around the component parts of the nominated property. The action plan lists twenty-two projects, of which ninety percent are at the component part level.

ICOMOS considers that the current management mechanisms are adequate for the protection of both the series as a whole and the individual component parts. As expressed in its Interim Report, ICOMOS also considers that it would be beneficial for each component part to have a management plan which is tailored to the specific needs of the site as a means of supporting local management and conservation. Within such a plan, a long-term vision of what the site will be in the future can be defined. With this vision, strategies, goals, and action plans can be developed, including aspects such as management, conservation, restoration, monitoring, presentation and interpretation, and also importantly, the financial resources for the implementation of such plans. In progressively implementing these management plans, ICOMOS believes that the condition of the sites should be brought into line with other Silk Roads World Heritage sites. In the additional information of February 2022, the States Parties agreed to develop such plans for each component part, with the timeframe and budget for accomplishing this initiative.

ICOMOS considers that capacity building is essential to the long-term conservation, management, and monitoring of the nominated property. ICOMOS noticed that in the past decade, the capacity has greatly improved, as shown in the quality of the documentation provided in the nomination dossier. ICOMOS stressed that regular funds for training the staff should be secured in order to sustain the capacity building. Regarding the need for expertise, ICOMOS considers that capacity building in the coming years, should be focused on conservation interventions using low-cost techniques. As indicated in the additional information in February 2022, the States Parties have placed capacity building as one of the top priorities with many on-going and planned activities to be initiated.

Visitor management
Most of the component parts are located at a short distance from large cities as Penjikent, Samarkand, Navoi, Bukhara, and Merv which could accommodate visitors and provide necessary services. However, of the nine component parts in Tajikistan seven are only accessible by foot, except the TJ-06 Mausoleum of Khoja Mukhammad Bashoro and TJ-09 Town of Ancient Penjikent component parts which can be accessed via roads. The visitor facilities are absent in seven component parts in Tajikistan, four in Uzbekistan, and all nine in Turkmenistan. There are nine component sites, one in Tajikistan and eight in Uzbekistan, that are living religious sites with adequate services for pilgrims and tourists. Heritage interpretation is not yet provided the component parts.

Based on the information provided by the States Parties and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation missions, interpretation is currently missing in all the component parts. ICOMOS notes that, in order to address this issue, the States Parties have started to undertake several initiatives. However, there appears to be no coordination between these initiatives. As mentioned in its Interim Report, ICOMOS considers that there should be an interpretation strategy developed for the overall nominated property, in order to present the individual component sites in a coordinated way. This strategy could determine what information should be presented at each component part to illustrate its contribution to the overall proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the Corridor and its relationship to the Silk Roads as a whole. It could also define what common elements might be shared by each component part, such as the logo of the Corridor, standardized interpretation boards, signs, a Corridor map showing the location of the component parts in the Corridor, etc. Under this strategy, each component site could design its own interpretation facilities and programs. In their response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the States Parties acknowledged the importance of the interpretation strategy and committed to developing one accordingly. In addition, the States Parties have started to develop a corridor website in five languages (Tajik, Uzbek, Turkmen, English, Russian) containing all information from the nomination dossier. ICOMOS welcomes these commitment and initiatives, and considers that a three-tier approach should be adopted, namely the overall concept of the Silk Roads, the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the Corridor, and the contribution of each component part to the Outstanding Universal Value.

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the overall tourism management of the nominated property is inadequate. ICOMOS considers that a significant amount of work is needed, and an interpretation strategy should be developed first in order to guide the forthcoming initiatives in a coordinated way.

Community involvement
The nomination dossier refers to the communities as the stakeholders such as “regional and city municipalities”, but there is no mention of any specific local communities such as ethnic or religious groups, or local people. However, it mentioned that tourism has brought benefits to the local people.

ICOMOS considers that local communities should be more engaged in site management, archaeological excavation, conservation and restoration, and tourist services for them to better benefit from the World Heritage status.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the existing legal system at the international, national, and site levels provides adequate protection for the nomination property. By coping with the limited available funds and human resources both from within the States Parties and outside, the current management mechanism is pragmatic and
effective. A Heritage Impact Assessment mechanism has been incorporated into the management system. Capacity building in the past decade has already shown positive results. Continuous staff training should be sustained, with an emphasis in the near future on low-cost conservation, monitoring, and protective techniques. ICOMOS considers that a management plan for each component part should be developed and implemented with monitoring mechanisms as an integral part. The visitor management and interpretation systems should be developed along with an interpretation strategy in place to coordinate all the activities. In summary, ICOMOS considers that the requirement for protection and management is overall met.

6 Conclusion

ICOMOS welcomes the detailed work that has gone into preparing this much-augmented nomination dossier, such as the extensive surveys and documentation that has been provided to a very high standard. The revised nomination has carefully addressed the weaknesses of the first nomination. It has allowed for twenty-two extra component parts to be added, and now provides a much clearer understanding of the specificities of this Corridor.

What is now well set out is how this corridor reflects the engine of the Silk Roads trade between the 2nd century BCE and the 16th century CE, the enormous wealth generated by merchants, as exemplified in the TJ-02 Castle on Mount Mugh, and TJ-09 Town of Ancient Penjikent component parts, the transformational impact that the trade had on the lives of communities, in terms of agricultural development, and the adoption of new religions.

The nominated property is at the heart of the Silk Roads networks linking trade roads and corridors from east-west as well as north-south. It acted not only as a central nodal point of international trade in Central Asia that channelled much of the exchanges between the 2nd century BCE and 16th century CE, but also as a melting pot of ethnicities, cultures, religions, science, and technologies. The nomination dossier presents the property in a convincing way that effectively supports the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and describes its strengths and challenges. The comparative analysis justifies the consideration of nominated property as a whole on the World Heritage List, while the internal comparison justifies the selection of its individual component parts. The property meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (v), the conditions of integrity and authenticity, and overall satisfies the requirement for protection and management.

While ICOMOS considers that what is presented is significant to justify Outstanding Universal Value, it nevertheless also considers that further component sites could be considered as potential future extensions of the current nomination, when conditions allow it, to strengthen certain aspects, particularly water management. The Zarafshan River basin was an area of intensive agriculture supported by a large network of canals and lakes. This aspect and the structures associated with it are currently underrepresented. In particular, ICOMOS considers that the remains of the Sheibanikhan Water Divider Bridge could be considered together with the remains of associated water management structures, and other irrigation systems as extensions to the property.

The conservation interventions in the past have led to the loss of authenticity, while more recent conservation measures observed the internationally accepted principles.

The majority of component parts are vulnerable to rising damp coupled with salt activities. This threat to the property should be addressed in the future through research and experiments.

While the legal protection of the nominated property is overall satisfactory, law enforcement is essential for the protection to be effective. The overall management system is adequate.

An effective interpretation strategy at the Corridor, section and component part levels should be developed, whose approach is adopted by all States Parties.

In summary, the nominated property demonstrates Outstanding Universal Value, meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (v), and conditions of integrity and authenticity. Its protection, conservation and management are overall satisfactory.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (v).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor is one of the key sections of the Silk Roads in Central Asia that connects other corridors from all directions. Comprising thirty-four component parts located in rugged mountains, fertile river valleys, and uninhabited desert, the 866-kilometre corridor runs from east to west along the Zarafshan River and further southwest following the ancient caravan roads crossing the Karakum Desert to the Merv Oasis.

Dotted along the corridor passing through varied geographical areas such as highland, piedmont, dry steppe, oases, fertile valleys, and arid-desert zones, the selected component parts reflect the complexity of landscapes and the adaption of societies to the control of the Silk Roads movement and trade. The variation in
human responses between the fertile valleys and deltas, and the desert and river crossings, are clearly reflected in the selection of small towns, forts, and way stations; while the outcomes of the political and social capital generated by trading contacts are reflected in the range of commercial, elite, and religious buildings included in the nomination. It was the place where the Sogdians, some of the most international merchants in the world history, flourished. The control of these corridors was of vital significance to many of the great Silk Roads empires, such as the Sogdian, the Partian, the Sassanian, the Timurid and the Seljuk, as they were fundamental to long-distance exchange along the Silk Roads.

Along the corridor, a large quantity of goods and some high-value commodities from the East and the West were moved and traded, and many famous local products were brought out of there to feed the desires of the populations afar. People travelled, settled, conquered, or were defeated there, making it a melting pot of ethnicities, cultures, religions, sciences, and technologies. During the historic period of the Silk Roads between the 2nd century BCE and the 16th century CE, the Corridor had experienced three prosperous periods: the rise of Sogdians merchants between the 5th and 6th centuries CE; the thriving trade with the Muslim world and beyond between the 10th and 12th centuries CE, and significant development of science, culture, urban planning and economics under the Mongols' rule from the 13th century to the 17th century CE.

**Criterion (ii):** The Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor exhibits an important interchange of human values over a span of eighteen centuries in the heart of Central Asia as demonstrated by the architecture, monuments, town planning, landscapes, arts, and technology of its component parts which reflect diversified cultures, ethnic traditions, beliefs, and technologies in both distinct and fused ways. Being one of the key sections at the centre of the Silk Roads network linking multiple ethnic regions, which has been alternatively controlled by nearby great empires, the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor clearly demonstrates the diversity of populations, and the cultures and traditions, ideas and beliefs, as well as knowledge and technologies associated with them.

**Criterion (iii):** The territory of the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor is overlaid by rich layers of cultural depositions which accumulated throughout history, which is an exceptional testimony to the cultural traditions of the societies that were shaped by the trade and exchanged along the Corridor. These are evidenced by the wealth of the Sogdian merchants as displayed by their luxurious residences, the Sogdian temples with fire altar and murals, the Achaemenid citadels, the early Islamic hypostyle mosques with a large minaret, the rich Sufism buildings after the Great Arab Conquest, the advanced irrigation systems, as well as the wide spectrum of the caravan service facilities that had been provided and maintained by the successive empires controlling the Corridor.

**Criterion (v):** The Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor is an outstanding example of traditional human settlements and land use that is representative of human interaction with nature. The territory of the Corridor covers diverse geographic areas such as highlands, piedmonts, dry steppes, oases and fertile valleys, and arid-desert zones, which dictated the town planning, architectural designs, agricultural and other production activities. It was also the people’s determination, initiatives, and ingenious designs that transformed the harsh land into one on which populations thrived.

**Integrity**

The integrity of the property is at two levels: the corridor level and the individual component part level. At the corridor level, the diversity of forms and functions of the selected component parts, including mausoleums, sardobas, caravanserais, minarets, mosques, religious complexes, settlements, and remains of ancient cities, fully demonstrate the active role the Corridor once played in history as a nodal section, which not only linked other corridors but also contributed to the trade with locally produced goods. The serial property as a whole also showcases the exchange of ideas and knowledge along the Silk Roads as the result of the movement of people and goods. At the individual component part level, all the attributes that are needed to convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are included in the property. The factors affecting the property, such as development pressure, are largely under the control of the States Parties.

**Authenticity**

The authenticity of the property resides at both the corridor level and the individual component part level. At the corridor level, the direction of the route, the geographical conditions, and the landscape settings that had shaped this section remain relatively unchanged over time. At the component part level, the location, the planning, and the layout of the sites remain unchanged. With many stretches of roads still used for transportation as they were used in the past, and most of the religious buildings and cemeteries still performing their original functions today. Many archaeological sites have been excavated and backfilled to protect the materials from deterioration, with the great majority of the portion remaining untouched, providing an opportunity for future research and the recovery of authentic data. The original materials and designs are found in most of the buildings. Conservation interventions conducted on the buildings observed internationally accepted principles such as minimal interventions. Reconstruction for interpretation purposes was undertaken in such a way that the reconstructed parts are distinguishable from the original structures and materials.

**Management and protection requirements**

The legal protection operates at the international, national, and component part levels. At the international level, an Agreement between the Ministry of Culture of the
Republic of Tajikistan, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan for common promotion, management, and protection of the components of the Serial Transnational Nomination “Silk Roads: Zeravshan-Karakum Corridor” was signed among the States Parties in 2020 as the legal basis for the protection and management of the property. At the national level, all thirty-four nominated component parts are state-owned and listed under state-level legal designations. At the site level, all thirty-four component parts have been meticulously surveyed, studied, and documented, the necessary measures required for their preservation are implemented, and land-use restrictions as well as planning regulations necessary for conservation purposes, are put into effect.

The Zeravshan-Karakum Corridor is managed at the transnational, national, and component part levels. At the corridor level, the management is regulated by the Agreement, which establishes a Coordinating Committee and a Working Group for the overall protection and management of the property. The Coordinating Committee conducts meetings with relevant stakeholders to resolve arising issues on the protection and management of the Corridor. The Coordinating Committee, together with the local authorities also provides the necessary tools and training to the managers and inspectors and encourage research and joint activities for the protection and promotion of the Silk Roads Corridor. The Working Group conducts meetings to discuss issues on protection and management of the component parts at the request of the Coordinating Committee. The Working Group is also responsible for the monitoring of the state of conservation of the component parts and informing the Coordinating Committee on adopted decisions. The International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS), based in Samarkand (Uzbekistan), facilitates the sharing of information among the countries during management processes. It also acts as the secretariat of the nomination of the Zeravshan-Karakum Corridor.

At the national level, all the component parts are owned by the States Parties, and designated as protected heritage sites. Ministries of Culture of the States Parties are respectively responsible for the management of the cultural heritage in their countries in terms of state registration, policy-making, administration and budget allocation, among others.

At the component part level, each site is managed by the regional branches or governmental institutions under the Ministries of Culture of the States Parties. The costs of site management, maintenance, conservation, and monitoring are mainly covered by the central and local government annual budgetary fund, while national and international ex-budgetary aids are allocated for specific projects such as conservation campaigns, capacity building, and research. Technical support is provided by international resources, as well as universities, and academic institutions of the States Parties.

Staff capacity has been significantly improved in the past decade, but can be further strengthened in the future. A site management plan with a monitoring mechanism should be developed for each component part, and an interpretation strategy should be adopted.

**Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS further recommends that the States Parties give consideration to the following:

- a) Developing and implementing a five-year management plan with monitoring mechanisms as an integral part,
- b) Developing and implementing a coordinated interpretation strategy to guide all the interpretation initiatives at the component parts,
- c) Establishing visitor management systems at all component parts with basic infrastructure, safety measures, service, and interpretation,
- d) Continuing capacity building for on-site staff members,
- e) Undertaking research to address the problem of rising damp coupled with salt activities that damage the lower portion of historic structures of the component parts,
- f) Engaging local communities in site management, archaeological excavation, conservation and restoration, and tourist services for them to better benefit from the World Heritage status,
- g) Undertaking research on artificial irrigation systems that helped the growth of the populations and cities in the region, with the view to consider potential extensions in the future of the current nomination,
- h) Considering the Sheibanikhan Water Divider Bridge in the future as an extension of the current nomination when conditions allow it,
- i) Investigating on the location and extent of the TJ-07 Toksankoriz Irrigation System component part and adjusting the boundaries of the property area and the relevant buffer zone accordingly, so as to cover the whole historical irrigation system, through a minor boundary modification request,
- j) Undertaking a study on the associative values of the necropolis, the pilgrim route, and the sacred spring outside the buffer zone of the TJ-06 Mausoleum of Khoja Mukhammad Bashoro component part, taking into consideration the requirements of integrity and authenticity, and considering adjustments of the boundaries of...
this component part, through a minor boundary modification request, if relevant,

k) Incorporating the three World Heritage sites along the Corridor into the management and interpretation systems of the current nomination,

l) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session;
Map showing the location of the nominated components
III Cultural properties

A Africa
New nomination
Extension

B Asia – Pacific
New nominations
Nomination referred back by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

C Europe – North America
New nominations
Nominations deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

D Latin America and the Caribbean
New nomination
Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites of Bronze Age (Mongolia) No 1621rev

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites of Bronze Age

Location
Ikhtamir, Battsengel and Öndör-Ulaan counties Arkhangai province
Bürentogtokh county
Khövsgöl province
Mongolia

Brief description
The serial property of four component parts comprises Bronze Age and Early Iron Age deer stone monuments and related sites located within the eastern and northern slopes of the Khangai Ridge in central Mongolia. Dating from about 1200 to 600 BCE, Mongolian deer stones relate to ceremonial and funerary practices. They stand up to four metres tall and are set directly in the ground as single standing stones or in groups. Covered with either highly stylised or representational engravings of stags, deer stones and associated structures are the most important surviving structures belonging to the Bronze Age culture of Eurasian nomadic peoples. Deer stones are almost always located in the context of complexes called *khirgisüürs* and sacrificial altars. The serial property’s four component parts – Khoid Tamir, Jargalantyn Am, Urtyn Bulag and Uushigiin Övör – are testimony to the culture of Eurasian Bronze Age nomads that evolved and then slowly disappeared between the 2nd and 1st millennia BCE.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of four sites.

Included in the Tentative List
19 December 2014

Background
The World Heritage Committee examined the nomination of the Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites, the Heart of Bronze Age Culture (Mongolia) at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou, China /Online, 2021):

Decision: 44 COM 8B.14
The World Heritage Committee,
1. Having examined Documents WHC/21/44.COM/8B and WHC/21/44.COM/INF.8B1,
2. Refers the nomination of Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites, the Heart of Bronze Age Culture, Mongolia, back to the State Party to allow it to:
   a) Revise the overall narrative of the nominated property to reflect the whole of the archaeological complexes, portraying a greater balance regarding deer stones and the other substantial attributes notably the *khirgisuurs*,
   b) Consolidate the information provided for the comparative analysis with clear criteria used consistently, and with summary findings in a table,
   c) Review the justification for inscription of the nominated property based on a revised overall narrative which will provide an adequate understanding of the various attributes, their relationships and meaning; in the case of criterion (i), this should also include the cultural role of the design qualities of the deer stones,
   d) Extend the buffer zone to the south of the Uushigiin Övör component part to include the area where there is currently a tent hotel, with the objective of relocating the hotel outside of the extended buffer zone,
   e) Take all necessary steps to provide comprehensive legal protection to the component parts of the nominated property as soon as possible,
   f) Fully implement the management plan,
   g) Provide personnel and resources for the administration in charge of the protection of the nominated property;
3. Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:
   a) Completing the planned survey and documentation work as soon as possible, and extending documentation to include the important elements in the landscape setting,
   b) Adopting a landscape management approach for the setting of the nominated property,
   c) Preparing and implementing a risk management plan and a tourism plan,
   d) Implementing additional conservation measures as part of the national programme,
   e) Avoiding further re-erection of deer stones without a robust methodology consistent with best conservation practice, and consideration of remedial measures as needed,
   f) Giving emphasis in the monitoring arrangements to the actual state of conservation of the identified attributes,
   g) Defining the carrying capacity of the land for grazing, and reviving traditional methods of pasture rotation,
   h) Establishing a timetable for the removal of the remnant machinery of the disused coal mine in the southwestern part of the buffer zone of the Khoid Tamir component part,
   i) Improving the interpretive materials for the nominated property,
   j) Updating the figures of the surfaces of areas and buffer zones according to the revised boundaries for the nominated property;
4. Also recommends that the name of the nominated property be amended according to the revised narrative and that the “Heart of Bronze Age Culture” be removed from the title.

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Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission previously visited the nominated property from 14 to 22 August 2019.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
The State Party provided additional information, responding to the decision of the World Heritage Committee on 28 January 2022.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
This serial property comprises Bronze Age and Early Iron Age deer stone monuments and related sites in central Mongolia within the eastern and northern slopes of the Khangai Ridge. The four component parts are Khoid Tamir, Jargalantyn Am, Urtyn Bulag and Uushigiin Övör. The original nomination was for three component parts, but in response to a suggestion from ICOMOS, the State Party decided to include an additional component part, originally located within the buffer zone of the Jargalantyn Am component part. The two component parts share a single buffer zone.

Mongolia has important monuments and sites associated with the Bronze Age culture of Eurasian nomadic peoples. These include deer stone monuments dating from about 1200 to 600 BCE. These are almost always located in the context of large complexes that include khirgisüürs (burial mounds), sacrificial altars and other elements. The Mongolian deer stone monuments and their associated complexes relate to ceremonial and funerary practices.

Deer stones range in height up to four metres, with engravings of stylised stag images or representational images. These elaborately decorated stones are set directly in the ground as single stones or in groups. A deer stone is generally divided into three ornamented anthropomorphic sections: an upper section that includes the head, a middle section that includes the torso, and a lower section that includes the lower body.

Within Eurasia there are three relatively distinct forms of deer stones. The nominated serial property displays two of these: the Mongol-Transbaikal type (Mongolian type), which is characterised by stylised stag images; and the Eurasian type, which does not have images. A third type, called Sayan-Altai, features realistically depicted animals.

Most examples of the latter are today found in the Russian Federation, with only a few in Mongolia.

The four component parts represent major concentrations of deer stones and significant concentrations of surface monuments of a funerary and ceremonial nature. There appears to be a clear association of the deer stones and surface monuments such as khirgisüürs with specific rivers and mountains, and all component parts are located within low valleys.

Deer stones are often accompanied by khirgisüürs. These are composite sites with round stone mounds at their centres, and square or round stone enclosures (sometimes referred to as fences), with many small stone heaps (or satellites) outside the eastern and southern stone enclosure rows, and sometimes with small stone circles outside the stone enclosures. The largest khirgisüür in Mongolia’s Khanui River valley, in the Urtyn Bulag component part, have more than 1,700 small satellite mounds, each potentially containing a horse skull. Such large khirgisüürs may reflect the existence of powerful leaders from the period.

There are both human burials and remains of horses (assumed to be sacrificial offerings) at the khirgisüürs. The burials and the deer stones are from the same period and are considered to honour departed leaders, with ceremonial sacrifices and feasting occurring at each location. Deer stones with khirgisüürs are interpreted as relating to individuals of the highest social position, whereas khirgisüürs without deer stones relate to individuals of lesser social status.

The area of the four component parts totals 9,768.03 ha, with buffer zones totalling 32,482.07 ha. The range of petroglyphs found within each component part are described in detail by the State Party.

The large Khoid Tamir component part offers the richest assemblage of surface monuments with khirgisüürs, mounds, circles and deer stones. This component part has a spectacular natural setting and includes burials, sacrificial stone structures and a stone quarry.

The Jargalantyn Am component part (the northern most of the two component parts in this area) is a large complex consisting of twenty-six deer stones and related features. This component part has been described as the largest Bronze Age offering complex in Mongolia, including numerous ‘horse mounds’.

The Urtyn Bulag component part (the southern Jargalantyn Am component part) is dominated by very large khirgisüürs (north and south), possibly the largest in Mongolia.

The Uushigiin Övör component part is the most elaborate and best preserved of the four components. The deer stones are of two types, the Mongol-Transbaikal type and the Eurasian type. Despite some fallen or broken deer stones, the site was not modified by later nomadic
populations as it occurred in the other component parts. Of special note is the presence of a deer stone with its depiction of a human face in a most elaborate form, which has played a key role in understanding the meaning of deer stones.

From the Late to Middle Holocene, the central Mongolian landscape assumed its present mountain steppe character. The herding of domesticated animals began to dominate the way of life, and the low valleys became important for their pastures. With the transition to horse-riding nomadism in the mid-2nd millennium BCE, these valleys were important for pasturing domesticated animals, and there is evidence of significant populations.

In the cultures of northern Eurasia, stone monuments played a key role as representations of power and remembrance. In the Late Bronze Age in Mongolia (1200-600 BCE), deer stone monuments and khirgisüürs burials and ceremonial mounds dominated the steppe landscape. Deer stones are widely distributed throughout Eurasia. The State Party estimates that approximately 1,500 have been discovered from Mongolia to Ukraine, and from the Ural Mountains to northern Tianshan. However, more than eighty percent of all known deer stones are in Mongolia.

The steppe and river valleys provided ideal environments for pastoral communities to develop complex societies. There is a uniformity of construction and erection techniques for deer stones and related funeral/ritual monuments throughout the steppe region. The meanings of deer stones are not known, but they are believed to refer to heroic ancestors and relate to the world view and rituals of Late Bronze Age communities of the region.

Radiocarbon analysis, mostly from Mongolian deer stone complexes, has provided dates in the range of the 13th to 7th centuries BCE (Late Bronze Age), correlated to the khirgisüürs that are spatially associated with them.

Nomads who lived more than 3,200 years ago erected scores of deer stones and khirgisüürs as well as thousands of sacrificial monuments in many places in the Khoid Tamir valley. Five sacrificial structures have been dated to 1200-760 BCE. Subsequently, these sites were used or changed by later peoples. Around the 8th to 7th centuries BCE, later peoples made slab tombs using the deer stones and the sacrificial structures, altering the original form and appearance of these complexes. Following this, in the 6th to 8th centuries CE, ancient Turks used deer stones as parapets and tethers, and as Kurgan steles. Nonetheless, there are fully intact deer stones found within the nominated component parts. These later phases are important manifestations of the cultural sequence of the ancient nomads of the later period of the Bronze Age in Mongolia.

State of conservation
In general, the deer stones and other identified attributes display an acceptable state of conservation, with limited impact from human or animal activities. The nomination dossier documents the state of conservation of all documented deer stones, khirgisüürs and other features in the four component parts, noting in particular broken stones and robbed or destroyed elements.

At the Khoid Tamir component part, twenty-four deer stones out of 113 are in their original locations, and sixty-three were re-used in ancient times for slab graves or parapets, and as steles, reflecting the complex cultural history of these sites. Many of the deer stones have been restored or re-erected and are reasonably well-preserved. The State Party has recorded the deer stones that have been broken (44) and where the engravings have become indistinct (52). The central mounds of the khirgisüürs have been looted, although the enclosures and stone mounds are well preserved, and the rock art appears to be well preserved. The stone quarry associated with this component part is also well preserved.

At the Jargalantyn Am component part, most of the deer stones are complete, although many were re-used in the creation of slab graves, but all stones have now been re-erected. In some cases, the stones have been fixed using cement. Also at this component part are examples of the use of the stone fragments from broken deer stones to support and fix other deer stones.

At the Urtyn Bulag component part, the central mound of the south khirgisüürs has been badly damaged by looting, but the surrounding stone fence and the small stone mounds or circles are very well preserved.

At the Uushigijn Övör component part, fourteen stones are standing while ten others have fallen and are in a fragmented form. Previously fallen deer stones have been re-erected. However, some of the stones have been oriented to directions other than the east. There has also been some use of cement in re-erecting stones. The component part has a wire-mesh protective fence that cuts across the circular enclosure of one of the khirgisüürs.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the previous technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that overall the state of conservation of the nominated property is satisfactory.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the previous ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are grazing animal impacts, tourism development, disused mining infrastructure in the buffer zone of one component part, and unsympathetic protective fencing.

The State Party acknowledges that there are significant pressures of pasture erosion and desertification occurring throughout Mongolia, although this is not particularly severe in the nominated component parts. While grass fires are a possibility and could affect the deer stones, there has been no evidence of damage from past fires.
There are no mining or cultivation activities in the nominated component parts, and the impact from traditional grazing has been minimal. Nonetheless, the carrying capacity of the land for grazing should be defined and monitored.

Various past activities that caused impacts are no longer occurring, such as the use of cement repairs. The re-use of decorated stones for animal shelters has ceased. There are no intrusions from the construction of major roads, settlements or industrial development. There are no commercial activities apart from those related to tourism. At the southwestern part of the buffer zone of the Khoid Tamir component part there is a disused coal mine with remnant machinery.

The Uushigiin Övör component part has a number of fragments of deer stones which may be at risk of being taken by visitors. As noted above, the component part has a wire-mesh protective fence that cuts across the circular enclosure of one of the khirgisüürs, and the information provided by the State Party confirms that there are plans to relocate the fence. In the buffer zone just south of the component part boundary is a tent hotel that needs to be relocated outside the buffer zone. The State Party has advised that discussions have commenced with the owner of the hotel in order to resolve this issue.

ICOMOS considers that the factors affecting the property are relatively minor, and with effective management they should be satisfactorily addressed.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory and that factors affecting the nominated property are grazing animal impacts, tourism development, disused mining infrastructure in the buffer zone of one component part, and unsympathetic protective fencing.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Of both exceptional beauty and cultural significance, the nominated serial property constitutes an outstanding example of Bronze Age megalithic monumental art of the highest quality.
- As masterworks of Late Bronze Age culture, the deer stone monuments demonstrate an extraordinary variety in their ornamentation, yet all feature stylised stag images. The images also sometimes feature anthropomorphic elements or various objects, tools and weapons.
- The deer stones and their related khirgisüürs demonstrate the artistic vitality and cultural practices of Late Bronze Age Eurasian nomadic peoples.
- The property is an exceptional testimony to the ceremonial funeral practices and culture of the Eurasian Bronze Age nomads, which had evolved and disappeared slowly from the 2nd to the 1st millennia BCE.
- The property portrays an outstanding example of a type of animal-style art and archaeological landscape that represents a significant stage of Bronze Age culture in Central and North Asia.

Based on the revised nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated serial property are the deer stones and related sites, including khirgisüürs containing human remains, pavement areas, circular or square rock fences, satellite mounds containing horse remains, and satellite boulder ovals or rings/hearth, as well as a quarry, together with their landscape settings.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis is presented in three parts: the first and second parts consider similar properties inside and outside Mongolia, and the third part considers properties with similarities that are already inscribed on the World Heritage List or on Tentative Lists.

Approximately 1,500 deer stones have been identified throughout Eurasia, although more than eighty percent of these are found in Mongolia. The revised comparative analysis establishes the importance of the selected component parts within the sites identified within Mongolia and neighbouring regions in Russia and China. The State Party has clearly organised the comparative information in a table that indicates the number and range of attributes, the quality of the art and the presence of special art figures. The authenticity and integrity of each compared site is also included.

The analysis notes that a number of large sites identical to the proposed nomination are to be found in parts of the Khangai Range and in the Mongolian Altai. The Khoid Tamir complex is considered to provide the richest assemblage of rock art, deer stones and sacrificial structures, as well as a spectacular natural setting. The Jargalantyn Am and Uushigiin Övör component parts are claimed to have the largest complexes with megalithic deer stones and sacrificial structures from the Bronze Age. The Urtyn Bulag is notable for its large khirgisüürs. The analysis contends that the nominated property has greater authenticity and higher integrity than the other Mongolian sites identified and supports the rationale for the selection of the serial component parts.

The comparative analysis considers similar sites outside Mongolia, where more than 300 deer stones have been identified. The State Party notes that the vast majority of these sites do not have a khirgisüür complex and are of the Sayan-Altai type, which is artistically different from the deer stones found in the nominated component parts. The analysis also indicates issues with integrity and authenticity that set the nominated component parts apart from others in the Russian Federation and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in northwest China.
analysis also refers to sites in Eastern Europe, though the anthropomorphic stones found there have no known relationship to the Eurasian deer stone tradition.

The analysis also considers properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. It notes that there are no directly comparable properties currently on the List or on any Tentative Lists. Nonetheless, the analysis considers rock art sites of the Stone and Bronze Ages in the context of a chronological and typological framework. However, none of these sites include deer stones and khirgisüürs.

With regard to other rock art sites in Asia, only the Petroglyphs within the Archaeological Landscape of Tanbaly (Kazakhstan, 2004, criterion (iii)) includes stag images that can be compared with those of the nominated property. A primary difference is the presentation of images on stone steles that are components of funerary and ceremonial sites.

Another framework for comparison relates to burial monuments and sites that have a megalithic character. The analysis notes the presence of many such properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. The analysis suggests that the most relevant comparisons can be made with standing-stone megalithic monuments in Europe and the British Isles dating from the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. While these megaliths are distinctly different and do not have images and engravings, they do have similar associations with rituals, sacrifices and religious beliefs.

At a number of sites, megalithic monuments are associated with dolmens and tumuli, but the analysis contends that these are totally different from the khirgisüürs within the nominated property. The analysis also notes that none of the megalithic monuments considered are associated with nomadic cultures or with the emergence of a new cultural complex in the Late Bronze Age. Finally, the analysis notes that most of the megalithic sites date to the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age and are older than those in the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (i): to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated serial property constitutes an outstanding example of Late Bronze Age megalithic monumental art. The deer stone monuments demonstrate an extraordinary variety in their ornamentation, yet all refer to an ideal image type of human forms wrapped in the body of a great antlered stag, an early ‘animal art style’ in central Eurasia. Both the deer stones and their attendant khirgisüürs demonstrate the artistic vitality and creative genius of human achievement in prehistoric times.

ICOMOS considers that the deer stones demonstrate a high intellectual or symbolic endowment, and a high level of artistic skill, reflecting the Eurasian nomadic cultures in the Bronze Age. Based on the outstanding creative and visual qualities of the deer stones, ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been demonstrated.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the property is an exceptional testimony to the ceremonial funeral practice and culture of Eurasian Bronze Age nomads, which evolved and then slowly disappeared between the 2nd and 1st millennia BCE. The component parts illustrate the shift to the emergence of a horse-riding nomadic society, with increased social hierarchy.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is a testimony to the culture of Bronze Age Eurasian nomads. The impressive qualities of the property, with its rich material expressions of culture are indicators of the importance of this testimony. In information provided in January 2022, the State Party further strengthened the evidence in relation to this criterion and provided a more coherent explanation of the relationships between deer stones, khirgisüürs and other attributes, the presence and role of human burials, and other archaeological evidence. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is strongly demonstrated.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property illustrates an outstanding example of type of animal style art and monumental heritage complexes that represent a significant stage of Bronze Age history in Central and North Asia. In justifying this criterion, the State Party refers to the landscapes where these complexes are most often located.

ICOMOS considers that there is insufficient evidence to enable the nominated property to be considered outstanding within the framing necessary for criterion (iv), and that the arguments presented are more strongly applied in relation to criteria (i) and (iii). ICOMOS therefore concludes that this criterion has not been demonstrated.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i) and (iii), but that criterion (iv) has not been demonstrated.
**Integrity and authenticity**

**Integrity**

The integrity of the nominated serial property is based on the location of the deer stone monuments within the context of spatially extended complexes that also include *khirisigsüürs* containing human remains, pavement areas, circular or square rock fences, satellite mounds containing horse remains, and satellite boulder ovals or rings/hearth. These elements demonstrate the monumental art and provide testimony to the ceremonial funeral practice and culture of Eurasian Bronze Age nomads.

The nominated property is affected by development in minor ways only. There is some tourism development which is located too close to the Uushigiin Övör component part and the residual impact of abandoned mining in the buffer zone of the Khoid Tamir component part.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property includes all the elements necessary to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and the selection of component sites has been justified. The integrity of the whole series and of each component part has been demonstrated.

**Authentication**

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on its form, design, materials, location and setting. In support of the statement on authenticity, the State Party has provided information about the archaeological research undertaken within the nominated components.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets the requirements of authenticity for the whole series and for each of the component parts. The form and design of the property is largely original, noting that some deer stones have fallen or are broken into fragments, and in many instances stones have been re-erected. In some cases, there would appear to be a degree of conjecture involved in deer stone re-erections, impacting authenticity. The materials, location and setting of the attributes have been retained.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

**Boundaries**

The boundaries of the component parts of the nominated property incorporate most identified attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and appear generally well defined. There are some sites located within the buffer zones, such as a large *khirisigsüür* and several deer stones in the western part of the buffer zone of the Uushigiin Övör component part.

The buffer zones generally provide adequate protection for the property. The buffer zones reflect the topography of the landscape surrounding the component parts, incorporating hills and river valleys. Given the importance of the landscape context of the nominated component parts, these aspects of the buffer zone are important. ICOMOS recommends that the buffer zone to the south of the Uushigiin Övör component part be extended to include the area where there is currently a tent hotel. The hotel should be relocated outside the extended buffer zone, further away from the nominated property.

Based on the revised nomination dossier, there are a total of twenty-two residents in the nominated property, and 179 within the buffer zones.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. The nominated serial property demonstrates criteria (i) and (iii), and the conditions of authenticity and integrity for the whole series as well as of the component parts have been met.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

While some inventory work has been undertaken, additional survey work is required. All of the deer stones have been inventoried, and it is understood that an inventory of the component parts is being updated.

The National Programme for the Protection of Stone Heritage Properties in Mongolia will prepare an updated registration and inventory of the four component parts.

There is currently limited documentation about the significant elements of the landscapes in which these complexes are located. As previously recommended, ICOMOS considers that a landscape management approach is necessary for the setting of the component parts, and that continued documentation is required for the important elements in these landscapes.

**Conservation measures**

Active conservation measures in recent decades include the uncovering and re-erection of half-buried and fallen deer stones. This work has restored the stones to their original settings and orientation, with some exceptions.

The Government of Mongolia adopted a National Programme for the Protection of Stone Heritage Properties in Mongolia in 2019 that contains several activities at the nominated property, including the replacement of the poorly sited protective fence at the Uushigiin Övör component part.

While the proposed conservation measures are appropriate, additional measures and remediation should be considered to address a range of issues. These include the past use of cement and the incorrect orientation of some re-erected deer stones. If any deer
stones are still incorporated into slab graves, careful consideration should be given to whether re-erection is appropriate, given the values that may be associated with this later cultural phase. If re-erection of the deer stones is ultimately determined to be appropriate, mitigation measures such as full heritage recording of the slab graves should be undertaken.

ICOMOS observes that there has been a degree of conjecture involved in past reconstructions and the determination of locations for re-erected stones. For this reason, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party does not undertake any further re-erection of deer stones without a robust methodology consistent with best conservation practice.

**Monitoring**

A baseline condition assessment of the nominated property is being undertaken from 2020 to 2022, and the State Party has provided a suite of key monitoring indicators. These are generally satisfactory, although they could be further improved through introducing new indicators that focus on monitoring the actual state of conservation of the identified attributes, and alignment with the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures undertaken as part of the national programme are appropriate. No further re-erection of deer stones should be undertaken without a robust conservation methodology. The monitoring arrangements are generally satisfactory, but greater emphasis should be placed on measuring the actual state of conservation of the identified attributes and it would be also advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

**5 Protection and management**

**Legal protection**

According to the State Party, the primary mechanisms for protecting the nominated property are the traditional practices undertaken by local people, based on their respect for the old relics and spiritual objects. They also value the grasslands and customarily do not disturb them by digging. This traditional protection has been formalised by means of local people working under contract to the local governing administrations.

Legal protection is provided through the Mongolian Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage (2014) and the List of Immovable Historical and Cultural Heritage Properties under State, Provincial and Local (Soum) Protection (2008). Protection applies to the four component parts via various provincial and local proclamations and lists. Khoid Tamir and Uushigün Övör are included in the State list, while Jargalantyn Am and Urtyn Bulag are in provincial and local lists. Uushigün Övör is also a monument under State Special Protection.

**Management system**

The nominated component parts are all State-owned, and local people play a major role in managing the property. In addition, the Government of Mongolia has created the National Programme for the Protection of Stone Heritage Properties in Mongolia as a major protective measure.

A concise management plan has recently been developed and includes a revised landscape approach and research objectives. The management plan now requires implementation. The administration/management office for the property is responsible for implementing the management plan. Technical assistance and guidelines are to be provided by the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO, the Mongolian National Committee for World Heritage and the UNESCO-accredited Foundation for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage.

The management plan outlines a range of objectives, details about the management authority and its role, and lists a range of activities (together with responsibilities for implementation and broad timeframes). Long-term objectives are identified, although the State Party has indicated that many are achievable within three to five years.

The State Party indicates that, in accordance with the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage, the protection administration will be established and provided with personnel and resources following World Heritage inscription. The State Party has indicated that there will be eighteen to twenty staff members working in the protection administration and that additional expert staff are available in the two provinces.

Some additional management tools have been identified for future development, including a risk management plan for the nominated property. The State Party acknowledges that tourism currently lacks sufficient management and monitoring, and this has been identified in the implementation plan. As noted above, ICOMOS considers a landscape management approach is required for the setting of the nominated property.

In relation to financial resources, there is no body responsible for funding the management and protection of the property. The State Party has identified some funds available in existing budgets as well as possible additional sources. However, limited resources will be an issue for the long-term management of this property.

**Visitor management**

While there are publications related to the deer stones, no on-site interpretation is provided. However, the archaeological research centre at Khoid Tamir is providing some information for local people and tourists. A tourist information centre is proposed to be built next to the archaeological research centre and a specific route for tourists is being established. Proposed future activities include making a documentary film and publishing a book about the deer stones.
Information provided by the State Party reports that a “comprehensive tourism and risk management plan” has already been formulated, including tourism master plans developed at the province level. The information provided is brief, and ICOMOS recommends continuing attention to these tools, taking into account the guidance available from the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

At the provincial level, a tourism route has been created specifically for the four component parts, and they have been included in other tourism routes. Tourist camps have been constructed and road access has been improved. Visitor facilities and infrastructure will be regulated.

Community involvement
The involvement of the local nomadic peoples is vital to the current management of the property. As noted above, they respect the spiritual qualities of the property, and their traditional practices protect the pasture and do not usually include excavation activities. Their role is formalised through contracts with the local governing administrations.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the protection and management are adequate but should be further improved. The management plan should be fully implemented and additional planning tools should be completed, including more detailed work on the plans for risk management and sustainable tourism. Personnel and resources for the protection administration should be provided, and full implementation of the management plan undertaken as soon as possible.

While some documentation exists for the nominated property, further survey work is required, and the State Party has scheduled this additional work, including important elements in the landscape settings. ICOMOS recommends that the State Party develop a landscape management approach for the settings of the nominated component parts.

Every effort should be made to support the local community in the effective protection and management of the property. The role of the local nomadic peoples is important to the long-term and effective protection and management of the nominated property. This is supplemented by legislative protection at the national level, as well the development of protective instruments at the provincial and local levels.

Visitor management and interpretation are adequate but require improvement. The future impact of visitors is a matter of potential concern, and ICOMOS has recommended the relocation of a tent hotel that is too close to the Uushigiin Övör component part.

6 Conclusion
The Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites of Bronze Age is a serial property of four component parts that includes examples of high-quality megalithic monumental art created by Eurasian nomadic peoples. These form key parts of larger complexes that include khirgisüürs (burial mounds) and other site attributes. The deer stone monuments exhibit an extraordinary variety of both highly stylised and representational engravings of stags.

The decision taken by the World Heritage Committee at its extended 44th session (2021) indicated the potential of this serial property to be inscribed on the World Heritage List and outlined a number of specific issues that needed to be addressed. The State Party should be commended for its attention to these matters within a relatively short timeframe, demonstrating the effectiveness of the feedback mechanism. Each of the critical issues has been satisfactorily addressed, and the longer-term actions have been initiated and are in progress.

Importantly, the State Party has revised the justification for inscription to better establish the significance of the deer stones within their cultural, physical and archaeological contexts. The deer stones and the complexes in which they are located exhibit the outstanding achievements of the monumental artistic traditions of the Eurasian nomadic peoples of the Bronze Age. By placing the deer stones within the context of these important archaeological features and structures, their significance is more coherently presented. Based on the revised information provided, ICOMOS considers criteria (i) and (iii) to be demonstrated. The conditions of authenticity and integrity for the whole series and of each of the component parts have been met.

The comparative analysis has been revised and usefully reorganised by the State Party, allowing the significance of the nominated component parts to be readily understood, justifying their selection.

The boundaries of the component parts and buffer zones are generally appropriate, although ICOMOS recommends that the buffer zone to the south of the Uushigiin Övör component part be extended, and the current tent hotel be relocated.

The state of conservation is generally satisfactory, and the conservation approaches are appropriate. However, it is strongly recommended that no further re-erection of deer stones should be undertaken without a robust conservation methodology. In the case of the monitoring arrangements, a greater emphasis should be put on indicators of the actual state of conservation of the identified attributes.

The protection and management are satisfactory but need improvement in several areas. In response to the recommendation by ICOMOS that a landscape approach to the management of the property be adopted, the State Party has identified landscape elements in each
nominated component part. Continued documentation is recommended including important elements in the landscape setting. Additional planning tools should be further developed such as the plans for risk management and sustainable tourism, taking into account the advice and information available from the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies. Personnel and resources for the protection administration should be provided, and full implementation of the management plan undertaken as soon as possible. Interpretive materials for the property should be improved, and every effort should be made to support the local community in the effective protection and management of the property. A number of additional recommendations are made to support the State Party's continued efforts.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites of Bronze Age, Mongolia be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i) and (iii).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites are significant and striking examples associated with the Late Bronze Age culture of Eurasian nomadic peoples. Deer stone monuments dated from approximately 1200 to 600 BCE. They are almost always located within complexes that include khirgisûrs (elaborated burial mounds), sacrificial altars, human burials and remains of horses, and other elements. Together the four component parts represent the occurrence and diversity of Mongolian deer stone monuments, khirgisûrs and satellite structures, and are notable examples of the world's megalithic ceremonial and funeral sites. Deer stones are gigantic steles, ranging in height up to four metres with engravings of stylised stag images. Elaborately decorated the stones are set directly in the ground singly or in groups.

In terms of ornamentation, cultural significance, archaeological and landscape contexts, the Mongolian deer stones are unique within the world's Bronze Age monumental heritage sites. About 1,500 deer stones have been discovered across the Eurasian steppe, classified into three distinct forms based on their artistic traditions. More than eighty percent of these occur in Mongolia, and the images of a stylised stag that cover these stones are without parallels across Bronze Age Eurasia. The significance of deer stone complexes at Khoid Tamir, Jargalantyn Am, Urtyn Bulag and Uushigiin Övör lies not only in their ancient origins and broad distribution, but also in their number, the variety and elegance of their ornamentation, and their intact spatial associations with khirgisûrs and other elements.

Criterion (i): The Deer Stone Monuments are of exceptional beauty and cultural significance and are masterworks of Late Bronze Age culture. They constitute an outstanding example of Bronze Age megalithic monumental art of the highest quality, demonstrating the artistic vitality and creative genius of human achievement in prehistoric times. They demonstrate an extraordinary variety in their ornamentation, yet all featuring the imagery of a great antlered stag.

Criterion (iii): The Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites provide an exceptional testimony to the culture of Eurasian Bronze Age nomads, which had evolved and disappeared slowly from the 2nd to the 1st millennia BCE. In their landscape settings, they are testimony to the ceremonial and funeral practices of these peoples.

Integrity

The serial property includes all the elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value, and the selection of component parts has been justified. The elements within the four component parts reflect the original layout and size of the complexes as they were shaped in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Aside from some tourism facilities, there are no commercial activities associated with the property. The individual component parts and the serial property as a whole meet the requirements of integrity.

Authenticity

Archaeological studies support the truthfulness of cultural values attributed to the sites within the property. The component parts reflect the original form, design, materials, layout, size, and locations of these complex monuments as they were created and shaped in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Surviving vestiges and monuments attest to the artistic skills and techniques used in the creation of these complex structures, and the knowledge and talent of the people who built them.

Management and protection requirements

Legal protection is provided through the Mongolian Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage (2014) and the List of Immovable Historical and Cultural Heritage Properties under State, Provincial and Local (Soun) Protection (2008). Protection applies to the four component parts via various provincial and local proclamations and lists. Khoid Tamir and Uushigiin Övör are included in the State list, while Jargalantyn Am and Urtyn Bulag are in provincial and local lists. Uushigiin Övör is also a monument under State Special Protection.

All component parts derive some protection from their remote locations and their traditional land use by nomadic herders. For the most part, such traditional ways of protection are still observed within these areas.

A concise management plan establishes a shared set of objectives for the four component parts. This has been elaborated with the active participation of local
communities and stakeholders. A site management administration unit for the protection and management of World Heritage properties which will ensure the implementation of the integrated management plan has been established. There are a number of aspects of the management system that require continuing development and implementation including documentation, risk management, sustainable tourism planning and monitoring.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Implementing the management plan fully, ensuring that sufficient personnel and resources for the administration and management are in place,
- b) Completing the survey and documentation of the component parts, including important elements in the landscape setting,
- c) Adopting a landscape management approach for the setting of the property,
- d) Preparing and implementing more detailed risk management and sustainable tourism plans,
- e) Avoiding further re-erection of deer stones without a robust methodology consistent with best conservation practices, and consideration of remedial measures as needed,
- f) Giving emphasis, in the monitoring arrangements, to the actual state of conservation of the identified attributes,
- g) Defining the carrying capacity of the land for grazing, and supporting traditional methods of pasture rotation,
- h) Establishing a timetable for the removal of the remnant machinery of the disused coal mine in the southwestern part of the buffer zone of the Khoid Tamir component part,
- i) Implementing the planned improvements to the interpretation of the serial property,
- j) Relocating the wire mesh protective fence at the Uushigiin Övör component part that currently cuts through one of the khirgisüürs,
- k) Continuing the consultations needed to relocate the tent hotel at the Uushigiin Övör component part outside of the buffer zone;

ICOMOS further recommends that the name of the property be revised to read “Deer Stone Monuments and Related Bronze Age Sites” in order to better reflect the revised justification presented by the State Party.
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
III Cultural properties

A Africa
New nomination
Extension

B Asia – Pacific
New nominations
Nomination referred back by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

C Europe – North America
New nominations
Nominations deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

D Latin America and the Caribbean
New nomination
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Tr’ondëk-Klondike

Location
Yukon Territory
Canada

Brief description
Located in the sub-arctic region of Northwest Canada, along the Yukon River, Tr’ondëk-Klondike lies within the homeland of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in First Nation. It comprises a series of eight component parts encompassing the archaeological and historic sources that reflect Indigenous people’s response and adaptation to unprecedented changes which were caused by the Klondike Gold Rush and affected both the landscape and the Indigenous populations living there, at the end of the 19th century. The nominated series collectively illustrates different aspects and impacts of the colonisation of this area and its Indigenous inhabitants, sites of exchange and trade between the Indigenous population and the colonists, sites revealing a segregation settlement pattern, and sites illustrating the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s adaptations in response to colonial presence and to continue their cultural practices.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of eight sites.

Included in the Tentative List
1 October 2004

Background
A previous nomination was submitted in 2018 but was withdrawn before consideration by the World Heritage Committee.

An ICOMOS advisory process on the site took place between May and October 2019. The ICOMOS advisory work focused on the potential global significance of the site and supporting attributes, a possible nomination strategy, and a relevant comparative framework.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 23 September to 2 October 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 5 October 2021 requesting further information about the serial nomination approach, boundaries and integrity, protection, development, and mining.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 15 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: integrity and boundaries, cartographic documentation, management arrangements, and public participation.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
Tr’ondëk-Klondike comprises a series of eight component parts located in the ancestral lands of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in First Nation, in the Yukon River watershed, in north-west Canada.

The area of the eight component parts totals 334.54 ha, with buffer zones originally totalling 53.85 ha.

The nominated serial property is located in an area that underwent unprecedented and rapid changes which were brought about by the Klondike Gold Rush and affected both the landscape and the Indigenous populations living there, between the end of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century.

The pursuit of gold superseded the fur trade, which occasioned the initial encounters of the Indigenous peoples with outsiders in the second half of the 19th century, and attracted high numbers of newcomers to the area in a very short period of time, causing dramatic changes to the environment. The economic prospects offered by the gold placer deposits triggered fast-developing colonial processes, with the emergence of non-Indigenous
settlements, the arrival of government and church representatives, and the establishment of an economic, governance, custom and religious system alien to the Indigenous peoples.

The serial nomination is held to attest to the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s ancestors’ relationship with their homeland, to the alteration of this relationship due to the encounter with non-Indigenous people, and to the evolution of their relationship between 1874 and 1908, from initial interaction to the rapid marginalisation, displacement and segregation, and also attempted assimilation, of the Indigenous people.

The nominated series is composed of the following component parts: Fort Reliance, Ch’ëdâhdëk (Forty Mile); Ch’ëdâhdëk T’h’än K’et (Indigenous people or Dénézhu Graveyard); Fort Cudahy and Fort Constantine; Tr’ochëk; Dawson City; Jëjik Dhä Dénézhu Kek’ît (Moosehide Village); and T’hë Zray Kek’ît (Black City).

Fort Reliance

This component part comprises an archaeological site preserving features of the fur trading post and associated settlement structures and dwellings, which bear witness to the initial collaboration and co-habitation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The Fort was built in August 1874, near a fishing and hunting camp site, with the collaboration of the Indigenous people, and operated until 1887. The log buildings were demolished in the subsequent decade.

Ch’ëdâhdëk (Forty Mile)

At the confluence of the Fortymile and Yukon rivers, this component part includes the location of an Indigenous camp site, which has yielded abundant evidence of more than two millennia of occupation, including a ‘ground cache’, in which Indigenous and European artefacts were found. In 1887, the Forty Mile townsite was established at this locale. Based on an orthogonal grid, it includes some ten buildings, a cemetery for the non-Indigenous inhabitants and archaeological remains of log cabins. To the south of the settlement, Mission Island housed a mission house and a school for the Indigenous people’s children. Most of the Indigenous people settled on this island. The evidence of occupation and use is archaeological as the town site and the mission are no longer occupied.

This component part bears witness to the occupation of the Indigenous people’s camp site by the newcomers and their marginalisation from the community of the settlers.

Ch’ëdâhdëk T’h’än K’et (Dénézhu Graveyard)

From Mission Island across the Yukon River, the cemetery of the Indigenous people is located on a terrace overlooking the river and both settlements on the opposite side of the river.

Fort Cudahy and Fort Constantine

The two fort sites are located north of Ch’ëdâhdëk on the opposite side of the Fortymile River, along the western bank of the Yukon. The remains are only archaeological. Fort Cudahy was built in 1893 and used for some ten years. It included commercial and residential functions. This component part is said to highlight changes in the economy and relationships between Indigenous people and traders.

Fort Constantine was built in 1895 as the first station of the North-Wes Mounted Police (NWMP) in these territories. The NWMP was dispatched there to control the border, collect customs fees and investigate complaints by Indigenous people against miners’ interference. The site was used only until 1901, as the miners moved to another gold deposit location and the police force relocated to Dawson City.

Tr’ochëk

This component part is located south of Dawson City, on the opposite side of the Klondike River, at its confluence with the Yukon. It was one of the ancient fishing and gathering sites of the Indigenous population. The archaeological evidence attests to Indigenous use of the site at two locations and at two time periods – 500 and 200 years ago. From 1896, and for two decades, the site was used to build a miners’ settlement – Klondike City, known also as Lousetown. Preserved archaeological evidence of this period is limited to traces of transport infrastructure. The component part depicts the Indigenous people’s subsistence system, their displacement and loss of fishing and hunting camps and grounds.

Dawson City

This component part covers the town as well as a large natural landslide – ‘Èdhä Dë’dhë’cha or Moosehide Slide – which is a landmark of this location. Newcomers settled in this area between 1898, when the Yukon Territory was established as a separate entity, and 1902. The town was given its urban layout, and institutional religious and commercial buildings were erected. Dawson City includes several buildings that date back to this period and illustrate colonial forces that imposed on the lands of Indigenous populations.

Jëjik Dhä Dénézhu Kek’ît (Moosehide Village)

This component part is located north of Dawson City on a high bank overlooking the river. The settlement contains some twenty-five dispersed structures, the Anglican St. Barnabas Church, Chief Isaac’s cabin, one cemetery and archaeological remains. The site bears multi-layered evidence of some 9,000 years of occupation. As one of the most ancient processing and gathering sites for the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, it was chosen for the relocation of the community, after the occupation of Tr’ochëk; and it became the first permanent village of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in. It is now a seasonal home, gathering place and fish camp, the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in having relocated to Dawson City from the 1950s onwards.
The site was occupied by the Indigenous people during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Located close to a caribou migration route, Black City comprises archaeological remains of former dwellings used only by the Indigenous people. The archaeological investigations have revealed the use of non-Indigenous tools for hunting and other objects. The site was abandoned in the late 1920s as many moved to Moosehide. The component part is held to demonstrate ingenuity, resistance, and adaptation in the face of the colonial push.

With the end of the Klondike Gold Rush, between 1898 and 1908 the population of newcomers dropped from some 30,000 to less than 5,000 people. By the 1920s, Indigenous peoples from the region started settling at new colonial towns in Yukon and some at Jëjik Dhà Dénezhu Kek’it.

In 1973 a delegation of fourteen First Nations from Yukon submitted a comprehensive land claim, which was accepted by the Canadian Government as a basis for negotiation. In 1998 the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Final Agreement and Self-Government Agreement were signed between the Government of Canada and the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in.

Archaeological campaigns were carried out between the 1990s and early 2000s at Ch’ëdähdëk, Ch’ëdähdëk Tth’än K’ët, Fort Cudahy and Fort Constantine, Tr’ochëk and Tthe Zray Kek’it. At Jëjik Dhà Dénezhu Kek’it, archaeological investigations were carried out repeatedly from the 1960s until the early 21st century. These campaigns have revealed archaeological immovable remains that attest to the encounter of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and the Indigenous people’s response to it.

**State of conservation**

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated series differs from one component to another, in relation to their types, whether remote archaeological sites or inhabited settlements. However, attributes exhibit good to fair conservation conditions and retain their capacity to convey the proposed justification for inscription. Artefacts that emerged during archaeological excavations are properly preserved in museums. Standing structures and buildings are being stabilised or conserved *in situ*.

**Factors affecting the nominated property**

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are: mining; permafrost melting, which causes differential settling of buildings; seasonal flooding, particularly at Forty Mile; and wildfires, which have been rare up to now but could be catastrophic for wooden structures and which could increase in frequency due to climate change. Moderate development pressures affect Dawson City; however existing regulations have proven effective in maintaining the historic character of the town. Expansion is expected to occur also at Jëjik Dhà Dénezhu Kek’it.

ICOMOS observes that measures to counteract the adverse impacts of development, permafrost melting, flooding and fire at key locations have been put in place. However, permafrost melting and wildfire would need closer monitoring and proactive measures to prevent or reduce their adverse impacts.

Although mining is excluded from the nominated component parts and their buffer zones, this activity represents a potential adverse impact as it may cause substantial alterations to the immediate and wider setting of the component parts and can undermine the understanding and appreciation of these sites from a heritage perspective.

ICOMOS requested additional information in October 2021 on this point and the State Party further clarified the protection mechanisms in place against potential adverse impacts in case mining claims develop into exploitation schemes.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested further assurances that the State Party will prevent mining exploitation near the nominated sites. In its response, the State Party has reaffirmed its commitment that no mineral activities will be permitted in the vicinity of the nominated property. It has also provided further details for each component part on existing federal and state legal provisions in place to exclude mining exploitation in the wider setting of the nominated series and their buffer zones.

ICOMOS considers that the array of instruments deployed by the State Party appears robust enough to ensure protection against mining developments that may negatively affect the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is overall adequate and that factors affecting the nominated property are permafrost melting, flooding, and fire. Potential impacts from mining activities in the immediate and wider setting of the nominated series has been minimised through legal and regulatory measures. Robust mechanisms are in place to protect, manage and maintain the nominated series and to prevent adverse impacts from affecting factors.
3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated serial property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

• Through one of the most complete and exceptional ensembles of archaeological and historical evidence, Tr’ondëk-Klondike reflects an Indigenous people’s experience of, and adaptation to, European settler colonialism.
• It demonstrates the dramatic changes in land use, settlement patterns, and economy, attesting to the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s experience of the rapid development of colonialism, from initial active engagement to dispossession and marginalisation, between 1874 and 1908.
• It illustrates how the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, through the persistence of traditions, maintained their cultural identity.

ICOMOS observes that colonialism is a broad phenomenon that has taken different forms across epochs and contexts, with different consequences. Therefore, the nominated property cannot be seen as the representation of the impacts of colonialism in general. However, Tr’ondëk-Klondike offers an accurate illustration of the dramatic impacts of the encounter of Indigenous people with large numbers of newcomers, driven by one of the great gold rushes, and of their response and adaptation to these changes, in North America in the 19th century.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information, the key attributes of the nominated property can be grouped as follows: the remote location and its environment; the geomorphology of the area and especially certain formations, such as Moosehide Slide; the siting of each component part, their mutual spatial and visual relationships, and their relationship and proximity to the mouths of tributaries of the Yukon River; the excavated and unearthed archaeological remains; the layout of settlements and occupation sites; the urban layout of Dawson City, with its institutional buildings and their specific architectural language; the toponyms in the Indigenous language; and the collection of Indigenous stories and narratives handed down through generations.

Further details on the attributes of the nominated series are included in the nomination dossier and in the additional information prepared throughout the evaluation process.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed on the grounds of the following parameters: life before colonisation, changing settlement patterns, changing livelihoods and new economies, establishment/consolidation of colonial power, and continuing life on ancestral lands. These parameters have been selected from a thematic framework considering a variety of effects of colonialism. The comparison has examined properties within the country, the sub-region, and throughout the world, inscribed on the World Heritage List, in the Tentative Lists of States’ Parties, as well as other designated sites. The most relevant comparators have been shortlisted with respect to their capacity to meet the above parameters.

ICOMOS observes that the comparative analysis only considers properties that include, in their formal designations, themes related to colonialism. On this basis the State Party could conclude that no other comparative sites represent an Indigenous perspective in as complete and multifaceted a way as Tr’ondëk-Klondike.

In ICOMOS’ view, this is largely the result of designation systems, including World Heritage, which were less attentive to Indigenous concerns in the past: the absence of Indigenous perspectives in the comparative sites may simply reflect nomination and designation strategies and processes, rather than indicating that Indigenous people’s perspectives are unavailable or insignificant. Arguably some sites might demonstrate, if research was to be conducted in that direction, similar affiliation and continuity as well as a similar array of adaptation strategies.

However, ICOMOS recognises that, within the most relevant geo-cultural sub-region – North America –, comparable and researched sites related to encounters between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people triggered by the feverish search for precious metals have not been preserved, either due to further development, as in California, or because of the fragility of archaeological records and extreme climatic conditions, as in Alaska, at locations related to other important gold hunts.

Therefore, the nominated serial property represents a very rare occurrence, where archaeological immovable remains, built structures and settlement patterns illustrate the effects of a specific form of colonialism in North America at the end of the 19th century, triggered by the rush for gold.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criterion (iv).

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that European colonialism is a significant stage in human history as a driver of immense socio-economic and demographic upheavals and that Tr’ondëk-Klondike provides an account of the consolidation of colonial power and of the impacts on the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s culture, echoing the universal experience of many Indigenous
people across the globe during the same period. The nominated series bears tangible witness to experiences and adaptations of Indigenous people to an exceptionally rapid and intense invasion, caused by growing European interest in the economic prospects offered by the natural riches of this territory.

ICOMOS observes that, indeed, European colonialism is a significant stage in human history globally, a phenomenon which took place in different ways throughout the centuries and across the world, generating specific effects and responses. Therefore, the nominated serial property cannot be seen as a universal representation of the experience of colonialism by Indigenous peoples across many regions of the world.

ICOMOS also considers it problematic that a typology can be illustrative of the human experience lived by the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in in the face of colonial encounters with non-Indigenous newcomers.

However, the comparative analysis in the nomination dossier, complemented by the work of ICOMOS, has demonstrated that the nominated series stands out for its rarity as an illustration of a settlement pattern reflecting the dramatic encounter triggered by the feverish search for precious metals between the Indigenous population and outsiders in a sub-arctic region, the colonial affirmation of the latter over the lands, resources and people, and the Indigenous response to these events, in the late 19th century.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iv).

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The State Party considers that all elements necessary to demonstrate the integrity of the nominated series are included within the boundaries of the nominated component parts. Each component part is said to contribute with original and specific evidence supporting the proposed justification for inscription of the nominated series. The property is of sufficient size to cover the scope of the Indigenous people’s experience of, and adaptation to, colonialism and does not suffer from adverse effects of development and neglect. The physical evidence of the attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription is in good condition, protected and managed.

ICOMOS noted that the nomination dossier mentions landscape features as relevant to understanding the proposed justification for inscription of the nominated series. However, these features are not included within the boundaries of the nominated component parts nor within their buffer zones.

ICOMOS requested clarification on this aspect and the State Party responded that the land and waters between the component parts are not attributes to the proposed justification for inscription and therefore do not need to be included within the nominated component parts.

The boundaries of the buffer zones of the nominated component parts have been established rather tightly around each component part as standardised offsets of thirty metres and, in some cases, ten metres from the boundaries of the nominated component parts.

ICOMOS requested additional information in October 2021, and the State Party replied that the current buffer zones are based on the existing legal framework and that landscape views and visual connections are safeguarded through established assessment mechanisms.

ICOMOS considered that landscape features, spatial relationships and important views among component parts represent “areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection”, as indicated in paragraph 104 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and should therefore be included within the buffer zones.

The issue was raised in the Interim Report, and the State Party responded very positively to ICOMOS’ concerns by revising and significantly expanding the buffer zones of five component parts. ICOMOS considers that the proposed expansion of the buffer zones now includes what is necessary to ensure an effective protection of the attributes of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the nominated serial property have been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The State Party considers that the archaeological evidence is complemented and supported by Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in stories and oral history about the nominated serial property and the events and processes that took place there, by archaeological and historical sources, and archival documentation. In combination, all these sources of information reflect truthfully the proposed justification for inscription. Relevant attributes of the nominated series include location and setting, land-use changes, settlement patterns, form and substance of archaeological remains, and intangible heritage. They all provide evidence of experience of, and adaptation to, colonial incursion, such as engagement, marginalisation, economic reorganisation and increasing sedentism.

ICOMOS considers that the settlement pattern, particularly the spatial relationships among the component parts of the nominated series, as well as the archaeological immovable remains and the surviving buildings and structures, credibly reflect the encounter between Indigenous people and newcomers, the colonial affirmation of the latter, the marginalisation and displacement of the Indigenous people, and their response in order to survive physically and culturally.
ICOMOS considers that, with the enlargement of the buffer zones, the conditions of authenticity are now demonstrated. In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been significantly strengthened by the expansion of the buffer zones, and that the conditions of authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

Boundaries
1,375 inhabitants are living within the nominated property, with almost all of them living within the boundary of the Dawson City component part. There are no inhabitants within the buffer zones (2016 figures).

According to the nomination dossier, the boundaries of the nominated component parts have been established to encompass all attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription. The component parts coincide with or comprise protected historic sites under federal, provincial and Territorial heritage legislation. A thirty metres offset around the perimeter of each component part forms the buffer zone; this is reduced to ten metres when the boundary adjoins the river.

Following the clarifications received from the State Party on the rationale for the boundary delineation of the component parts, ICOMOS considers that these could be considered as acceptable.

However, ICOMOS asked for more detailed maps, at higher resolution, in its Interim Report, as a baseline documentation. The State Party provided a full set of revised and more detailed maps that provide further information on the location of archaeological sites and remains, of the topography and local geomorphology of the nominated component parts, and of the protection designations.

ICOMOS was concerned about the tight delineation of the buffer zones. However, the State Party has carefully considered ICOMOS’ concerns and has proposed to expand the boundaries of two clusters of component parts to include key historic vistas and landscape features that contribute to the integrity and effective protection of the nominated series.

With the expansion of the buffer zones, Ch’iídähddék (Forty Mile), Ch’iídähddék T’hän K’et (Dënezhu Graveyard) and Fort Cudahy and Fort Constantine are now encompassed by one single buffer zone covering also the section of the Klondike River where it joins the Yukon River and one stretch of the latter to reach the Dënezhu Graveyard. Tr’ochëk and Dawson City also have their buffer zones significantly enlarged and merged into one single buffer area covering the mouth of the Klondike River where it joins the Yukon River, and one section of the Yukon.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries are now adequate and encompass all necessary attributes and areas that are functionally linked to the nominated series, which, along with the protective measures in place, ensures an adequate layer of protection.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription
In summary, ICOMOS considers that, on the basis of the comparative analysis and of the outcomes of the evaluation process, Tr’ondëk-Klondike has demonstrated that, within the relevant geo-cultural region, no known site survives with the same wealth of tangible evidence, illustrating the impacts of gold rushes on Indigenous people and their land. Therefore, the nominated serial property represents a very rare occurrence, where archaeological immovable remains, built structures and settlement patterns illustrate the effects of, and Indigenous response and adaptation to, a specific form of colonialism in a sub-arctic region in North America at the end of the 19th century, triggered by the rush for gold. Criterion (iv), which is the only one proposed by the State Party, has been justified, although the proposed justification for this criterion has been found too general by ICOMOS and a more confined justification has been considered more appropriate, on the basis of the outcomes of the evaluation process.

The boundaries of the nominated component parts, although tight, have been considered adequate, whilst the buffer zones have been considerably expanded by the State Party during the evaluation process and now include important elements in the immediate setting of the nominated component parts that are important for the conditions of integrity and authenticity to be demonstrated and to provide the necessary added layer of protection.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
The nominated property has been inventoried, described, and documented by each of the managing partners. All historic structures have been inventoried and documented to allow for repairs in kind, restoration or for their reconstruction, if needed. Some inventories were initiated in the 1970s, and these have been subsequently complemented by regular condition assessments.

Archaeological materials recovered from excavations reside in the Yukon Government’s curatorial facility in Whitehorse. However, the disposition of these remains may change following the completion of Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s archival facility in Dawson City. Additional archaeological materials are on display at the Dänö́ga żá Cultural Center. The Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in have been actively building cultural collections and have assembled archaeological and ethnographic materials located in national and international museums.

Parks Canada has collection storage facilities onsite containing around 300,000 artefacts. The Dawson City Museum also has extensive collections that include books and thousands of historical images of the Klondike.
Collectively, the artefactual, photographic, and historical collections curated by the nomination partners provide ample opportunities for research and interpretation.

ICOMOS observes that a common approach to, and synergies in, documentation and monitoring would be beneficial in terms of resource use.

ICOMOS further suggests that a research study that aggregates reports and publications concerning the managed sites and provides a summary of key findings and issues would help overcome the fragmentation of archaeological information and develop a critical bibliography on the history of research at each site.

Conservation measures
Surveys and documentation had begun already in the 1960s and 1970s at some sites; however, both documentation and conservation measures developed in a more systematic manner from the 1990s onwards. Component parts enjoy the application of conservation policies and/or individual management plans prepared according to legal or policy requirements within federal, state, municipal, or First Nations self-government frameworks. These include regular monitoring and maintenance/conservation measures. The heritage designations covering the nominated component parts are consistent with the proposed justification for inscription and designations covering the nominated component parts are coordinated by the Tr’ondëk-Klondike World Heritage Site proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation strategy of the nominated series is adequate, but a strengthened synergy and collaboration among the different agencies responsible for managing the nominated component parts would result in enhanced efficiency of the system and of resource use.

Monitoring
Monitoring is carried out by four levels of government. Reporting forms vary between agencies, but the extent of documentation and the frequency of condition assessments are consistent between them all. In case of inscription on the World Heritage List, monitoring will be coordinated by the Tr’ondëk-Klondike World Heritage Site Stewardship Committee and a formal coordinated monitoring plan will be developed within the management plan.

ICOMOS considers that documentation, conservation and monitoring are adequate for the purpose of safeguarding the nominated series. Enhanced synergy and collaboration in the conservation, documentation and monitoring of the nominated property among managing agencies would improve the efficiency of resource use and ultimately effectiveness in conservation.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is developed to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and adapted for easy integration of monitoring outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
Existing legislation at all relevant levels is detailed in the nomination dossier, so only key reference documents are mentioned in this report.

A four-tiered governance – federal, territorial, municipal and First Nation – applies in Yukon Territory and this concerns also the nominated serial property. The overarching framework for Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s land ownership, government and management rights is represented by the Umbrella Final Agreement, the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Final Agreement and Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Self-Government Agreement, which set out the federal government’s, Yukon government’s and the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s respective responsibilities in managing the nominated property and buffer zones.

The Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Heritage Act (2016) and the Land and Resources Act (2004, 2007) define the framework for Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in to manage their land and resources, including cultural heritage. The Parks Canada Agency Act (1998) establishes the agency and outlines its responsibilities for managing designated historic sites under its care.

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act (YESAA, 2003) establishes a process for impact assessment applying to all Yukon land and on a range of projects and developments. For non-federal or Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in owned heritage resources, protection is afforded through an array of territorial legislation and municipal by-laws. Under the YESAA, an independent Board (YESAB) carries out all assessments of development or mining proposals. Its recommendations are included in the permission processes of decision-making bodies.

The nominated series comprises heritage designated sites at different levels. Most of the land where these sites are located falls within Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in settlement land, which is managed by their relevant departments.

The nominated component parts and respective buffer zones are under different ownership, but only a limited percentage of component parts is in private ownership, all in Dawson City.

The implementation of the legal framework of each jurisdiction is guaranteed by respective institutions: the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Heritage Department, the Yukon’s Department of Tourism and Culture and its Historic Sites unit, Parks Canada Agency (PCA) and the PCA’s Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO), which oversees designated buildings in federal ownership.

The various designation systems envisage incentive and cost-sharing mechanisms as well as technical guidance to support owners and managers in their conservation obligations.
ICOMOS requested clarification in October 2021 on the status of mining claims for some component parts and respective buffer zones. The State Party confirmed that mining stakes have been withdrawn from all nominated component parts.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested additional assurances that no mining-related activities will be carried out in the vicinity of the nominated component parts and that no negative impacts from mining will harm the attributes of the nominated series.

In its response, the State Party provided further details showing that all governance levels are fully committed to prevent mining activities in the vicinity of the nominated property and its buffer zones, which are all excluded from mining. The State Party has also illustrated in detail all regulatory measures, impact assessment processes, and relevant institutional arrangements in place to guarantee that impacts on the nominated property are carefully assessed and, if negative impacts are revealed, development cannot proceed.

The State Party also provided further information on the draft Dawson Regional Land Use Plan, which identifies the Yukon River Corridor as an area of special interest and management. The Yukon River Corridor – an eighty-two-kilometre stretch of the river extending one-kilometre inland on both banks – was granted interim mineral staking withdrawal in 2020; seven out of eight component parts are included in this corridor; and, with the approval of the Plan by Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in and the Yukon Government in June 2023, will be covered also by this additional layer of protection.

Furthermore, the State Party has also proposed a set of additional measures and instruments to reinforce the current system. Finally, the signatory parties to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning the Joint Management and Protection of Tr’ondëk-Klondike World Heritage Site have committed to investigating the feasibility of permanent mineral staking withdrawal in an expanded area around the Fortymile River component parts.

**Management system**

The management of Tr’ondëk-Klondike involves the collaboration of four partners: Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, the Parks Canada Agency, the Yukon Government, and the City of Dawson. Each of these entities owns and manages lands contained within the nominated property. The envisaged collaborative partnership foresees the establishment of a Stewardship Committee affording equal representation to each of the four parties. The Stewardship Committee would act as a governance body, but it would not have legislated decision-making powers, each partner reserving the right to make independent management decisions for the properties they administer. They all have well-established rules and regulations that govern the documentation, management, and interpretation of cultural resources. All partners include paid, full-time staff positions. A World Heritage Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from several local stakeholders (the Klondike Visitors Association, Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, Dawson City Museum, as well as local residents) is also envisaged.

The draft management plan will be finalised and approved if the property is inscribed on the World Heritage List. It sets out a management framework and guide for the Stewardship Committee, describes principles, objectives and responsibilities of each partner, and relies on existing management plans for individual designated heritage sites. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a coordinated and consistent management approach will complement the management plan, alongside Terms of Reference for both the Stewardship and Advisory Committees.

ICOMOS notes that the absence of legislated decision-making powers may create management coordination issues that would need to be carefully addressed. Therefore, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked for additional clarification from the State Party on whether measures exist to avoid unilateral decisions that may negatively affect the nominated series.

In its additional information of February 2022, the State Party explained that the (MoU) concerning the Joint Management and Protection of Tr’ondëk-Klondike, is a formal high-level commitment of the four-tier governance entities and key for the coordinated protection and management of the nominated property. A mechanism to address potential unilateral decisions of one of the MoU parties has been set up. The MoU is expected to be approved on 30 July 2022 and operational from September 2022. The MoU complements existing planning measures, decision-making mechanisms, and institutions to back up the commitment of the governance level towards protecting specifically the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

The MoU establishes that the highest level of review by the parties will apply during The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) assessments. Furthermore, a Tr’ondëk-Klondike Development Assessment Tool is planned to be developed to ensure that attributes of Outstanding Universal Value be considered in the YESAB assessment process. An outline of the tool and a timeframe for its development are offered in the February 2022 additional information.

ICOMOS is fully reassured by this additional information and clarifications about the ability of the management system to protect in the long run the nominated property.

**Visitor management**

The nominated series can count on existing visitor facilities and programmes that will act jointly to provide orientation and interpretation of Tr’ondëk-Klondike to visitors. The key facilities include the Visitor Information Centre, the Dänöjà Zho Cultural Centre and the Dawson City Museum. The exhibits at the museum are being improved to reflect the nomination narrative. Accommodation infrastructure is developed and diversified in term of offer. Some
component parts have their access restricted and related information is provided in Dawson City.

ICOMOS considers that careful interpretation and presentation are key for the understanding of the nominated property and need to be paid particular attention, in order to support the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

Community involvement
The nomination dossier is not explicit about the involvement of the local communities in the nomination process.

ICOMOS, in its Interim Report, asked for clarification on this matter and the State Party replied that all residents in the area of the nominated property have been given full opportunities to participate and provide feedback in the process. The local inhabitants support cultural inclusion, mutual understanding and incorporation of Indigenous perspectives into the region’s societal fabric.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that protection measures appear to be comprehensive, the nominated component parts and respective buffer zones are protected also through complementary layers of legislation, and there is already evidence of their success as regulatory tools. The various federal, provincial, and national designations are consistent with the proposed justification for inscription, therefore existing protection policies ensure the safeguarding of its supporting attributes.

The approval of the Dawson Regional Land Use Plan, expected in 2023, and of the measures for the Yukon River Corridor, will strengthen the protection of Tr’ondëk-Klondike, its immediate and wider setting. Within the framework of this plan or of the Tr’ondëk-Klondike Development Assessment Tool, a study of key views and viewsheds related to Tr’ondëk-Klondike can further reinforce the protection of the landscape dimension of the property and guarantee a landscape approach to its management.

An adequate and well-geared management system is in place, based on a legal and policy framework that can rely on existing plans and implementing institutions. A high-level commitment and coordination mechanism in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the relevant management actors is planned to come into force in July 2022, to strengthen coordination through a Stewardship Committee.

ICOMOS observes that collaborative partnerships among these four agencies already have a proven track record. The close alignment of heritage goals and interests, and the local scale on which much of this operates, have to date made a potentially challenging governance structure work effectively. The proposed additional measures will further strengthen coordination and an effective management response.

However, ICOMOS observes that it will be important that the management partnership guarantees that all component parts are managed to the same level of quality. Operational mechanisms for stronger collaboration and mutual support among partners for site management and monitoring seem necessary to ensure consistent action throughout component parts and effective outcomes. These include securing agreements from each agency on the length of an appointment term, as well as annual time commitments and expectations for the Stewardship Committee members, and designating one agency to play the role of a Secretariat for the Committee and securing a commitment from this agency to support this position.

6 Conclusion

With the nomination of Tr’ondëk-Klondike, the State Party has undertaken a challenging task, given the complexities of exploring such a broad and multifaceted theme as colonialism and particularly from the perspective of the impacts on, and response to its effects by, Indigenous people. Choosing this perspective for the nomination has been possible thanks to a long-lasting commitment and dedication of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in to raise awareness about their culture and their history and has been fully embraced by the local community as a whole.

The State Party has succeeded in demonstrating the relevance of Tr’ondëk-Klondike for the World Heritage List under criterion (iv): the nominated series stands out for its rarity as an illustration of a settlement pattern reflecting the dramatic encounter triggered by the feverish search for precious metals between the Indigenous population and outsiders in a sub-arctic region, the colonial affirmation of the latter over the lands, resources and people, and the Indigenous response and adaptation to these events, in a relatively narrow window of time in the late 19th century, during the “Klondike Gold Rush”.

The State Party has fully harnessed the evaluation process and has accepted to considerably expand the buffer zones of five component parts, creating two expansive buffers encompassing two clusters of component parts which had historical and functional links and incorporating a good proportion of their immediate setting, particularly the riverine landscape which played an important role in the life of Indigenous people as well as in the newcomers’ pattern of occupation of Indigenous land for their own purposes. As expanded, the buffer zones now include landscape features, spatial relationships, and important views connecting component parts that represent “attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection”. With this expansion, both the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been demonstrated.

A robust and multi-layered system guarantees the protection of the nominated component parts from any form of adverse development, including mining activity, which is not possible within the boundaries of the nominated series,
the buffer zones, and in most areas in the vicinity of the nominated property. Further assurances about the strong commitment of all decision-making bodies to protect Tr’ondëk-Klondike and to prevent adverse impacts on it from mining has been documented during the evaluation process.

The existing management system is well-gearied, supported by specific instruments, but it will be further reinforced by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that involves the key decision-making bodies for the nominated property and its wider setting, aiming to strengthen coordination among key institutional actors. A World Heritage management plan has been prepared and will be adopted if Tr’ondëk-Klondike is inscribed on the World Heritage List.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Tr’ondëk-Klondike, Canada, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iv).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Tr’ondëk-Klondike is located in the homeland of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, in north-western Canada. It is a serial property that includes eight component parts: Fort Reliance; Ch’ëdähdëk (Forty Mile); Ch’ëdähdëk Tlh’än K’et (Dënëzhu Graveyard); Fort Cudahy and Fort Constantine; Tr’ochëk; Dawson City; Jëjik Dhà Dënëzhu Kek’it (Moosehide Village); and Ttë Zräy Kek’it (Black City). These have been significant resource areas for the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s ancestors for thousands of years and were fundamentally transformed during the colonial occupation of these lands. Collectively, the geographical, structural, and archaeological evidence of the Tr’ondëk-Klondike serial property represents a rare and exceptionally preserved tangible illustration of dramatic modifications of land use, settlement patterns, and economy caused by the rapid and large scale of the colonising incursion of newcomers into the ancestral land of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in in search of gold and precious minerals. It also testifies to the intense upheaval that impacted the Indigenous people between 1874 and 1908, their dispossession from, and marginalisation in, their ancestral land, as well as their response and adaptation to the progressive colonial affirmation of the newly established Dominion of Canada. The component parts are also places where, through the endurance and revival of traditions, the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in have fostered and maintained their distinct cultural identity.

Criterion (iv): Tr’ondëk-Klondike includes archaeological immovable remains, built structures and settlement patterns that illustrate the dramatic encounter triggered by the feverish search for precious metals between the Indigenous population and outsiders in a sub-arctic region, the colonial affirmation of the latter over the lands, resources and people, and the Indigenous people’s response to these events, in the late 19th century. Tr’ondëk-Klondike stands out as a very rare occurrence and provides remarkable evidence of growing colonial influence within a concentrated timeframe – from the construction of the first commercial fur-trading post at Fort Reliance in 1874, to the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896-1898, and, ultimately, the consolidation of colonial authority by 1908.

Integrity

Tr’ondëk-Klondike falls entirely within the homeland of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in. All the elements necessary to demonstrate the integrity of Tr’ondëk-Klondike – composed of encampments and harvesting sites, buildings, artefacts, and buried archaeological features – are found within the boundaries of the serial property, which is of adequate size to convey the property’s Outstanding Universal Value. Key elements of the landscape setting that provide functional links among component parts are included in the buffer zones, whilst expansive views and viewsheds from component parts over the riverine landscape, the surrounding hills and mountains that contribute to the understanding of the Outstanding Universal Value are part of the wider setting. As a whole, the property does not suffer from the adverse effects of development or neglect. The physical evidence that transmits the Outstanding Universal Value of Tr’ondëk-Klondike is in good condition and the property’s component parts are protected and managed under appropriate legislation and policy, with no component part exposed to unplanned or unregulated developments.

Authenticity

The authenticity of Tr’ondëk-Klondike is confirmed in the location and setting, changing land uses, and patterns of settlement by the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in in response to the incursion of foreigners into their homeland. The property includes evidence related to both foreign colonial actors and Indigenous people that demonstrates extreme and rapid socio-economic change, as well as an active continuation of cultural traditions, resource use, and established settlement patterns. The authenticity of Tr’ondëk-Klondike is supported through Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s stories and oral history about the property, the assessment and reporting on the archaeological and historical resources, and archival and documentary records. Authenticity is also confirmed by language and other forms of intangible heritage, such as place names and the traditions, laws and customs of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in known as ‘Tr’ëhudè’, and the landscape setting and views from and over the Tr’ondëk-Klondike serial property.

Management and protection requirements

The property is subject to a strong and comprehensive legislative and jurisdictional framework, across four levels of government, that protects the historic and archaeological resources of Tr’ondëk-Klondike. Protection and management of the serial property is secured through Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, territorial, federal, and municipal
legislation and policies. Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in’s legislation is consistent with traditional governance, traditional practices, community planning, and conservation policies.

Territorial, federal, and municipal laws and policies contribute to the protection, conservation practices, management, and legal recognition of community-based planning and formal designation of historic sites. All component parts are designated as either national, territorial, or municipal historic sites or protected burial sites, or identified in the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Final Agreement, which outlines provisions of protection and management. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning the Joint Management and Protection of Tr’ondëk-Klondike and the “Tr’ondëk-Klondike World Heritage Site Management Plan” provide a framework for the four levels of government that have regulatory, management, or administrative responsibilities for the property. The management plan describes principles, objectives and responsibilities of each partner and relies on existing management plans for individual designated heritage sites.

Long-term protection and management challenges for the property include the effects of climate change and other environmental factors; the decision-making process has been strengthened to avoid threats from mineral exploitation.

**Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Finalising and implementing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning the Joint Management and Protection of Tr’ondëk-Klondike and related ancillary management coordination mechanisms,

b) Preparing a study on key views and viewsheds over the landscape setting to ensure their consideration in all developments and related decision-making processes,

c) Proceeding with the finalisation of the announced measures and instruments to further reinforce management effectiveness according to the proposed timeframes,

d) Providing updated figures for the areas of the revised boundaries of the buffer zones;
Map showing the location and the revised boundaries of the nominated components (February 2022)
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Viking-Age Ring Fortresses

Location
Vesthimmerland, Mariagerfjord, Odense, Slagelse and Køge Municipalities
Northern Jutland, Southern Denmark and Zealand Regions Denmark

Brief description
The Viking-Age Ring Fortresses consist of five archaeological sites comprising a system of monumental ring-shaped Viking-Age fortresses sharing a uniform geometric and scalable design. The fortresses at Aggersborg, Fyrkat, Nonnebakken, Trelleborg and Borgring were positioned strategically near important land and sea routes across the Jutland peninsula and on the islands of Funen and Zealand in present-day Denmark. Each made use of the natural topography of their surrounding landscape for defensive purposes. Constructed between about 970 and 980 CE, they were in use for only a short period of time. While their function can only be inferred, their scale, shared layout and resource-intensive engineering, as well as their short period of construction, suggest a symbolic role in the consolidation of the kingdom of Denmark under King Harald ‘Bluetooth’ Gormsson. They are seen as an emblematic demonstration of the centralised power of the Jelling Dynasty, and a testimony to the socio-political transformations that the Danish realm underwent in the late 10th century, which included conversion to Christianity. They also signalled a wider transition in Northern Europe, which saw the formation of Nordic states and the beginning of the Scandinavian Middle Ages.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of five sites.

Included in the Tentative List
30 January 2018

Background
This is a new nomination. The World Heritage Committee previously examined the transnational serial nomination Viking Age Sites in Northern Europe, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Latvia and Norway at its 39th session (Bonn, 2015):

Decision: 39 COM 8B.22

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-15/39.COM/8B and WHC-15/39.COM/INF.8B1,
2. Defers the examination of the nomination of the Viking Age Sites in Northern Europe, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Latvia and Norway, to the World Heritage List in order to allow the States Parties to:
   a) Explore further the full scope, scale and nature of Viking Age sea and river migration and trade routes, and the settlements that these routes engendered through:
      i) Definition of the main parameters of time, space and cultural terms related to the migrations;
      ii) Mapping of the major migration and trade routes and of the surviving evidence for Viking trade settlements along these routes;
      iii) Selection of the routes where significant remains survive which illuminate migration and trade and the key facets of influence and cultural exchange;
   b) Define a nomination strategy, that might include one or more series, which could allow key aspects of the Viking Age migrations to be reflected on the World Heritage List, and allow future nominations to be accommodated;
   c) On the basis of this further work, submit a new serial nomination;
3. Considers that any revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the sites;
4. Recommends that the States Parties consider inviting ICOMOS to offer advice and guidance in the framework of the Upstream Process.

As recommended by the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS provided advice to the State Party under the Upstream Process from October to December 2019.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 27 September to 1 October 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 5 October 2021 requesting further information about the boundaries, as well as the protection of the nominated property and its buffer zones.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 12 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report regarding the extent of scheduled areas within the proposed boundaries, the protection of component part 5 (Borgring) and of the broader landscape, and management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 17 February 2022.
2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

The nominated property is a chain of five monumental ring-shaped fortresses that constituted a system constructed in the late 10th century CE under the rule of King Harald ‘Bluetooth’ Gormsson. Built in a short space of time (about 970 to 980 CE) using large-scale resource-intensive engineering, the enclosures were strategically positioned across the Viking-Age Danish kingdom close to important communication and trade routes. The common feature of the fortresses was their precise geometrical and scalable design, which incorporated natural topographical features for defensive purposes.

Aggersborg (component part 1)

The largest of the circular fortresses, Aggersborg, is the northernmost of the archaeological sites. It was located on a prominent rise, opposite today’s town of Legøster in Northern Jutland, on the shore of Limfjord, which was the key Viking-Age military and commercial east-west transit corridor and one of the most important navigation routes in Northern Europe at the time. Due to its strategic position, Aggersborg controlled the maritime Limfjord passage and part of the Haervejen – the historic main road running north-south through the Jutland peninsula. Aggersborg fortress was in use from the early to mid-970s to about 1000 CE. The fortress was probably the royal seat in medieval times, as evidenced by a fortified royal estate constructed on the beach in the period from about 1200 to 1300 CE.

Fyrkat (component part 2)

Fyrkat fortress, located near the present town of Hobro in Northern Jutland, was situated on a promontory overlooking the valley of the Onsild Å river. It was positioned to control a section of the Haervejen and the Mariager Fjord, which provided access to the Kattegat sea. Built in 975 CE, the fortress functioned for about five to fifteen years before being destroyed by fire.

Nonnebakken (component part 3)

The fortress at Nonnebakken was built on a promontory on Funen island in proximity to a river and marshes. It was constructed next to the Viking-Age settlement of Odense, which slowly developed after 900 CE to become a town that is now the third largest city in Denmark. Odense eventually took over some of the functions of the fortress, once the latter ceased to operate. In the 12th century CE a Benedictine convent was created on the site. From the 19th century onwards city buildings and streets spread over the site of the fortress. Today, Nonnebakken fortress is the only component part of this serial nomination located in an urban context, buried under the central area of present-day Odense.

Trelleborg (component part 4)

Trelleborg fortress, situated near Slagelse on Zealand island, was erected on a small peninsula between the Tude Å and Vårby Å rivers. The straits between Zealand and Funen islands were major seaborne traffic lanes and served as choke points to the Baltic Sea. The strongest fortified site of all five, it is the only one with an outer ward protected by an additional outer rampart with a gateway. Longhouses arranged in an arch shape stood inside the ward. The outer fortification was added after a fire in 980-981 CE. The fortress was in use from the early to mid-970s to about 1000 CE, and possibly re-occupied in the High Middle Ages. It was erected on an earlier Neolithic and Iron Age site. Among the finds uncovered at Trelleborg is the only complete Viking warrior’s shield found in Denmark. North of the fortress, evidence of work associated with shipbuilding was discovered.

Borgring (component part 5)

Borgring fortress on Zealand island was situated on a slope overlooking the Kæge Å river. It protected land-based traffic. The fortress had no ditch, but was surrounded by a brook and water-locked depressions that probably played a similar protective role.

All five fortresses, which vary in size, were equipped with a circular rampart with four gateways located close to the cardinal points, which divided the interior into four radial segments. Aggersborg, Fyrkat, Trelleborg and Nonnebakken fortresses had a concentric ditch. The internal layout of these enclosures included axial streets encircled by a ring street. Geometrically ordered near-identical wooden longhouses stood inside the structures. No axial or ring streets have been recorded at Borgring. The absence of longhouses, street grid, or a ditch may suggest that this fortress was never completed, or that it served a symbolic purpose.

Cemeteries were found outside the circular rampart at Fyrkat to the northeast of the fortress, and at Trelleborg inside the outer ward. The graves at Trelleborg show evidence of pagan and Christian burials. At Fyrkat, the burials are considered pagan.

Abandoned after a short period, the ring fortresses show no evidence of having been maintained. They possibly stopped serving their intended purpose – offensive or defensive. The function of the fortresses can only be inferred. Finds from excavations conducted at the archaeological sites include crafts and items of daily life activities, as well as grave goods and death paraphernalia.
The area of the five component parts originally totals 49.333 ha, with buffer zones totalling 10.802 ha. The boundary of component part 1, Aggersborg, includes the fortress from the outer berm of the ditch with a limited external zone to the west and north. The boundary of component part 2, Fyrkat, encloses the fortress and a cemetery located immediately to the northeast of the structure. The boundary of component part 3 surrounds the extent of the Nonnebakken fortress and includes, to the north, the possible location of the so-called “Odins Vi” shrine. The boundary of component part 4, Trelleborg, encompasses the fortress and the ward with its radially-set houses and the cemetery, as well as the area to the north, at the confluence of Tude Å and Vårby Å rivers, where evidence of work related to shipbuilding has been found. The boundary of component part 5 includes the fortress and the area around Borgring, reflecting future research potential.

The buffer zones around the component parts include the important immediate and wider setting of each fortress, as well as key views. In component part 1, the large buffer zone includes evidence of earlier and later activity on the site, the coastal foreland south of the fortress and the approach to the island of Borreholm. The area through which the Haervejen must have passed in the vicinity of Aggersborg is included as well. At Fyrkat and Trelleborg the buffer zones include almost all the visual catchment of the archaeological sites, even though in the first case the buffer zone does not include the whole of the Onsild Å river valley, and in the second case it does not include the whole course of the Tude Å river. At Borgring the buffer zone extends around the nominated property about 300 metres to the north, east and south, and about 400 metres to the west. It does not encompass the entire course of the Kege Å river. At Nonnebakken the entire historical context of the Viking-Age and medieval city of Odense is included in the buffer zone as an important setting.

The construction of the fortresses can be linked to a period of instability and political conflict that threatened the Danish realm under the Jelling Dynasty. It also coincides with a major cultural change in the Danish kingdom, namely its conversion to Christianity. The fortresses were part of a larger infrastructural project of King Harald, who created a network of defences that spread across what is now Denmark, northern Germany, southern Sweden and Norway. Strategically spaced in military terms and erected in relation to key fortified settlements of the time, they might have served as symbolic royal power bases in the political landscape of chieftains. Together with older central places of political and religious importance, and the earliest fortified towns, they constituted a centralised national control system tactically planned and implemented by the Danish king at the end of the 10th century CE.

ICOMOS notes that the State Party acknowledges the existence of two somewhat similar archaeological sites in Scania, in present-day Sweden. The ring fortresses of Trelleborgen and Borgeby may have once belonged to this group, as they share characteristics with the nominated property. However, since their dating is inconclusive and they do not appear to reflect the same geometrical precision in form and design as the nominated property’s component parts, it is currently impossible to unequivocally conclude that they represent the same type of enclosure.

**State of conservation**

Archaeological research that has taken place at the component parts for almost a century continues with varying intensity to the present day.

Large-scale excavations and smaller targeted archaeological campaigns have been held at Aggersborg (component part 1) since 1945. The Fyrkat fortress site (component part 2) was first excavated in 1943. The works there included investigations of the cemetery. The first excavations at Nonnebakken fortress (component part 3) took place in 1953, while early excavations on the site of the Trelleborg fortress (component part 4) were conducted in 1934-1942. The Borgring site (component part 5) has only recently been identified as a Viking-Age ring fortress, following excavations in 2014.

To a large extent, investigations at Borgring and Nonnebakken have involved non-invasive geophysical surveys. In the 2000s, investigations at all sites included interdisciplinary topographical research that aimed to establish and map possible links between the Viking-Age ring fortresses, the maritime environment and military naval power of the time. More investigations are being planned at Trelleborg fortress in the near future (including experimental archaeology) and at Fyrkat, where another potential cemetery will be examined. Future geo-radar surveys and test drilling at Nonnebakken will help to better understand the landscape setting of this fortress.

The above-ground elements of the component parts have suffered gradual decay from the time they were abandoned. Contemporary fires destroyed wooden features, and recycling of wood and stones by the populations living in the vicinity probably further denuded the structures. Natural erosion of earthwork ramparts paired with sustained farming activities on the sites until the 19th and even 20th centuries have further affected the enclosures.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the below-ground elements of the nominated property is good at all five component parts, and that the archaeological deposits are well preserved. Even at Nonnebakken, the structures buried under the city of Odense have been proven to be sufficiently preserved. The key above-ground features of all fortresses are traceable.
Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factor affecting the nominated property is development pressure. Currently, none of the component parts suffers from any physical threats. Four of them are located in rural settings where agricultural activities are permitted only within the existing agricultural areas. Component part 3, Nonnebakken, is located in an urban context and is subjected to typical minor development pressures associated with urban renewal interventions, infrastructural adjustments and other building maintenance.

ICOMOS notes that some pre-existing elements of infrastructure affect the nominated property, especially their visual impact on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. A small portion of the eastern perimeter of Aggersborg fortress (component part 1) is under a road, which negatively affects the ability to understand the site. Wind turbines located within and outside the buffer zone of Aggersborg also affect views to and from the component part, though key vistas to the southwest are not affected. The wind turbines within the buffer zone will be removed at the end of their lifespan. Only the clusters located outside the buffer zone will be replaced with new turbines. At Trelleborg (component part 4), one wind turbine within the buffer zone, which has a negative visual impact, will be removed at the end of its lifecycle. Wind turbines outside the buffer zone are visible in the northern direction, but have little to no impact in terms of key vistas.

At Borgring (component part 5), a highway running close to the eastern boundary of the fortress intrudes into its immediate setting, which has a negative visual impact on the component part and produces traffic noise. Borgring lies within an area designated for a transport corridor laid out by the Danish State. Additional information provided by the State Party in November 2021 informed that the current plans for the corridor do not foresee changes to the existing carrying capacity of the highway near the Borgring component part. Should future expansion become necessary, it will involve widening of the road to the east, so as not to affect the archaeological site.

In terms of new developments, a “Hobro West” road link is planned about one kilometre northeast of Fyrkat fortress, outside the eastern perimeter of the component part 2 buffer zone. The State Party reports that a provisional Heritage Impact Assessment indicates this anticipated project will have no negative impact on the nominated property’s proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

New tourist infrastructure will be developed at Fyrkat, Trelleborg and Borgring. Provisional Heritage Impact Assessments prepared for these proposed developments indicate that none will have any physical or visual impacts on the nominated property’s proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Plans have also been developed to improve the visualisation and presentation of the Nonnebakken fortress. The proposed installations will have no physical impact on the below-ground archaeological deposits.

No major environmental pressures, including long-term effects of climate change, have been identified for any of the component parts. The locations of the fortresses on promontories and elevated plateaus, as well as robust vegetation covering the fortresses’ enclosures, serve as additional protection against environmental threats. Periodic monitoring of the water table should be considered, given the depth of some archaeological deposits, long-term precipitation variations and the associated changes to groundwater levels.

Despite high concentrations of visitors in the peak-season months and the almost unrestricted access to the archaeological sites, no deterioration of the fortresses is anticipated due to tourist inflow, even if traffic intensifies.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory and that factors affecting the nominated property are being controlled effectively.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Viking-Age Ring Fortresses bears exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition through a system of large-scale circular fortresses that were a functional and symbolic expression of the new concept of state power in late 10th-century southern Scandinavia. As one of the great building projects of King Harald ‘Bluetooth’, this series signifies nobility, kingship and authority, and demonstrates Harald’s ability to command and utilise great resources during a key transition period in Northern Europe that included the conversion to Christianity.

- This group of outstanding monumental military works is without parallel in Scandinavia, and is exceptional within the wider European Early Medieval context. The ensemble makes a key contribution to the interpretation of historic developments in Viking-Age Scandinavia and Northern Europe, including early state formation. Shared characteristics include a monumental appearance, precise geometrical and symmetrical layouts, a circular shape enclosing a symbol of a cross, and similarity in construction. In terms of Viking-Age military architecture, it embodies the apogee of design, construction and use of traditional materials.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are: a uniform geometric and scalable design, which included circular earthwork rampart with four gateways located close to the cardinal points and
typically, a concentric ditch, as well as internal axial streets encircled by a ring street; strategic location in the territory and close to major communication routes; and purposeful use of natural topography of the surrounding landscape.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed on the grounds of three parameters: the role of the system of fortifications that were developed and used over a short period of time in the process of state formation; the strategic location of the chain of fortresses, spread across a vast territory with strong regard to landscape features; and the precise symmetrical and geometrical layout and scalable design of the circular fortresses, with shared structural elements. These parameters have been considered within typological, chronological-regional and thematic frameworks. The fortresses have been considered as types of military properties under archaeological heritage. They were compared using the geo-cultural context of Scandinavia and Northern Europe, and Central/Eastern and Western Europe more broadly, within a timeframe of about 800 CE to 1100 CE. Within the thematic framework, the nominated property has been compared to structures revealing political and cultural associations with state formation, and the issues of power and control.

The comparative analysis has examined properties within Northern, Eastern and Western Europe inscribed on the World Heritage List and sites included in the Tentative Lists of States Parties, as well as other properties. Given the large number of fortified sites that date to about 800 to 1100 CE within the chosen geo-cultural context, the analysis focused on the most relevant examples representing the specified parameters.

Comparators on the World Heritage List include Jelling Mounds, Runic Stones and Church (Denmark, 1994, criterion (iii)) and Archaeological Border Complex of Hedeby and the Danevirke (Germany, 2018, criteria (iii) and (iv)). Neither, however, specifically includes a (ring) fortress, or can be considered a system.

Among sites on the Tentative Lists, the closest comparators include Western Stone Forts (Ireland, Tentative List); The Royal Sites of Ireland: Cashel, Dún Ailinne, Hill of Uisneach, Rathcroghan Complex, and Tara Complex (Ireland, Tentative List); Grobina archaeological ensemble (Latvia, Tentative List); and Sites of Great Moravia: Slavonic Fortified Settlement at Mikulčice – Church of St. Margaret at Kopčany (Czechia and Slovakia, Tentative Lists). None of these sites share the full combination of attributes with the nominated property. The key similarity in each of them is their function as some sort of centre of power. They do not demonstrate evidence of systematic planning according to a precise design, and all were constructed and used over a long period of time.

With regard to fortifications not on the World Heritage List or Tentative Lists, a large number of sites in Scandinavia and the Baltic seaboard, Central, Eastern and Western Europe, and the British Isles have been analysed using a qualitative approach. Among the Danish sites, fortified towns (e.g., Ribe, Aarhus), bridges (e.g., Ravning Enge Bridge near Jelling) and aristocratic settlements with palisades (e.g., Gammel Lejre, Tisse) were considered, though they differ from the nominated property in terms of typology.

The circular fortresses in present-day Sweden are important comparators, particularly the ring fortresses of Trelleborgen and Borgeby. Located in Scania in what was part of Danish territory at the time of King Harald ‘Bluetooth’, they were most probably associated with the nominated property, with which they share similarities. Current scholarship suggests that they were modified at the time the Danish ring fortresses were constructed, in order to be incorporated into the same network. However, it has not yet been established that they represent the same type of enclosure as the nominated series. Another potential comparator is a fortress at Foteviken in Scania. However, the current state of investigations there does not allow for a clear conclusion.

Frisian, Saxon and Slavic ring fortresses, which are considerably older, have been included in the comparative analysis as possible sources of inspiration for the nominated Viking-Age ring fortresses. Typical Slavic fortresses (e.g., Cősitz, Burg von Tornow and Raddusch, all in present-day Germany) rarely had a completely circular form and were smaller than the nominated sites. Among Frisian circular fortresses, a group of five ringwallburgen situated around the mouth of the river Scheldt in present-day Netherlands can be considered the closest model for the nominated property. Yet, the ringwallburgen, and other Frisian fortresses located in present-day Germany (e.g., Borgsumsberg and Tinnumburg), do not form part of a network.

A key comparator in present-day United Kingdom is the Burghal Hidage, King Alfred’s defensive network erected about the 880s CE for the kingdom of Wessex. An example of a network of fortified places connected by military roads, which together formed a system financed by a new system of taxes, the Burghal Hidage nevertheless lacks the uniformity of plans that characterises the Viking-Age Ring Fortresses. In addition, it has evolved over many centuries, with most of its forts developing into towns and cities.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis has demonstrated that the nominated serial property’s combination of proposed Outstanding Universal Value and attributes is not yet represented on the World Heritage List. There are no contemporaneous architectural parallels to these ring fortresses as a unified system erected on the basis of a precise, scalable design, and which could be said to demonstrate the process of power consolidation and early state formation in the Northern European context.
ICOMOS notes that the ring fortresses at Trelleborgen and Borgrøby in Sweden might conceivably be included in the nominated serial property. Should further research demonstrate convincingly that they are of the same type as the nominated series and belonged to the same group, ICOMOS considers that an extension of the current nominated serial property could be proposed by the relevant States Parties as a potential transnational serial property.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that this chain of Viking-Age ring fortresses testifies to the socio-political phenomenon of the early state formation and Christianisation of Nordic tribes in southern Scandinavia. Constructed in the late 10th-century during the reign of King Harald ‘Bluetooth’, the five monumental enclosures testify to the sovereign authority of the Danish royalty. As a coherent system, they constitute an ideological marker of the unification of the kingdom of Denmark and an expression of the new concept of centralised royal power, which triggered the transition to statehood amongst Nordic chiefdoms and petty kingdoms. They may also be seen as a symbolic expression of a cultural shift that the Danish kingdom underwent upon King Harald’s conversion to Christianity, which subsequently led to the integration of the region into the European cultural tradition.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property can be seen as an exceptional testimony to the process of state formation and an expression of a cultural shift in the geo-cultural context of Scandinavia and Northern Europe. The monumental scale of the Viking-Age ring fortresses, built in a precise manner and within merely a decade, signifies a high degree of centralised control and is evidence of King Harald’s state-building ambitions as well as his ability to muster military power, resources and local workforce to create a coherent system of surveillance and control spread over a vast territory.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the ring fortresses represent an outstanding example of monumental military architecture in Scandinavia and an exceptional integrated system within the wider context of the European Viking Age. They demonstrate high technical values of construction, and the exceptionality of a strictly-ordered geometry in scalable form which used natural topographical features for defensive purposes. Sharing a precise symmetrical layout and design, the five fortresses constitute a monumental unified system constructed between about 970 and 980 CE. Positioned strategically in the landscape and close to key communication and transport routes, they testify to the strong central power of the Jelling Dynasty, and particularly King Harald, who unified the vast territory under his rule.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property is an exceptional example of military architecture that illustrates the centralisation of power in the Viking-Age Northern Europe, which led to the process of state formation, a significant stage in human history. It is outstanding in terms of the coherence of the design and construction of the entire ensemble, and its geometrical and symmetrical accuracy is impressive. The precise manner in which all five fortresses were built in a short time testifies to the existence of centralised power that was required to control and manage such a monumental infrastructure project involving resource-intensive engineering. Their strategic positioning linked to the control of major land and sea routes, and their territorial spread, hint at a unified system of governance over a vast area.

ICOMOS further considers that the typological uniformity of the component parts of the nominated property supports the serial approach. ICOMOS notes that Borgring fortress (component part 5) lacks evidence of a concentric ditch as well as axial and ring streets. However, ICOMOS notes that the absence of these elements can possibly be interpreted as the monument not having been completed, or having served solely symbolic purposes.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv), and that the serial approach is justified.

Integrity and authenticity
Integrity
The integrity of the nominated property is based on the wholeness and intactness of the design features and construction elements of the five ring fortresses that constitute a coherent group of archaeological sites. The boundaries have been drawn to encompass the archaeological and landscape elements that contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The selection of serial component parts is justified.

The nominated serial property is of an appropriate size to include all the relevant attributes, including preserved above-ground earthworks and underground archaeological deposits. The above-ground elements have suffered gradual decay from the time the fortresses were abandoned. They have survived best at Aggersborg, Fyrkat and Trelleborg (component parts 1, 2 and 4). At Nonnebakken and Borgring (component parts 3 and 5),
the fortresses are barely discernible in the landscape as small elevations in the terrain. Located in rural areas, Aggersborg, Fyrkat, Trelleborg and Borggrind are grass-covered. Agricultural activities are not allowed within these component parts. The ring fortress of Aggersborg has a farm occupying a part of its surface, and a section of its eastern perimeter is under a road, both of which detract from the integrity of this component part. Nonnebakken fortress, situated in an urban context, is completely covered by urban fabric, which affects the integrity of the site. It is vulnerable to typical urban development pressures, which are minimised and managed through existing spatial planning.

Elements of modern infrastructure have a negative visual impact on some of the individual component parts, especially wind turbines located within sight of Aggersborg and Trelleborg, as well as a highway passing close to the boundary of the Borggrind fortress. The landscapes around the fortresses, especially at Fyrkat, Trelleborg and Nonnebakken, have changed substantially since the 10th century CE due to natural and anthropogenic factors.

The value of the nominated property as a whole lies primarily in archaeological deposits, which have been preserved at all component parts, even in areas previously excavated. The forms of the excavated features survive intact in the subsoil. ICOMOS notes that approximately fifty percent of the stratigraphy at Nonnebakken can be deemed preserved, which affects the wholeness of the underground deposit. Despite archaeological investigations that may have compromised the wholeness of the component parts, ICOMOS considers that the surviving below-ground elements and deposits at all five fortresses are sufficient to sustain the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

Finds from excavations at the archaeological sites are stored at the local museums in respective municipalities and the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen.

ICOMOS notes that only the known extent of archaeological remains and the natural topographical features that formed an integral part of the defensive structures of the fortresses have been included within the boundaries of the component parts. The broader landscapes that constituted the strategic settings of the fortresses are contained within the buffer zones. ICOMOS recognises that these broader landscapes have a high level of protection, in terms of both their cultural and natural values, through relevant protection regimes and spatial planning documents that apply in the buffer zones. Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the component parts should be expanded, if and when possible, through minor boundary modification request to include the strategic landscape settings of the fortresses.

While some specific adverse effects of development have been identified, ICOMOS considers the integrity of the whole series of the nominated property as well as of each of the component parts to be satisfactory.

Authenticity
The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of the series as a whole to truthfully and credibly express its cultural values through its attributes. It can be said to be authentic in its forms, designs, materials and substance as demonstrated by archaeological evidence, as well as the locations and settings of the component parts.

The archaeological deposits of the nominated property are preserved largely intact. The original forms of the fortresses have survived unaltered below ground at all component parts. ICOMOS considers that the original designs of the fortresses are authentic at all five component parts.

The above-ground elements have been substantially damaged. At Aggersborg, Fyrkat, Trelleborg and Borggrind (component parts 1, 2, 4 and 5), farming activities and erosion over the centuries have affected the authenticity of the sites. Historic fires have destroyed the wooden elements of the fortresses. Recycling of wood and stones by the populations living in the vicinity might have further denuded the structures. These four fortresses are currently grass-covered. The area of Aggersborg fortress is also partly occupied by a farm, which affects the overall authenticity of this component. At Aggersborg, Fyrkat and Trelleborg, what remained of the original ramparts has been encased in protective layers of earth and turf, and the ditches have been re-cut. Undertaking such an indicative visualisation, rather than a reconstruction, is inspiring but may be confusing, as the actual surviving extent of the original ramparts, which are preserved in the earthworks but not visible, is not distinguishable. Nonnebakken fortress is covered by an urban overlay, its above-ground elements having been destroyed. The lack of more substantial above-ground remains here has an adverse impact on the ability of the series as a whole to fully convey its values.

The landscapes of the five fortresses have evolved and been transformed substantially through the centuries. The Kongens Borge (“The Kings’ Fortresses”) research project has been instrumental in mapping the changes. Research on the topography of the archaeological sites is ongoing. ICOMOS considers that, while the locations of the fortresses are geographically the same, the settings have partly changed.

Despite changes that occurred through centuries, ICOMOS considers the authenticity of the whole series of the nominated property as well as of each of the component parts to be satisfactory.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met, and that the conditions
of authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

Boundaries
There are 140 people living within the nominated property – all within component part 3, Nonnebakken – and 12,322 within the boundaries of the buffer zones.

The boundaries of the component parts have been logically defined by the extent of the known or presumably preserved archaeological material, and include the features of the natural topography that formed an integral part of the defensive structures of the fortresses as well as other associated external elements. The boundaries have been delineated using either topographical features or administrative boundaries of the component parts of the nominated property. This approach has been applied consistently by the State Party.

The buffer zone around each component part has been established with the intent of protecting the important immediate and wider setting of each fortress as well as key views. Earlier or later evidence of activities around each ring fortress is also included within its buffer zone.

In the additional information received by ICOMOS in November 2021, the State Party explained that the buffer zones constitute an additional layer of protection for the fortresses and the fortifying elements of the natural topography, thus supporting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated serial property. They also protect the important strategic locations of the fortresses in the broader landscapes in relation to key land and sea routes.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List. ICOMOS also considers that the proposed justification for inscription under criteria (iii) and (iv) is appropriate. The serial approach is justified, and the selection of component parts is appropriate. ICOMOS further considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
Historical and archaeological records, including maps and results of geophysical surveys and research programmes into the landscape and topography, are available for each component part. All structural elements and known archaeological remains within the component parts have been recorded. The landscape context has been documented using topographical and historical maps, LiDAR images and computer-based models.

Inventories and reports, as well as key cartographic material and data related to the protection and maintenance of sites, are stored at the Vesthimmerlands Museum, Historical Museum of Northern Jutland, Trelleborg Museum, Museum Southeast Denmark, Odense City Museums and National Museum of Denmark. The robust records constitute the baseline documentation for all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and are adequate for future management, conservation arrangements and monitoring, as well as for disaster responsiveness.

In the additional information sent in February 2022, the State Party confirmed that all data from the archaeological investigations in the component parts, including details of the finds, have been registered in relevant online databases, some of which are accessible to the general public. A detailed review of the excavated objects has been published.

Artefacts excavated at the archaeological sites are stored under safe conditions in the National Museum of Denmark and local museums affiliated to the component parts – Hobro Museum (Fyrkat), Odense City Museums (Nonnebakken), Trelleborg Museum (Trelleborg) and Museum Southeast Denmark (Borgring). The objects are either in exhibition or in secure magazines, access to which is granted on request.

Conservation measures
Responsibility for maintenance of the nominated serial property resides with the relevant municipalities cooperating with local museums and, in the case of Nonnebakken, private owners. Experienced staff monitor the sites daily and implement conservation measures when necessary.

There is no long-term conservation plan in place for the nominated property. However, the activities in place are programmed. The maintenance of archaeological sites consists mostly of cutting the grass twice a year. Sheep grazing is practiced at Trelleborg, and is to be introduced at Fyrkat. No conservation measures are currently in place at Nonnebakken.

Monitoring
In the event of inscription on the World Heritage List, monitoring through the assessment of the condition of the nominated property’s attributes will be done once every three years (at the beginning and mid-point of the Periodic Reporting cycle) using a four-point scale: preserved in a stable or improving condition; compromised; seriously compromised; or lost, where a major loss of significance would be recorded. Records will be kept in the museums at each component part. Factors affecting the property will be assessed and recorded annually. Erosion, water levels and severe weather events will be monitored and assessed, based on their spatial and temporal scale and their impact on the attributes.

ICOMOS observes that it is not clear what baseline data will be used as a point of reference for monitoring.
purposes. No limits to acceptable changes or threats have been provided to inform actions.

ICOMOS considers that appropriate conservation measures based on regular maintenance have been deployed where necessary. However, an overarching long-term conservation plan should be developed for the nominated serial property.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
All components are legally protected at the national level as scheduled ancient monuments by the Danish Museum Act (No. 1505 of 14 December 2006), which prohibits any physical alterations to the archaeological sites. Additional national designations add a layer of protection to the selected archaeological sites or parts thereof. Except for Borggring (component part 5), the sites are protected by the Danish Protection of Nature Act (No. 1042 of 20 October 2008), which includes a hundred metres protection zone around any scheduled ancient monument in which no physical alterations to the setting or the archaeological layers can be made, nor buildings erected without prior approval of the Danish Nature Agency.

Aggersborg, Fyrkat, Trelleborg, and Borggring (component parts 1, 2, 4 and 5) are located within areas designated as Rural Zones, where changes in land use are prohibited and agricultural land use restricted to existing agricultural areas. Nonnebakken (component part 3), situated within an urban context, falls under special national designation as a Cultural Heritage Area, where the heritage status of a location requires archaeological excavations to be conducted before any development project can be undertaken. All groundworks in the city zone require approval from the Agency for Culture and Palaces.

At the municipal level, all fortresses are cited in the respective municipal plans, which are regulated by the Planning Act (No. 1027 of 20 October 2008) that stipulates rules for land-use planning in the country. Aggersborg is referenced in the Municipal Plan (2017) for Vesthimmerlands Municipality. Fyrkat is cited in the Municipal Plan (2009-2013) for Mariagerfjord Municipality and is additionally protected by four registered protection orders (1963, 1964, 1981 and 2006). Trelleborg is referenced in the Slagelse Municipal Plan (2017-2028) and further protected by two registered protection orders. It is also mentioned in the District Plan 1137 (and the new District Plan 1224 currently in preparation), which regulates future alterations in the areas surrounding the fortress. Borggring is cited in the 2013 Kege Municipal Plan and will feature in a new plan currently under development. Two registered protection orders exist for Borggring. Nonnebakken is part of the Odense Municipal Plan (2020-2032) and is cited in two district plans (2-443 and 0-777).

In additional information received by ICOMOS in November 2021, the State Party clarified the specific provisions of the individual special zoning restrictions relevant to the nominated component parts and the buffer zones, and elaborated on the planning documents that apply in each case.

In additional information received by ICOMOS in February 2022, the State Party confirmed that the scheduling process for Borggring has been completed and addressed the discrepancies between the extent of the nominated component parts and scheduled areas. Minor variances in cases where the entire extent of the scheduled area was not included within the boundary of a component part have been corrected and revised maps have been provided. Full compliance between scheduled areas and component parts has thus been achieved for Aggersborg, Fyrkat and Nonnebakken. At Trelleborg and Borggring the nominated area is currently larger than the scheduled one. Further steps to extend the scheduled areas in these cases to cover the entire area of component parts will depend on the results of future surveys and related scheduling processes. In both cases, the sections of component parts that fall outside the scheduled areas are protected by compatible high-level nature protection. The State Party also reconfirmed the existing restrictions related to landscape setting protection, for which no strategic approach is in place.

Management system
Management of the nominated property at the level of the component parts resides with the Danish Nature Agency at Aggersborg (component part 1), the National Museum of Denmark at Fyrkat (component part 2) and Trelleborg (component part 4), the Museum Southeast Denmark at Borggring (component part 5) and the Odense City Museums at Nonnebakken (component part 3).

In the event of inscription of the nominated property on the World Heritage List, a Series Coordinator will be engaged to deliver a single integrated Property Management Plan (2022-2027) across the component parts. The Coordinator will report to the property’s Management Board composed of representatives from the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, respective local museums, municipalities and communities, and key landowners. The Board will report to the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, the ultimate authority for administering the Danish Museum Act.

The Agency for Culture and Palaces has delegated its responsibility for monitoring and implementing protective measures at the nominated serial property to the Historical Museum of Northern Jutland at Aggersborg and Fyrkat, the Roskilde Museum at Trelleborg, the Museum Southeast Denmark at Borggring and the Odense City Museums at Nonnebakken.

The single integrated Property Management Plan (2022-2027), developed and approved in principle in December 2020, will become operational across the component parts within six months, should the nominated property be inscribed on the World Heritage List. It provides a basis for the long-term sustainable management of the
nominated property and makes provisions for Heritage Impact Assessments for development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the nominated property. The Property Management Plan has been developed with relevant state institutions, municipalities, heritage organisations and community representatives. It prescribes a participatory management model.

As no natural disasters are anticipated for the nominated property, the State Party considers a risk preparedness strategy to be unnecessary.

The component parts are funded separately, from different sources, mainly through the municipalities and local museums. Some funds are from external sources or are project-based. Institutions and stakeholders responsible for the management of the component parts will collectively contribute to financing the Series Coordinator position.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for each component part is well resourced and funded. However, there seems to be no sustainable funding for the development and interpretation of the nominated serial property as a whole, as there is no direct state budget allocated to that end.

ICOMOS also notes that there are currently no formal management plans for the individual component parts and their buffer zones. While the existing processes seem effective, there is a need for each component part to have its own dedicated management plan and strategic action plan compatible with the specific conditions of each site and operationalised under the overall Property Management Plan.

In additional information sent in February 2022, the State Party presented a draft research strategy, which will be further developed and integrated with the Property Management Plan. It includes research on state formation processes and in-depth studies on the nominated ring fortresses as a system, including future comparative studies on other fortresses in Western and Northern Medieval Europe. The relationship of this serial property to other structures erected by Harald ‘Bluetooth’ will also be explored.

Visitor management
Aggersborg, Fyrkat, Trelleborg and Borgring fortresses (component parts 1, 2, 4 and 5) have onsite visitor facilities, while Nonnebakken (component part 3) has none, as it is not yet a tourist destination. Except for Nonnebakken, there is at least a small museum or exhibition space at each component part, where key information on the history and meaning of the fortress is provided in Danish and English, and sometimes German. Free guided tours are offered at Aggersborg and Borgring. Interpretative panels have been installed at all archaeological sites to guide visitors. Uniform signage has been introduced to emphasise the coherence of the fortresses as a chain. Programmes of local awareness promote the nominated property. Websites and apps have been developed for individual component parts. The fortresses are accessible to the public yearlong without restrictions, except for Nonnebakken, where access to an area hosting a school is limited to off-school hours. Numbers of visitors are not controlled. At Fyrkat and Trelleborg, reconstructions of Viking-Age buildings located outside the components’ boundaries offer an immersive experience. The Trelleborg reconstructions are also the basis for annual re-enactments. New museums are planned at Fyrkat, Trelleborg and Borgring. The first one is to house some of the finds from the excavations at Fyrkat. At Trelleborg, the existing museum and visitor centre are to be expanded and an “International Adventure and Knowledge Centre” created in the eastern section of the buffer zone. The planned museum at Borgring is to include an archaeological research facility (Borgring Exploratorium) located immediately outside the southern perimeter of the buffer zone, replacing an existing temporary tourist facility. The plans for Nonnebakken focus on improving the visualisation and presentation of the ring fortress, and include marking its outline in the landscape.

Tourism development at the individual component parts is integrated into different marketing strategies targeting national, regional and international tourism.

ICOMOS observes that there is no strategy for developing an integrated tourism plan around the fortresses as a group. An overall concept for an interpretation and promotion strategy of the ensemble also seems to be missing. ICOMOS considers that both should be developed and integrated into the Property Management Plan.

Community involvement
Community involvement and the active engagement of local communities in the protection, maintenance and management of the nominated property complement the administrative support provided by municipal authorities. The Aggersborg, Fyrkat and Trelleborg component parts are owned by the Danish State. The land of the Borgring component is owned by the Vallø Stift Foundation. Nonnebakken is situated on the land belonging to multiple private owners. Most of the land in the buffer zones is also privately owned. Including representatives of the landowners in the management structures should ensure more effective protection of the nominated property.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that protection of the nominated property and the management system are both adequate. Sustainable financial resources should be secured for the development and interpretation of the property. Tourism and interpretation strategies should be developed and integrated into the Property Management Plan. The draft research strategy should be further developed and integrated with the Property Management Plan.
6 Conclusion

The primary interesting feature of the Viking-Age Ring Fortresses is the coherence of their system based on a uniform design, which demonstrates a high level of centralised power needed to manage a project of such scale and precision. The strategic positioning of the fortresses, linked to the control of major communication routes, and their territorial spread demonstrate the authority of King Harald 'Bluetooth' Gormsson, whose political ambition and tactical thinking led to the consolidation of the Danish kingdom.

The work done by the State Party to research and document the nominated property is thorough and the historical analysis is very detailed. The comparative analysis presented is particularly exhaustive.

ICOMOS considers that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated, according to criteria (iii) and (iv), and that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met. Protection and management of the nominated serial property is adequate.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified and the selection of component parts is relevant to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The relevant States Parties could at a later stage consider proposing the Trelleborgen and Borgeby ring fortresses in present-day Sweden as a potential transnational extension of the nominated serial property, if the results of future research confirm that these two sites belong to the same group of Viking-Age ring fortresses.

ICOMOS recommends considering the possibility of extending the boundaries of the component parts to include the strategic landscape settings of the fortresses, if and when such extensions become possible, through minor boundary modification requests.

ICOMOS also recommends that dedicated management plans for each individual component part and its buffer zone be developed and operationalised under the Property Management Plan as well as an overarching long-term conservation plan.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Viking-Age Ring Fortresses, Denmark, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The ring fortresses of Aeggersborg, Fyrkat, Nonnebakken, Trelleborg and Borgring, constructed between about 970 and 980 CE during the reign of King Harald 'Bluetooth' Gormsson, represent outstanding examples and technological mastery of military architecture. Strategically positioned close to important land and sea routes across the Jutland peninsula and on the islands of Funen and Zealand in present-day Denmark, all five enclosures were constructed based on a uniform, precise, geometric, scalable design, and incorporated elements of natural topography for defensive purposes. The structures included fortified circular ramparts with four gateways located close to the cardinal points. In most cases, they were equipped with a concentric ditch, axial streets encircled by a ring street, and rows of longhouses geometrically arranged in the four quadrants of the fortified ring.

While functioning for only a brief period, this chain of Viking-Age fortresses is representative of the largest monuments that illustrate the centralisation of power by the Danish Jelling Dynasty and the consolidation of the kingdom of Denmark under King Harald, who integrated a vast territory spreading from present-day northern Germany to Denmark, southern Sweden and Norway. This network demonstrates the existence of a strong royal authority that was able, through military operations and alliance building, to command sufficient resources to exert sovereign control over territorial waters, land traffic and trade.

The fortresses, the function of which can only be inferred, testify to the early stages of state formation and socio-political transformations of the late 10th century CE in the Danish kingdom, including the conversion to Christianity, which eventually triggered the progression of statehood and Christianity in the whole of Scandinavia, and heralded the beginning of the Middle Ages in Northern Europe.

Criterion (iii): The monumental scale of the Viking-Age ring fortresses, built in a precise manner and within a single decade, signifies a high degree of centralised control and is evidence of King Harald’s ability to muster military power, resources and a local workforce to create a coherent system of surveillance and control over a vast territory. The ring fortresses testify to Harald’s state-building ambitions and can be seen as an outstanding testament of the process of state formation and an expression of a cultural shift in the geo-cultural context of Scandinavia and Northern Europe.

Criterion (iv): The chain of fortresses represents an outstanding example of monumental military architecture in Scandinavia and an exceptional integrated system within the wider context of the European Viking Age. The network demonstrates high technical values of construction and the exceptionality of a strictly ordered geometry in scalable form. The precise manner in which all five ring fortresses were built over a short period of time testifies to the existence of centralised power that was required to manage such a monumental infrastructure project involving resource-intensive engineering. Their strategic positioning linked to the control of major land and
sea routes, and their territorial spread, hint at a unified system of governance over a vast area.

Integrity
All the elements necessary to express the property’s Outstanding Universal Value are included within its boundaries. Archaeological deposits have been preserved at all five component parts sufficiently well to sustain the essential values of the property. The form of the excavated features survives intact in the subsoil. While the above-ground elements of the fortresses have suffered decay, the key structural elements of the Aggersborg, Fyrkat and Trelleborg enclosures are readable in the landscape. The Borgring and Nonnebakken fortresses are discernible only as small elevations, the latter being covered entirely by urban fabric. The landscape around the fortresses has changed substantially since the Viking Age due to natural and human-made factors. Elements of modern infrastructure have a visual impact on some of the individual component parts.

Authenticity
The original forms, designs, materials and substance of the ring fortresses have survived unaltered below ground at all five component parts, even in areas where archaeological excavations have taken place. The above-ground elements of the enclosures have been damaged due to various human activities and natural erosion over many centuries, and the landscapes of the five fortresses have evolved, but the strategic settings of the structures can still be comprehended. The five component parts contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the site as a whole, and the property does not suffer unduly from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

Management and protection requirements
All five component parts are legally protected as ancient monuments at the national level through the Danish Museum Act (No. 1505 of 14 December 2006). At the municipal level, all of the fortresses are cited in the respective municipal plans, which are regulated by the Planning Act (No. 1027 of 20 October 2008). Spatial planning documents and special zoning restrictions provide additional protection to the property and the buffer zones.

The boundaries of the property reflect the highest level of national legal protection, with the exception of parts of Trelleborg and Borgring, where the process of extending the scheduled areas to cover the entire area of these component parts will depend on further archaeological investigations and negotiations with landowners. In these cases, the sections falling outside the scheduled areas are protected by compatible high-level nature protections.

Protection and management of the property reside at the highest level with the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces. Management at the level of the component parts lies with the Danish Nature Agency at Aggersborg, the National Museum of Denmark at Fyrkat and Trelleborg, the Museum Southeast Denmark at Borgring, and the Odense City Museums at Nonnebakken. The management of the serial property will be coordinated by a Series Coordinator, responsible for the delivery of an integrated Property Management Plan (2022-2027) across all the component parts. A key mid- to long-term challenge will be to mitigate the negative visual impact modern infrastructure has on views to and from some of the component parts.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Supplementing the integrated Property Management Plan with dedicated management plans for each individual component part and its buffer zone,

b) Developing for the ensemble of fortresses an overarching conservation plan, a concept for an interpretation and promotion strategy, and an integrated tourism strategy,

c) Further developing the draft research strategy and integrating it with the Property Management Plan,

d) Establishing clear baseline data to be used as a point of reference for monitoring purposes, and specifying limits to acceptable changes in order to inform future actions,

e) Considering the possibility of extending the boundaries of the component parts to include the strategic landscape setting of the fortresses, if and when this becomes possible, through minor boundary modification requests,

f) Exploring the possibility of extending the serial nomination to include the two similar Scanian fortresses, should future research and sufficient evidence justify including these archaeological sites,

g) Providing updated figures for the areas of the revised boundaries of the serial property as a whole, and of each component part;
Map showing the location of the nominated components
Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt (Germany)
No 1656

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt

Location
Erfurt
Thuringia
Germany

Brief description
Located in the medieval historic centre of Erfurt, the capital city of Thuringia, the Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt comprises three monuments – the Old Synagogue, the Mikveh, and the Stone House – that are illustrative of the life of the local Jewish community and its coexistence with a Christian majority in Central Europe during the Middle Ages, between the end of the 11th and the mid-14th century.

Category of property
The State Party considers the nominated property to be an ensemble; however, each nominated monument is spatially separated from one another, not in direct visual or spatial connection with each other, and is delimited by individual, separated boundaries. Therefore, in terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is to be considered a serial nomination of three monuments.

Included in the Tentative List
15 February 2015

It was included in the Tentative List under the name “Old Synagogue and Mikveh in Erfurt – Testimonies of everyday life, religion and town history between change and continuity”, and the relevant criteria indicated at the time included also (vi).

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members, and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 6 to 10 September 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 24 September 2021 requesting further information about the description and wider historic context of the nominated property, the serial approach and integrity, authenticity and restoration/reconstruction works, development project, protection, management, and the presentation and interpretation of the site.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 October 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including an expansion of the historic cultural context, additional graphic documentation, and the rationale for the delineation of the boundaries.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 24 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history, and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt comprises three individual monuments – the Old Synagogue, the Mikveh, and the Stone House – all located in the middle of the medieval historic town.

The area of the originally nominated three component parts totals 0.04 ha, with an initial buffer zone totalling 61.05 ha.

Old Synagogue
The building is a rectangular two-storey structure with an asymmetrical gable roof, sited in a courtyard and secluded from the street view, as was customary at that time for Jewish religious buildings built in neighbourhoods hosting both Jews and Christians.

Four different phases of construction have been identified: firstly around 1100 CE and then in the early 12th century, the third phase around 1270, and then an expansion around 1300. The building shows evidence of modifications between the 12th and early 14th centuries, the latter as a consequence of the damage suffered during the pogrom of 1349, and of its non-religious uses over the centuries. It preserves wall sections and one wooden beam dating back to 1100.
Following the 1349 pogrom, the building was converted into a storehouse: a vaulted cellar was created, two wooden ceilings added, and two doorways opened up to allow access for carts. The building retained this function for about 500 years. At the end of the 19th century, the building was turned into a ballroom with a dining area, suffering further modifications but sparing the building from deliberate destruction. This function was preserved until the 1990s.

The Mikveh

The 13th century Mikveh, a structure purposely designed for ritual bathing, is located on the banks of the River Gera, probably in order to facilitate access to running fresh water, as required by Jewish religious tradition. The additional information provided in response to the Interim Report suggests that the chosen location may have been determined by the lack of space near the synagogue due to the presence of existing buildings. The Mikveh was built on a rectangular plan, nine metres long and three metres wide, with high-quality stone walls, exhibiting different stone types: large sandstone ashlars for the basin area and regular courses of limestone for the lowest and uppermost part of the walls. This structure, like the synagogue, bears traces of the damage suffered during the 1349 pogrom and subsequent repairs. When the Jewish community left Erfurt definitively, the Mikveh was turned into a cellar and used as such until the 1940s. Rediscovered in 2007, the Mikveh has been preserved as a monument since 2011.

The Stone House

The Stone House, a medieval stone residential building – called Kemenate – is part of a compact residential lot, of which the most ancient structures date back to the 12th century. The building was heated and included a cellar, a high-ceilinged ground floor, and a low-ceilinged first floor. A stepped gable roof completed the building. The building preserves the perimeter walls and other architectural features from the initial construction phase. During the 13th century the building was modified, its entrance repositioned, and a new wooden ceiling – the beams being dendrochronologically dated to 1247 AD – was put in place and decorated with floral motifs. Historical documentation traces the building to Jewish ownership from before 1293 until the mid-14th century.

Located at the crossroads of important commercial routes, and under the rule of the Archbishop of Mainz, Erfurt offered ideal conditions for economic and cultural flourishing opportunities for the Jews, who are documented in Erfurt at least as early as 1100 CE. The Jewish residential quarter was in the city center, where Christian merchants also lived. The prosperous conditions of the Jews in Erfurt, at least until the 1349 pogrom, are reflected in the architectural quality of their religious buildings and their residences, as the Stone House shows. A cemetery, now lost, located outside the residential area, completed the key structures that made the Jewish community of Erfurt a qehilla (a Jewish community entity, with authority on matters pertaining to the Life of Jews which was a point of reference also for the Jews living in nearby towns).

Shortly after the 1349 pogrom, Jews came back to Erfurt and formed a new community, which thrived until the 15th century, when anti-Jewish sentiment arose again and led the City Council to revoke its protection of the Jews (1453): by 1454, the Jewish presence in Erfurt had ended. The new synagogue was used as an arsenal, the Jewish cemetery levelled out, and its gravestones used as building materials.

Archaeological investigations in the medieval quarter during the late 1990s led to the discovery of a large collection of silver coins and ingots, and items of gothic gold and silversmiths’ work, which has come to be known as the ‘Erfurt Treasure’, and which can be dated to between the 13th and 14th centuries. The owner of the treasure was probably a wealthy Jewish moneylender, Kalman von Wiehe, as the property in which it was found was in his ownership at the time of the 1349 pogrom.

The buffer zone of the nominated monuments comprises a good part of the Historic Town of Erfurt, which preserves the medieval urban and street layout and numerous buildings and monuments dating back to the Middle Ages and later periods.

Upon ICOMOS’ request, in November 2021 the State Party provided some additional information, particularly on the area formerly known as the Jewish Quarter and its changes between the 11th century and 1454, a date that marked the end of the Jewish presence in Erfurt.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS further asked for the historic cultural context of the formation of the Jewish community in Erfurt to be expanded. The State Party explained that Jewish presence in Erfurt can be traced back to the initial construction stage of the Old Synagogue, at the end of the 11th century, possibly around the intersection of Via Regia, Michaelisstraße and Waagegasse. At the time Erfurt was yet to develop, thus it can be stated that the construction of the synagogue marked the growth of the town just as much as the erection of parish churches in the vicinity did, funded by Christian merchants. The Jewish community in Erfurt was under the protection of the Archbishop of Mainz, to whom they paid taxes for the synagogue and the mikveh. It is possible, although not documented, that the first Jews came to Erfurt from Mainz. Tax registers show that Jews lived side-by-side with Christians, with whom they had business and property dealings. The architectural qualities of the synagogue and construction similarities with the churches support the argument of a wealthy and self-confident Jewish community well-integrated with the Christian majority.

State of conservation

Inspections at the monuments are carried out regularly. The indoor climate is monitored at all three components; the salt content of the stone surfaces is monitored at the Mikveh.

The Old Synagogue has been the object of careful documentation and research since the 1990s and, after the Municipality of Erfurt purchased the building, conservation interventions. The adopted conservation
Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are humidity fluctuations, with consequent salt formation and crystallisation, potential floods, fire, and anti-Semitic intentional harmful attacks.

Whilst measures are in place for preventing or reducing these threats, ICOMOS underlines that the maximum attention is needed to avoid adverse impacts from fire or terrorist attacks. ICOMOS considers that the policy of controlled and limited visitor numbers is wise and should be continued, also to reduce any humidity fluctuation of the indoor environment.

ICOMOS requested additional information on development projects and the State Party has provided documentation on recent housing projects as well as on a planned UNESCO World Heritage Information Centre to be built in an empty plot within the historic centre, currently used as a car park.

Based on the visual documentation provided, ICOMOS recommends that a Heritage Impact Assessment for the Information Centre be carried out, to ensure that the design of the complex is compatible with the overall character of the Old Town and with the aim and function of the Centre, and sent to the World Heritage Centre before any final decision is taken about the construction of this facility.

ICOMOS further considers that security measures for the synagogue need to be reviewed and possibly strengthened, as circulation in its vicinity will increase in the event of inscription on the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation varies from good to excellent and that factors affecting the nominated property are humidity fluctuations, flood, fire and deliberate destructive acts. Preventive measures are in place and need to be strictly implemented and monitored. A Heritage Impact Assessment for the planned Information Centre is highly recommended, and its outcome submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review prior to any final decision being taken. It is equally suggested to share for review the study under preparation on the Stone House. The security measures for the nominated property and particularly the synagogue need review and possible reinforcement as a response to increased visibility caused by the nomination.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property, complemented by the Erfurt Treasure, is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- It sheds light on the daily life of a Jewish Community and on its coexistence with Christians in an urban environment.
- It illustrates the heyday of Jewish culture in Erfurt in the Middle Ages and its end following the pogroms that occurred in the mid-14th century.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information, the key attributes of the nominated property are explained below.

The 12th-13th century Synagogue is the oldest known and best-preserved structure of this type in Germany, in terms of location, built fabric, layout and design. It has been preserved to a very high degree, and bears witness to the transformations during its period of use as a synagogue, as well as the damage and desecration suffered as a result of spreading anti-Semitism in the 14th century.

The 13th century Mikveh exhibits high construction quality and unique typology, and it is among the very few very well-preserved structures of this type dating back to the Middle Ages.

The Stone House is said to be an exceptionally preserved 13th century secular building that preserves a painted wooden ceiling, the most ancient example known north of the Alps, and to present a rare Jewish-medieval home arrangement.

The highly preserved medieval urban layout of the former Jewish Quarter and of the historic centre of Erfurt provides the historic and physical setting as well as other areas and attributes that are functionally important to understand the proposed justification for inscription and support the nominated property and its protection.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed on the basis of the themes related to Jewish heritage. It has examined relevant properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, in the Tentative Lists of States Parties, as well as other properties, particularly in Central and
Eastern Europe – the area of diffusion of Ashkenazi Jewry in the Middle Ages.

The nomination dossier has firstly developed a comparison for each individual monument and then for the series. The analysis concludes that the Old Synagogue in Erfurt is the only Ashkenazi synagogue to exhibit a high degree of preserved original fabric; the typology of the synagogue – a single nave hall – is similar to the one in Speyer, the proportions of its plan being different, but in Erfurt, the synagogue fabric is preserved to a greater extent. The comparison on the mikveh concludes that the mikveh in Erfurt is part of a very small group of medieval community mikvehs, which was built near a watercourse and adapted to local conditions. For these reasons, its typology is unparalleled and an exemplar of a mikveh-type used in other cities and now lost (Vienna and Bamberg). The analysis for the Stone House admits that the typology of this building is typical for medieval Central Europe; however, Erfurt preserves a group of such buildings, which is uncommon in the sub-region. The exceptional feature of the Stone House, however, is its painted 13th century ceiling, which, according to the nomination dossier, is the oldest known example and, to date, the most authentically preserved. The comparison concludes that the Stone House is a rare, particularly well-preserved, example of an otherwise widespread type of building, which sheds light on the way of life of Jews in the Middle Ages in Erfurt.

The comparison then examines the entire nominated series with other similar sites from Central and Eastern Europe. The analysis concludes that only a very limited number of Jewish Quarters survive throughout Europe, and these are in most cases later than the Erfurt collection of monuments and are not as well or as authentically preserved as in Erfurt.

The additional information sent in February 2022 expands the comparison of all three monuments, and particularly of the Stone House and its wooden ceiling with floral decoration, with other surviving contemporary examples.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis should have been carried out for the whole series, rather than for each component part. Nevertheless, the conclusions of the comparative analysis about the specific urban and historic conditions of the development of the Jewish community and its monuments in Erfurt have been backed up by further information and an expanded description of the component parts and of their context, and can now be considered justified. ICOMOS notes that the separated locations of the synagogue and the mikveh has been documented elsewhere (e.g., in Constance, Rothenburg, Bamberg, Prague as well as Mainz), but only in Erfurt can this still be seen in an almost intact medieval urban setting and the monuments are extensively preserved, despite modifications and changes of use.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, complemented by the additional information on the urban and historical context in which the emergence of the Jewish community in Erfurt took place, as well as the exceptional preserved condition of the monuments in their contemporary urban setting, justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

**Criteria under which inscription is proposed**
The property is nominated based on cultural criteria (iii) and (iv).

**Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;**

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated Old Synagogue, Mikveh, and Stone House bear exceptional testimony to Jewish rites, lifestyle, and Judaeo-Christian coexistence and subsequent persecution and expulsion of the Jews in the Middle Ages. The Erfurt Treasure complements and enhances the ability of the three monuments to convey this.

ICOMOS considers the historic pattern of coexistence, persecution, and expulsion of Jews described in the justification of this criterion is common to other cities in the Ashkenazi realm in the Middle Ages. Furthermore, this pattern cannot be seen as a cultural tradition or a civilisation, but rather as historic circumstances, and processes.

The additional information provided by the State Party has contributed to clarifying the historic urban context of the presence of the Jewish community in Erfurt and has shown that, indeed, the Jews lived side-by-side with Christians. However, this coexistence, although documented through archival records, does not seem to have been specific to Erfurt only, as the separated locations of Jewish ritual buildings seen in Erfurt can be traced in other cities. Furthermore, the three individual nominated monuments can be said to reflect Jewish life but not the Jews’ coexistence with Christian society under this criterion. The former Jewish-medieval quarter, which has been preserved almost intact in its urban layout and structure, is not part of the nomination but remains in the buffer zone. The exceptionality of the Erfurt Treasure alone cannot support this criterion, as this is movable heritage, which, in addition, was not found in any of the nominated monuments but in a cellar located in the buffer zone.

**Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;**

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the buildings represent early and rare well-preserved examples of Jewish architecture from the Middle Ages, illustrating their conformity to vernacular architecture and
ICOMOS noted that the proposed justification needed further clarification on what would make the Jewish heritage of Erfurt distinct from other sites in the relevant geo-cultural region and period and asked the State Party for an expansion on this aspect in its Interim Report.

The additional information and arguments provided demonstrate that the three nominated monuments can be seen as exceptionally preserved examples of their building types and of their reciprocal location, and which are very rare to be found as still-standing structures, as most have suffered from the ravages of history. The nominated monuments, therefore, illustrate different synagogue and mikveh building types and spatial distribution, which have been documented elsewhere but do not survive in such a state of preservation. Their construction, design, and layout speak of the coexistence between the Jewish community and Christian society through the similarity of architectural solutions for both Jewish and Christian buildings. The Stone House is a well preserved and very rare residential building, with original structures and a decorated wooden ceiling dating back to the mid-13th century, which is documented to have been in Jewish ownership from the 13th to the 14th centuries, and thus provides a rare illustration of Jewish life in Erfurt in the Middle Ages.

ICOMOS considers that the additional arguments and information provided have contributed to demonstrating criterion (iv). However, ICOMOS does not consider that criterion (iii) has been demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The State Party considers that the nominated serial property, complemented by the Erfurt Treasure, includes all elements necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. On the one hand, their integration within the medieval city reflects the coexistence between Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages; on the other hand, the evidence of the damage to the built fabric and conversion to other uses of the religious buildings since the 14th and 15th centuries illustrate the subsequent phase of persecution of the Jews by, and expulsion from, a society founded on a Christian majority.

ICOMOS noted that the boundaries of the individual component parts were very tightly drawn and would need some clarification on the reasons for such a choice. For instance, in other cities synagogues were complemented by other buildings related to Jewish life. Not much was explained about whether a yeshiva or other community spaces existed at Erfurt and, if so, what was their location. ICOMOS further noted that the integration of the buildings into the urban fabric is not fully reflected by these tight boundaries. The existence of a Jewish Quarter is mentioned in the nomination dossier and the additional information provided in October 2021 on its transformations shows a much smaller area around the Jewish nominated monuments. On the other hand, the very large proposed buffer zone, which takes in a good part of the protected historic town of Erfurt, did not appear adequately justified in the nomination dossier nor in the additional information provided in October 2021 by the State Party. Therefore, ICOMOS asked for further clarification in its Interim Report.

The State Party responded by proposing to slightly expand the boundaries of the nominated component parts, which is explained in the boundary section. The boundary enlargement of the nominated component parts greatly enhances the integrity of the nominated monuments.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series as well as the integrity of each of the component parts has been demonstrated in relation to criterion (iv) only.

Authenticity

The nomination dossier states that the form and material fabric of the nominated monuments are largely preserved and are therefore able to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Their location in, and relationship with, the urban medieval fabric of the historic town remains clearly perceivable. The use has changed but their original functions are demonstrated through material evidence and documentation (in particular for the Stone House). The traces of the historic events that led to the persecution and expulsion of the Jews and to the conversion of their religious buildings are also still perceivable in the original built fabric of the monuments, which have been conserved on the basis of strict conservation principles. The discovery of the Erfurt Treasure represents powerful evidence of the persecutions.

ICOMOS considers that the expanded historical context and explanations about the nominated series and Erfurt have contributed to support and to specify how the attributes of the nominated series and the related sources of information, that include the location, the building fabric, the layout, and the design of the monuments as well as the associated archival documentation, convey in a credible manner the justification for inscription under criterion (iv).

However, ICOMOS does not consider that the Erfurt Treasure, a movable collection of precious objects, can be considered an attribute of the nominated serial property but it certainly sheds light on the wealth of Jewish community members in Erfurt.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole series as well as the authenticity of each of the component parts has been demonstrated.
In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that, with the enlargement of the boundaries of the nominated component parts, the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

**Boundaries**

There are no inhabitants in the nominated three monuments, whilst around 7,000 people live in the buffer zone.

The boundaries of the initially proposed nominated component parts coincided with the footprint of the monuments. There was no clear explanation of the rationale for the selection of these boundaries in the nomination dossier, e.g., in relation to the original layout of the monuments and their immediate setting, nor did the additional information provided in November 2021 shed indirect light on the choice.

The initially proposed buffer zone covered a good part of the historic town of Erfurt, with the exclusion of the areas occupied by the citadel and by the cathedral. The historic town of Erfurt is fully protected at the municipal level therefore mechanisms are in place to ensure an added layer of protection. However, in ICOMOS’ view, the inclusion in the buffer zone of such a large area did not seem to be supported by historical or functional reasons nor by protection needs.

ICOMOS noted that a Jewish Quarter was mentioned in the nomination dossier and the additional information has provided an overview of its transformation, focusing on a much smaller area of the historic town.

Further information was sought on the rationale for the boundaries of the nominated component parts and on the buffer zone in the Interim Report.

The State Party replied by proposing the enlargement of the boundaries of the nominated component parts. The nominated area is proposed to be enlarged to include the courtyard and the reception building of the Old Synagogue Museum. The adjusted boundary of the nominated mikveh covers the immediate setting of the structure – today a green space with paths. The boundary of the nominated Stone House now includes the neighbouring house to the south to which it is structurally connected, and the original access area, to include also the access to the cellar of the Stone House.

The State Party has also proposed a reduced buffer zone, limited to the area of the historic centre of Erfurt that encompasses the Medieval Jewish Quarter up to the location of the medieval Jewish cemetery (now lost).

These changes, however, do not seem reflected in the modification of the measured size of the boundaries of both the nominated component parts and the buffer zone. ICOMOS recommends that the State Party is asked to provide updated figures for the areas of the revised boundaries matching the updated maps.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the additional information and documentation have strengthened the case for the nominated property to justify criterion (iv) but not criterion (iii). The initially very tight boundaries of the nominated monuments have been widened by the State Party. They can now be considered sufficient to include the necessary attributes for the nominated series to credibly demonstrate that the nominated monuments are outstanding, rare and exceptionally preserved examples of a medieval synagogue, mikveh and Jewish residential building reflecting in their built fabric, architectural details and decoration programme both the adaptation of building types to specific local spatial and social conditions and the coexistence with predominantly Christian society, during the urban development of Erfurt at the crossroads of important commercial routes in the Middle Ages. The former Jewish Quarter, in the buffer zone, covers the immediate setting of the nominated monuments and includes important visual linkages, areas and attributes, such as the urban layout, the surviving medieval built fabric, and street network, that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

ICOMOS considers that the inventories and documentation of all three nominated sites are excellent. All three component parts of this nomination have a “room data sheet” which exists in both physical and digital format and is stored in an electronic database. These are complemented by extensive research publications, demonstrating long-term scholarly commitment.

**Conservation measures**

The Old Synagogue was the subject of a long-term conservation plan from the 1990s until 2009. The mikveh underwent a comprehensive programme of archaeological excavation, conservation, and protection between 2007 and 2011. Research has been carried out at the Stone House since 2015 and monitoring of the indoor climate has been carried out since 2020. The outcome of this exercise indicated the need for measures to reduce microclimate variations in the indoor space around the wooden decorated ceiling. A feasibility study is being prepared for the Stone House to address visitation in harmony with conservation requirements.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property has been the object of careful research and of a comprehensive conservation programme. No urgent measures seem necessary; however, continued attention is needed particularly at the Stone House, given the sensitivity of the decorated beamed ceiling to fluctuations of the thermo-hygrometric parameters.
Monitoring
A monitoring programme on activities related to the preservation of the attributes of the nominated property is in place.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring would need to be further developed to specify indicators, rather than spheres of action, as exists now, to properly address all attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has been carefully researched and conserved. The permanent monitoring of the conditions of the most sensitive elements of the nominated monuments is particularly important to ensure their long-term conservation. Specific indicators would need to be developed to ensure effective monitoring of all attributes of the nominated property supporting the justification for inscription. ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
A detailed description of the protection framework at the federal and state levels is provided in the management plan. Building and planning regulations are a federal responsibility and are relevant for the protection of the nominated serial property and its buffer zone. The key acts are the Federal Regional Planning Act (Raumordnungsgesetz des Bundes – ROG) and the Federal Building Code (Baugesetzbuch – BauGB).

Heritage protection is guaranteed at the state level through the Thuringian Constitution, the Protection of Cultural Heritage Act of Thuringia (ThürDSchG). The three nominated component parts are registered individual monuments at the state level.

Planning instruments at the state and municipal level also define provisions relevant for the protection of the monuments and of the buffer zone: these include the Regional Development Plan of Thuringia 2025, Land-Use Plan of the State Capital Erfurt (FNP), 2006 republished in 2017, with its supplementary plans 5 and 3 on Protection of Monuments and Building Management Plan, the Integrated Urban Development Concept for Erfurt 2020 (ISEK). The local designation statute for the Old Town of Erfurt, issued in 1992, guarantees the protection of the historic centre, and the Preservation Statute for the Old Town of Erfurt (1992) provides for regulating mechanisms of interventions within this area, further complemented by an Advertising Statute (2010).

The institutional system for protection implementation is based on two structures: the Thuringian State Chancellery acts as the State Cultural Protection Authority, with the Thuringian State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology acting as State Conservation Office; the City of Erfurt is the Local Cultural Protection Authority, with the Department for the Conservation and protection of Monuments.

An independent advisory body, the State Heritage Council, with members from various specialist fields, advises the State Cultural Protection Authority on conservation matters, among others.

Management system
The management system of the nominated property is grounded in the protection framework described above. However, for the purpose of effective management, communication and coordination among all relevant stakeholders, a Site Coordinator office is planned to be set up.

The Site Coordinator office will be assigned two positions for people who have been involved in the nomination process since 2009. The Site Coordinator office will have responsibilities spanning control, networking, conflict management, communication, education, monitoring, and reporting, among others.

A conflict management mechanism to deal with the compatibility of decisions with the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property has been developed by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. This mechanism applies to World Heritage in Germany and is described in the management plan attached to the nomination dossier.

A Steering Group was established in 2008 for the nomination. It includes representatives of the Municipal offices and Council, the Jewish State Community, the State cultural heritage protection and management offices, and the Erfurt Tourism and Marketing Board. This group acts as a forum for communication and exchange. An Advisory Board has been created to advise on the nomination and on the conceptual development of the permanent exhibition of the Old Synagogue Museum. In the case of inscription, the Advisory Board will continue its advisory function.

A management plan has been prepared: it outlines guiding principles, protection and management system and describes key objectives, priority actions for further reinforcing the management and the enjoyment of the nominated monuments, actors responsible for implementation, and monitoring system.

Visitor management
The nomination dossier and the management plan inform that a communication and public relations strategy was developed already in 2011, targeting different audiences. Visitor management activities are planned, including an information point and an orientation system, to complement what is already in place. An overall strategy for tourism at the regional level is under development, to promote integrated offers covering multiple destinations in Thuringia. Measures to ensure that visitation at the nominated monuments is compatible with their conservation needs are being developed. Visitor
infrastructure has been developed at the Old Synagogue and at the Mikveh, and a strategy for the compatible use and access of the Stone House is being prepared.

ICOMOS welcomes the initiatives of the managing agencies and considers that finalising a strategy for the presentation to visitors of the nominated series and particularly of the Stone House is an important step for the overall conservation and use of the nominated property compatible with its conservation needs.

ICOMOS underlines the importance of an interpretation strategy for the nominated property that can assist in better understanding and appreciating the specific geo-historic context of the development of the Jewish community in Erfurt, and, more generally, the role played by Jewish communities within European cities in the Middle Ages and onwards.

Community involvement
The nomination dossier does not provide detailed information on how the community of Erfurt has been involved in the nomination. The management plan sets out specific objectives for different target audiences, including the population of the region, to strengthen awareness about this heritage and acceptance of the nomination.

ICOMOS considers that an awareness-raising programme specifically aimed at all segments of the local population is crucial to ensure that the content and aims of the nomination are well and widely understood at the local level. Only in this way, can the potential inscription of the nomination deploy its benefits and achieve its aims. ICOMOS recommends that adequate human and financial resources are allocated to accompany the participation and involvement of local communities in this project that needs to be a collective and shared one.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the protection of the nominated property is adequate to ensure that its attributes continue to convey the proposed justification for inscription. The management system relies on existing legal instruments at federal, state, and local levels and on established institutions, which have been collaborating in preparing the nomination. The establishment of the Steering Group and the appointment of the Site Coordinator office are crucial to ensure an adequate level of inter-institutional coordination, collaboration, and communication among the key management actors. Integrating risk management considerations and measures within the overall management system and plans is advisable, including strengthening security measures for the three nominated monuments. The implementation of a multi-year awareness-raising and participation programme for the local population to ensure that the nomination project is shared locally is crucial for achieving the aims of this nomination. Regular monitoring of the implementation of the management plan will assist in updating the plan periodically.

6 Conclusion
The nomination of the Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt comprises three exceptionally preserved and very old Jewish monuments – the Old Synagogue, the Mikveh and the Stone House – dating back to the Middle Ages and illustrative of Jewish life and coexistence with a Christian society between the end of the 11th and the mid-14th centuries in Erfurt, an important commercial town under the Archbishop of Mainz’s protection.

The three monuments have been nominated under criteria (iii) and (iv) as they are considered exceptional testimonies to the heyday of Jewish culture in Central Europe and to its sudden end as a result of pogroms during the mid-14th century and they reflect the adaptation to local conditions and use of vernacular architecture and construction techniques.

The State Party is to be commended for the efforts that have been put in over three decades in the study and the rigorous conservation of these medieval Jewish monuments, which are rarely preserved in Central Europe, due to the distance in time from the Middle Ages, the effects of recurring anti-Jewish persecutions, the 1938 Kristallnacht, and the bombing campaigns of the Second World War.

On the basis of the information included in the nomination dossier, further supplemented by the additional information, ICOMOS considers that a key interesting characteristic of this nomination is that it contributes to shedding light on the establishment of a Jewish community that emerges as different from that in the World Heritage ShUM sites and more integrated with the Christian majority, through trade and its contribution to Erfurt’s urban development during the Middle Ages.

The comparative analysis, supplemented by the additional information provided by the State Party, has been able to justify consideration of the three nominated monuments for the World Heritage List under criterion (iv) but not under criterion (iii).

Expanding the boundaries of the nominated monuments and revising those of the buffer zone have significantly strengthened their integrity.

The nominated monuments can be seen as rare and exceptionally preserved examples of a medieval synagogue, mikveh and Jewish residential building that illustrate in their built fabric, architectural details and decoration programme the adaptation to specific local spatial and social conditions and the coexistence with a predominantly Christian society, during the urban development of Erfurt at the crossroads of important commercial routes in the Middle Ages. The former Jewish Quarter, in the buffer zone, includes important visual connections and attributes, such as the urban layout, the surviving medieval built fabric, and street network, that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection.
The nominated property is carefully documented and well conserved, and a monitoring programme is in place for the most sensitive elements. The nominated monuments are adequately protected through an array of legal and planning instruments; the management system relies on a well-gear set of mechanisms, integrating the federal, state, and local levels.

In case of inscription, a Site Coordinator office is planned to be set up and will be assigned two positions to implement identified responsibilities. A Steering Group has been in place since 2008 and an Advisory Board, created for the nomination, is planned to continue its role.

Overall, the protection and management systems of the Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt appear adequate to sustain the nominated property and its proposed Outstanding Universal Value in the long term. Some recommendations have been put forward by ICOMOS to complement and reinforce the actions planned or being implemented by the State Party.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt, Germany, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iv).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Located in the heart of the Old Town of Erfurt in Thuringia, the Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt comprises the Old Synagogue, the Mikveh and the Stone House, which are rare and exceptionally preserved examples of Central European Jewish buildings that illustrate, in their built fabric, architectural details and decoration programme, the adaptation to the town’s specific spatial and social conditions and the coexistence of a Jewish community with a predominantly Christian society, during the urban development of Erfurt at the crossroads of important commercial routes in Central Europe in the Middle Ages. The property sheds light on the heyday of a Jewish community engaged with trade and exchanges in Central Europe during the Middle Ages, between the late 11th and mid-14th centuries CE, until the Black Death wave of pogroms.

Criterion (iv): The Old Synagogue, the Mikveh and the Stone House of Erfurt are an early and rare testimony to Jewish religious and secular architecture from the Middle Ages in Central Europe. The buildings illustrate the conformity with vernacular architecture and adaptation to local conditions and thus reflect the coexistence with a predominantly Christian society and the heyday of Jewish life in Central Europe’s medieval Erfurt until the wave of pogroms of the mid-14th century.

Integrity

The property includes all attributes necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value. The former Jewish Quarter, in the buffer zone, with its well-preserved urban layout, medieval built fabric, and street network, includes visual connections and attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection. The integration of the buildings of the Jewish community into the medieval city is impressively perceivable to this day. They reflect how Jews and Christians lived together in the midst of coexistence, persecution and expulsion in a medieval city in Europe. The three component parts are of adequate size, so the protection of the characteristics and processes, which communicate the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, is guaranteed. The Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt is not threatened by any adverse developments or neglect.

Authenticity

The form and materials of the Old Synagogue, the Mikveh and the Stone House are largely preserved. Evidence of their construction and use by the Jewish community and Jewish citizens of the city and their conformity with local building traditions and techniques is provided by the preserved original medieval building fabric. The exceptionally well-preserved building fabric of the Old Synagogue mostly dates to the period from around 1100 to the early 14th century, when it was in use as a synagogue. In the Mikveh, the form of the ground plan and room height, as well as the medieval building fabric (12th-14th centuries), have been authentically preserved. Its original function as a ritual bath is fully perceivable. The Stone House is largely preserved in its fundamental structural elements from the 13th century and its unique interior design. The traces of a key event of European history, the wave of pogroms of 1348-1350, are clearly perceivable to this day.

Management and protection requirements

The laws and other regulations of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Free State of Thuringia guarantee the continuous protection of the Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt. The Old Synagogue, the Mikveh and the Stone House are registered as cultural monuments in the Book of Monuments (Denkmaltuch) of the Free State of Thuringia in accordance with Article 4 of the Protection of Cultural Heritage Act of Thuringia (ThürDSchG). In addition, they are included in the monument ensemble "Old Town of Erfurt", which is also recorded in the Book of Monuments. All measures in the monument ensemble "Old Town of Erfurt", in which the three component parts and the buffer zone are located, require permission from the Local Cultural Protection Authority (Untere Denkmalschutzbehörde). In addition, municipal statutes and planning such as the preservation and design statutes and the Urban Development Concept ensure the sustenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and the protective function of the buffer zone.
The City of Erfurt is responsible for management as the owner of the property. A management plan has been developed as a binding action and planning instrument and will be periodically updated. The Site Coordinator office, backed up by the Steering Group and the Advisory Board, is key to guaranteeing coordination and management effectiveness at the property. A careful strategy for the use, interpretation and communication of the property is crucial for long-term sustenance of its Outstanding Universal Value.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Preparing a Heritage Impact Assessment for the planned visitor centre and sending it for review to the World Heritage Centre prior to any final decision on the matter,

b) Sharing with the World Heritage Centre the feasibility study for the use of the Stone House as soon as it has been finalised,

c) Integrating risk management considerations and measures within the overall management system and plans, including reviewing security measures for the three monuments,

d) Implementing an interpretation strategy aimed at all segments of the local population to disseminate and raise awareness about the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and in general on Jewish heritage in Erfurt and Central Europe,

e) Further developing specific indicators to ensure effective monitoring of all attributes of the property,

f) Ensuring regular monitoring of the management plan implementation and its periodical update,

g) Providing updated figures for the areas of the revised boundaries of the property and of its buffer zone;
Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (February 2022)
Civita di Bagnoregio
(Italy)
No 1664

WITHDRAWN
Kuldīga / Goldingen in Courland (Republic of Latvia)
No 1658

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Kuldīga / Goldingen in Courland

Location
Kurzeme (Courland)
Republic of Latvia

Brief description
Located in the western part of Latvia, the town of Kuldīga is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a traditional urban settlement, which developed from a small medieval hamlet into an important administrative centre of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia between the 16th and 18th centuries. The town structure of Kuldīga has largely retained the street layout of that period. The intersection of the Venta and Alekšupīte rivers is a defining element of the town’s structure, contributing to its scenic character. The historic built fabric of Kuldīga includes structures of traditional log architecture as well as large foreign-influenced techniques and styles of brick masonry and timber-framed houses that illustrate the rich exchange between local craftspersons and travelling craftsmen from other Hanse towns and centres around the Baltic Sea as well as Russia. The Duchy of Courland and Semigallia ceased to exist in 1795, when it was incorporated as a province of the Russian Empire. However, the architectural influences and craftsmanship traditions introduced during the period of the Duchy endured well into the 19th century. The harmonious townscape of Kuldīga, with clay tiles used as the predominant roofing material, is a representative example of traditional Latvian building techniques and traditions.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a group of buildings.

Included in the Tentative List
28 February 2020 as “Kuldīga (Goldingen)”

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 18 to 22 August 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 24 September 2021 requesting further information about the criteria, the history and development of the nominated property, and the comparative analysis.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 29 October 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: justification for inscription, comparative analysis, boundaries of the nominated property, management plan, risk management, and watch tower.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 25 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The beginnings of Kuldīga date back to the 13th century, when the Livonian Branch of the Teutonic Order built a castle there. Located at the confluence of the River Venta and the smaller Alekšupīte stream, in the central Kurzeme Region, about 150 kilometres west of Rīga, the area was strategically positioned between Livonia and Prussia. In the 14th century, whilst only a hamlet, Kuldīga joined the activities of the Hanseatic League and started to engage in international trade. During this time, the area north of the castle territory grew up and the first elements of the town were laid out (e.g. the market square and St. Catherine’s Lutheran Church).

The 16th century was a time of great shocks. The Russian invasion of Livonia in 1558 set off a series of events that consequently led to the establishment of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, in 1561. Kuldīga was the primary residence and administrative centre of Courland’s first ruler, Gotthard Kettler, after the establishment of the Duchy. However, Kettler moved his residence soon after, first to Rīga and then choosing Mitau (present day Jelgava) as his capital. However, his residence seems to have been mostly
In the 18th century, shutters were introduced as a new architectural element, given the easy availability of glass. Decorated window proportions, the size of windows increased significantly while houses initially remained similar in their overall proportions, now so characteristic of wooden roof boards and the more fire-hazardous roofing materials. The proportion of masonry buildings also increased, replacing traditional wooden ones.

During the co-regency of Gotthard Kettler’s heirs, Kuldīga continued to be the ducal residence and administrative centre of Duke Wilhelm Kettler, who had been given power over Courland in 1596 and ruled until 1616. Kuldīga maintained an important role in the administration of the Duchy during its entire existence and continued to grow as a result.

Under the reign of Duke Jacob Kettler (from 1642 to 1681), the Duchy reached the peak of its prosperity, engaging in international trade and acquiring several strong points in the estuary of the Gambia River in Africa (1651) and Tobago in the Caribbean (1654). Duke Jacob determined that Jelgava would be the sole capital of the Duchy, therefore Kuldīga lost its capital status. However, the Duke liked to stay there and the town generally benefited from the increased economic development of the Duchy throughout the 17th century. This led to further urban expansion of Kuldīga and numerous urban elements that developed during that period contribute to the image of the town today.

Access to new building materials and technologies in the late 17th and early 18th centuries led to considerable changes in the architectural styles. The roofing materials started changing from thatch and wooden shingles towards wooden roof boards and the more fire-resistant red clay tiles, now so characteristic of the roofscape of Kuldīga. While houses initially remained similar in their overall proportions, the size of windows increased significantly given the easy availability of glass. Decorated window shutters were introduced as a new architectural element.

In the 18th century, Kuldīga registered its fastest expansion by strengthening connections with other towns in the Duchy. The roads leading to Ventspils (in the north), Alūksne and Liepāja (in the west) and Skrunda and Jelgava (in the south) were paved and new roads constructed. In this period, the density of construction increased significantly along the main new streets.

The Duchy of Courland and Semigallia was dissolved and it became a Russian province in the course of the third partition of Poland in 1795. Kuldīga retained its town administration but with time it lost part of its importance. At the beginning of the 19th century, the territory of the town was approximately the same size, but the coverage of buildings became denser. Throughout the century, different laws and regulations aimed at fire safety led to the progressive replacement of fire hazardous roofing materials. The proportion of masonry buildings also increased, replacing traditional wooden ones.

Waterways, which had previously dominated trade, were replaced by rail from the middle of the 19th century. However, Kuldīga did not benefit from the building of the railways. Therefore, the city’s development slowed down considerably, which partly allowed the legacy from the period of the Duchy to be preserved. In the second half of the 19th century, the brick bridge over the Venta River was constructed, connecting Kuldīga to the east.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the scale of construction in the town changed; two- or three-storey masonry houses were built more often. During the period of the First World War, the population of Kuldīga decreased significantly but the town did not suffer any significant damage. In the mid-1920s, Kuldīga was still quite isolated from other settlements in Latvia due to poor roads and the lack of railways. During the Second World War, a part of the Jewish quarter was bombarded – the area is now a public park. After the war, Latvia was incorporated into the Soviet Union, leading to the construction of some buildings typical of modern Soviet-era architecture. Unlike most of the towns which had developed over the period of the Duchy of Courland, Kuldīga survived the two World Wars largely unscathed and modern urban development largely took place outside its historic centre.

The area of the nominated property, as submitted originally in the nomination dossier, was 64.32 ha with a buffer zone of 108.79 ha. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS expressed some concerns about the boundaries proposed, which the State Party responded to by submitting a new map as part of supplementary information received on 25 February 2022. However, figures for the revised total area of the nominated property and the buffer zone were not included and need to be provided at a later stage.

Overall, the nominated property encompasses the medieval castle mound plateau, the medieval area known as Kalnamiests (i.e. the oldest inhabited area of the town) and the urban areas which developed during the ducal period from the 16th until the 18th centuries but continued to organically evolve until the middle of the 20th century, when conservation efforts were put in place. In addition, large areas of the environmental setting of Kuldīga are also included in the nominated property. This includes the intersection of the Venta and Alekšūpīte rivers, as well as the Ventas Rumba waterfall, which was essential for the growth of Kuldīga into a trading centre.
State of conservation

Regulations dating back to the 16th century made it illegal to build within the area around the market-place without the permission of the Town Council. Multiple fires over the centuries (and particularly in the 17th century) repeatedly destroyed significant numbers of the town’s wooden buildings. In 1615, a severe flooding of the Venta River washed away the castle bridge as well as numerous buildings next to the river bank.

During its existence, the Duchy of Courland was at war (or involved in wars) with neighbouring powers for a total of eighty-one years. The castle of Kuldgā was destroyed during the Great Northern War (1700-1721); some of its ruins are still standing.

Fire remained a threat; therefore, in 1828, regulations were tightened and a decree was issued which required the complete elimination of thatched roofs and their replacement with clay tiles. In 1896, additional regulations required new residential buildings to be built from stone or brick only. In 1922, the Town Council of Kuldgā published regulations which prohibited acts of vandalism with regard to “remnants from the past”.

The biggest loss of buildings happened in the Second World War, when part of the Jewish quarter was bombarded. After the war, the first development plan for the town was issued in 1948. A review of this plan by the national Monument Protection Department determined that street widenings within the historical network be executed only “where it is particularly required” and that the Alekšūpīte stream be preserved. In addition, it recommended to limit the demolition of buildings only where necessary. In 1969, Kuldgā was designated as a cultural monument at the national level.

In 1973, the third development plan required that new buildings should blend into the earlier composition of the town and that the common character of architectural forms and materials should be maintained. Building regulations issued in 1977 limited the maximum height of new centrally-located residential buildings to two storeys and defined guidelines concerning facades, roofs and doors, both with regards to material and design.

The Kuldgā Restoration Centre was established in 2010. The Centre has since implemented several conservation programmes for wooden buildings and elements of wood buildings. In 2014, the area of the “urban construction monument” of state importance was further expanded to include the part of the town located on the left bank of the Venta River, and especially along Ventspils, Liepājas and Jelgavas Streets. The designation covers the spatial environment of Kuldgā along with the urban layout and architectural elements.

A comparison between the urban layout in 1797 – based on the oldest existing map of the town – demonstrates that the urban structure of the 18th century of the whole historic centre as well as the axes of the main roads are largely preserved. The locations of the historical water crossings over the Alekšūpīte River remain largely unchanged. Some of the bridges that were originally built from wood were later replaced by masonry structures.

Whereas bridges over the Alekšūpīte existed already in the ducal era, no permanent bridge spanned the Venta River at the time. The current brick bridge was built in 1874. ICOMOS notes that the river landscape has changed since the time of the Duchy. At that time, the river was navigable and the islands are a result of later development; the banks have created new habitats. Most of the territory of the former Order Castle is currently a landscaped park; the castle itself no longer exists.

Different wars over the centuries affected the town’s historic built fabric, particularly that dating to the time of the Duchy of Courland. In addition, multiple fires destroyed significant numbers of the town’s wooden buildings (e.g. in 1563, 1615, 1669, 1693 and 1704). Whilst the nomination dossier stated that much of the historical urban fabric of the 17th and 18th centuries still exists today, information included in the annexes submitted with the nomination dossier did not substantiate this claim. Therefore, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked if the State Party could submit maps illustrating the development of the built fabric over time and identifying the historic wooden buildings located within the nominated property. The map submitted shows that a large proportion of the existing buildings date from the 19th century and later, that is, after the period of the Duchy. Based on historic records referred to in publications submitted as annexes to the nomination dossier, in 1821 the town had 205 buildings; most of them were wooden buildings and only eighteen were masonry ones. More than half of the buildings had thatched, board or shingle roofs. Today, while some wooden buildings remain, the majority are stone buildings or mixed stone and wood buildings. And whereas the shift from thatched, board or shingle roofs to clay tile roofs started during the Ducal period, the transition largely occurred during the 19th century.

Overall, ICOMOS considers that the town and the castle area have changed very much as a whole since the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia ceased to exist in 1795. Today, it presents itself more as an historic town with multiple time layers and functions than as the castle town of the period. The 19th and early 20th century public and private buildings and additions to the street grid play a big role in the present townscape.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is generally good.
Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are development pressures, risk of fire and floods, and tourism pressures.

Development pressures derive mainly from increasing necessity of utilities or service infrastructure. A telecommunications tower, located in Putnu Street (in the buffer zone of the nominated property), is visible from the town centre as well as from the opposite bank of the Venta River. Based on information received through its technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS’ Interim Report enquired about the possible construction of the new watch tower, if it could have potential visual impacts on the townscape of Kuldīga, and if a Heritage Impact Assessment was undertaken or planned. The State Party submitted visualisations of the project to be located within the buffer zone of the nominated property and the nature reserve “Venta Valley”. The State Party explained that the project was assessed and approved in accordance with the procedures laid down in the legislation, and its potential visual impact was analysed by several bodies. The project was legally approved in 2017 but has not yet been implemented due to lack of funds.

The construction of high-rise buildings within the nominated property and the buffer zone is unlikely given that the town’s general construction rules state that no more than three-storey buildings can be built within both areas. The municipality has also taken measures to reduce the effects of vibrations and pollution from traffic, which can affect traditional building materials.

In the past, fires destroyed substantial parts of the urban fabric and remain a risk to this day, since the town has many wooden buildings as well as buildings with important wooden elements. The conservation of the wooden buildings and elements is also challenging due to difficulties in securing adequate timber materials and changes in construction methods. Decreasing numbers of qualified craftspeople and resulting knowledge loss of traditional building techniques add to these problems. To counter these trends, the Restoration Centre educates specialists in the different fields necessary for the conservation of the nominated property.

Like fire, floods remain a threat to the nominated property. Floods damage the building foundations and the consequent humidity leads to the development of mould, even after the flooding event. Climate change can potentially increase the frequency of flood events in the future. High levels of humidity during winter along with relatively high variations of temperature throughout the year affect the foundations of the buildings and foster the growth of mould. In addition, the salt used to defrost the streets in winter adds to these problems: the combination of melting ice and salt used to defrost the streets gets spattered onto the building facades, accelerating the deterioration of traditional materials.

Visitor numbers have grown considerably over the years: from an estimated 35,640 people in 2014; to 135,198 in 2016; to 300,259 in 2019. Based on information provided in the nomination dossier, ICOMOS notes that accommodation available includes mainly apartments and holiday homes. The potential rise in the number of visitors, if the nominated property were to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, could lead to residential buildings being increasingly used as touristic accommodation and subsequent reduction in the number of permanent inhabitants within the nominated property. This is concerning, given that the nomination dossier mentions statistics that show the number of inhabitants in Kuldīga continues to gradually decrease – a trend experienced in other towns and cities in Latvia.

To understand in more detail what management responses are being taken to address some of the factors identified, ICOMOS’ Interim Report requested further information regarding visitor management and risk management. Consequently, the State Party submitted an updated management plan which includes two additional annexes that deal with tourist flow management in Kuldīga Old Town and risk management.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is generally good and that the main factors affecting the nominated property are risks of fire and floods, tourism pressures and deterioration of traditional building materials.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Kuldīga is one of the very few remaining, and the best-preserved, urban testimonies of a small yet important political empire, the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, which ruled the territory of modern Latvia from the 16th to 18th centuries.
- Kuldīga bears a unique testimony to a culture and civilisation which no longer exists (i.e. the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia) but continues to influence contemporary society.

Based on the nomination dossier, the main attributes of the Duchy’s testimony can be grouped as follows: (a) the urban layout and streetscape which depict the spatial relations of the urban aspects at the time; (b) architectural remains of residential, public and religious buildings which illustrate the regional development and composition of architecture and townscape in the 17th and 18th centuries; (c) the expression of specific craft skills that have been passed down from generation to generation and which continue to be used in the contemporary conservation of Kuldīga; and (d) landscape elements which preserve the
The comparative analysis was developed based on a three-step approach. The first part focuses on properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and included on Tentative Lists. The use of criterion (iii) is a central parameter of this part of the comparative analysis. A total of six cities were considered but only those located in Europe are actually compared: Bryggen (Norway, 1979, criterion (iii)), the Old City of Berne (Switzerland, 1983, criterion (iii)) and San Marino Historic Centre and Mount Titan (San Marino, 2008, criterion (iii)). Regarding sites included on Tentative Lists, only Vila Viçosa, Renaissance ducal town in Portugal is seen as relevant since it refers to an urban centre of a duchy and the continuation of this heritage until today.

This part of the comparative analysis also considers towns associated with the Hanseatic League (e.g. Hanseatic City of Lübeck (Germany, 1987, criterion (iv)), Historic Centres of Stralsund and Wismar (Germany, 2002, criteria (ii) and (iv)), Historic Centre (Old Town) of Tallinn (Estonia, 1997, criteria (ii) and (iv)) and Hanseatic Town of Visby (Sweden, 1995, criteria (iv) and (v)). However, the State Party considers that these towns relate to a different timeframe than the one represented by the nominated property. A few historical urban centres representing different political entities contemporary with the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia are also presented, namely the Naval Port of Karlskrona (Sweden, 1998, criteria (ii) and (iv)), the Historic Centre of Riga (Latvia, 1997, criteria (i) and (ii)), the Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments (Russian Federation, 1990, criteria (i), (ii), (iv) and (vi)) and Vilnius Historic Centre (Lithuania, 1994, criteria (ii) and (iv)).

Finally, this part of the comparative analysis compares the nominated property with Old Rauma (Finland, 1991, criteria (iv) and (v)). The State Party considers that Rauma is inscribed entirely based on its role for the typology of northern European towns, especially regarding vernacular wooden architecture, created in the late 18th and 19th centuries. In contrast, it is considered that Kuldīga does not focus on a typology of architecture but on an urban ensemble testifying to a historic society.

The second part of the comparative analysis focuses mainly on the importance of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia in comparison with other regional powers and duchies. This is justified on the grounds that in the European context, duchies were a common political system since medieval times. This part of the comparative analysis asserts that Prussia is the only duchy which is comparable to that of Courland regarding its economic and political independence. However, Courland was considered more advanced regarding international trade.

The third and final part of the comparative analysis compares the nominated property with other administrative centres of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. Seventeen towns are identified. Of these, Jelgava/Mitau, Liepāja/Libau and Ventspils/Windau are particularly relevant. Libau and Windau were two of the most important harbours in the Baltic region thus of particular value to the Duchy of Courland, but also later on to the Russian Empire. While Kuldīga was the initial residence for Duke Gotthard Kettler, in 1578 he selected Mitau as the main residence of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. While Kuldīga still remained an important residential town during the reign of Duke Wilhelm Kettler (1596-1616), his exile firmly established Mitau as the primary residence of the Duchy. However, that town was massively damaged during the Second World War.

The State Party concludes that Kuldīga stands out not because it was historically more important than other towns of Courland but because of its exemplary state of preservation and its completeness – reflecting the era when the small Duchy’s trade relations and colonial activities developed alongside the most powerful European nations.

The comparative analysis, as presented in the nomination dossier, largely revolved around the historical importance of the Duchy of Courland. Therefore, in its request for additional information sent on September 2021, ICOMOS asked the State Party to expand the comparative analysis to focus the comparisons on the four main types of attributes identified in the nomination dossier (i.e. the urban layout and streetscape, the architecture, the craft skills and the landscape elements). Consequently, the State Party expanded the comparative analysis to towns which developed largely in the 16th and 18th centuries, in the Baltic States, Poland and Belarus. However, the State Party acknowledged its limitations in undertaking the necessary research because of the COVID-19 pandemic health restrictions. Therefore, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS expressed its wish to receive further information to reinforce the expanded comparative analysis that had been provided. The additional information submitted on February 2022 builds on adequate archival research and is supported by photographs collected during site visits. The State Party noted that whilst the additional time spent on the in situ research provided valuable additional insights about the additional comparable sites that had been selected, it did not generate outcomes substantially different from those presented before.

As previously concluded, Viljandi (Estonia), Trakai (Lithuania) and Kazimierz Dolny (Poland) are considered the most relevant to compare the nominated property with, because of their engagement in international trade and their regional importance. However, the analysis found that those towns either lack authenticity or integrity, or do
not show the same level of integration of internationally inspired elements into local architectural traditions. In addition, in terms of the combination of attributes, the State Party considers that Viljandi (Estonia) does not express the development and continuity of crafts inspired by international encounters as in Kuldīga. For Pärnu (Estonia), the historical landscape setting and the urban layout of its centre can still be perceived today but destructions in 1944 largely affected the integrity of the old town. Trakai (Lithuania) was also compared more closely because of its similarities regarding its historical importance as a regional centre of the Duchy of Lithuania in the 14th and 15th centuries. The dwelling houses in this town are predominantly front-gabled wooden buildings with high gable roofs, often now made from corrugated iron, hence not preserving the historical materials. Therefore, the State Party concludes that the high levels of authenticity and integrity of the nominated property, its homogenous streetscape, and the continuity of local craftsmanship that developed during the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia cannot be matched by any other town in the relevant geo-cultural area.

ICOMOS considers that while Kuldīga was the primary residence of the Duchy’s first ruler, the Duke soon after moved its capital to Jelgava/Mitau. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that Goldingen, as the nominated property was known at the time, was not the primary administrative centre of the Duchy throughout its existence from the 16th to the 18th centuries. As noted in the nomination dossier, Mitau was in fact the main residence of the Duchy and a centre of the ducal monumental building programmes. The historic, political and economic importance of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia is also deeply interrelated with the ports of Liepāja/Libau and Ventspils/Windau. ICOMOS also notes that the castle, as the physical residence of the rulers of Courland, was destroyed at the beginning of the 18th century. The critical reason why Kuldīga is considered today as the best testimony of the Duchy is its state of conservation.

ICOMOS considers that Kuldīga today presents itself more as an historic town with multiple layers from the 13th to the early 20th centuries. As the expanded comparative analysis shows, the nominated property stands out as an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, particularly when other historic towns in the region have not retained the same levels of integrity due to the effects of fires, wars or modern developments. The additional information provided by the State Party on the development of the urban structure and the built fabric of Kuldīga, from the 13th century to the present day, supports this conclusion.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criterion (iii).

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Kuldīga bears a unique testimony to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia and its era of growth, international trade and cultural exchanges, as both its first ducal residence and essential administrative centre. The nominated property is said to be the best-preserved and last remaining urban testimony of the Duchy’s political power, displaying a street and plot layout with significant physical remains of architectural fabric and infrastructure dating back to the late 16th to 18th centuries.

ICOMOS considers that, while Kuldīga played an important role in the history of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, the political and economic importance of the Duchy, throughout its duration, was far more related to the towns of Jelgava/Mitau, Liepāja/Libau and Ventspils/Windau. Mitau is generally considered to have been the main administrative centre of the Duchy whereas the ports of Libau and Windau were critical to the Duchy’s trade and colonial activities.

The nomination dossier emphasises the urban layout as a considerable tangible expression of the period of the Duchy. However, ICOMOS notes that the urban layout or town structure is not a direct result of the Duchy’s power nor of particular planning needs associated with it. ICOMOS also considers that the tangible expression of the Duchy in the historic fabric of the nominated property is also weak. Many of the wooden buildings that existed at the time were destroyed in fires in the 17th century and others were replaced by masonry or combined stone and wood ones in later periods. The construction period of several buildings described in the nomination dossier as the architectural testimony of the Duchy is unclear; others had elements replaced or added in later centuries and some, like the Town Hall (built in 1806), were built anew after the Duchy no longer existed.

In its request for additional information sent on September 2021, ICOMOS asked the State Party to explain the rationale used for nominating the property under criterion (ii) only. The State Party replied that, initially, it also considered criteria (ii) and (iv). In relation to criterion (ii) and the interchange of influences, the State Party considered that Kuldīga was a hub for trade and cultural exchanges. Many foreign craftspeople and merchants settled in Kuldīga and integrated references to their cultural origins with the local architectural traditions, hence creating an architectural language specific to the Duchy of Courland in its integration of German and Latvian architectural traditions. However, it was felt that some of these aspects were covered under the justification for criterion (iii).
In relation to criterion (iv), the State Party considered that Kuldīga is one of very few historic urban centres of the 17th and 18th centuries which have survived in the Baltic region, a region heavily impacted by multiple wars. It adds that the town has not been intentionally constructed based on a unique or exceptional layout or form, rather it is its exceptional state of preservation that makes it stand out among other towns in the wider region.

ICOMOS considers that whilst the nominated property developed throughout the Ducal period as a whole, the town cannot be said to reflect in an outstanding way the political and economic power of Courland. Kuldīga mainly stands out as a well-preserved traditional urban settlement but one that reflects multiple historical periods – from the 13th to the early 20th centuries.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

While not initially nominated according to criterion (v), ICOMOS considers that Kuldīga is representative of traditional Baltic architecture, merging German and Latvian traditions, which, complemented by a well-preserved town structure, a harmonious townscape and scenic river valley landscape, acts as a witness to the history of traditional settlements in the region.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iii) has not been demonstrated but that criterion (v) is justified.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property should be analysed based on the evidence related to it being the primary residence and administrative centre of the Duchy of Courland. The nominated property includes the area of the town that existed during the period of the Duchy and the urban structure that developed at the time has been preserved. However, few attributes remain that convey the Duchy’s political and economic power. Only ruins of the castle as the physical residence of the rulers of Courland exist today.

Few public buildings dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries remain. Of these, even fewer are a direct expression of the rulers’ power as in the case of the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, built in 1641-1649 and renovated in 1746, at the request of the King of Poland in return for the approval of the succession rights of Duke Jacob. The Supreme Court House of the ducal period still exists but it no longer retains its original function.

The nomination dossier acknowledges that the nominated property includes a number of later houses which were built on the foundations of 17th and 18th century constructions. However, it considers that those buildings contribute nevertheless to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property by further demonstrating the continuation of the urban layout and spatial relations of the Ducal period.

Based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, the nominated property does not suffer from the effects of development. Modern materials, like hard renderings, steel structures and exposed concrete are only visible here and there. Not all of the town buildings are in good condition. Conservation activities over the past twenty years have contributed to improved condition of the structures in around one hundred buildings; however there is still work to be done.

ICOMOS deemed that, if the justification for the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property were to be anchored in its role as the primary residence and administrative centre of the Duchy of Courland, the wholeness and intactness of the nominated property would have to be evaluated mainly on the tangible evidence dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. In that regard, ICOMOS concluded the conditions of integrity could not be considered to be demonstrated. However, Kuldīga’s urban structure, developed from the 13th to 18th centuries, remains largely intact and its buildings, influenced by the architectural styles which emerged during the period of the Duchy but which persisted to a considerable degree until the early 20th century, contributes to a harmonious whole. ICOMOS therefore considers that, as a traditional human settlement – reflecting a broader timeframe than that of the Duchy of Courland – integrity has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The location of the nominated property was a fundamental aspect for the development of the urban structure of the town, influenced by the intersection of the Venta and Alekšūpīte rivers; this structure is retained. The river landscape has changed over time but not to the extent that it fundamentally changes the area of the setting of the nominated property.

The authenticity of the nominated property needs to be analysed largely in relation to the forms, design and materials of its built fabric, particularly since the State Party argues that local and foreign craftsmen jointly developed a new architectural language in the town, which was inspired by international encounters as well as the availability of new materials based on trade relations set up under ducal rule. Since the nomination dossier included little information on the detail of that new language, ICOMOS, in its request for additional information sent on September 2021, asked the State Party to provide more detail in this regard.

The State Party explained that, in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the increase in foreign craftsmen and trade allowed access to new building materials and technologies, resulting in significant changes in the
architectural style. The roofing materials changed from thatch and wooden shingles towards wooden roof boards and the more fire-resistant, characteristic, red clay tiles. The overall proportions of the houses remained largely the same but the size of windows increased with the availability of glass. A specifically new architectural element was double-framed windows. Further changes were introduced towards the end of the 18th century. Tin covers and wind boards were added and wooden cornices became more elaborate; the same as for door and window decorations.

ICOMOS found that physical elements deriving from the Duchy period are rare and patchy, not only in the urban fabric but also in individual buildings. The subsequent changes have mainly kept the traditional morphology and created urban continuity. Contemporary conservation works respect and apply the use of the forms and materials of the relevant period.

The 20th century buildings, and especially reconstructions done in the 1970s, make it difficult to truly identify their main building period. After the protection measures set up for the old town in 1969, some twenty buildings were built mainly for visual reasons. Their façades resemble early 18th century houses but their structures are characterised by semi-modern techniques with available materials of the time, including concrete, cement and asbestos sheets.

The nomination dossier acknowledges that disagreements exist between residents and conservation specialists regarding the purpose and result of conservation works. Citizens often prefer the buildings to look perfect and modern.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property, on the basis of criterion (v), have been demonstrated.

**Boundaries**

The boundary of the nominated property includes most of the pre-19th century urban area of Kuldīga and part of its environmental setting, namely part of the Venta River. The definition of this area is largely influenced by the 1797 map of the town, which provides evidence that the town’s street network at the time has largely been preserved.

The boundary of the property, as included in the nomination dossier, was also influenced by the legal protection of the “urban construction monument” – The Historic Centre of the Town of Kuldīga. On the one hand, the latter was smaller than that of the nominated property on its eastern part (because it does not include the Venta River area) but larger on its western part. The ruins of the ducal castle were only partly included in the nominated property.

The boundary of the buffer zone was largely based on the protection zone of the “urban construction monument”, called “individual protection zone”. As of 2020, a total of 1,680 people were officially registered as living in the nominated property and an additional 1,100 people within the buffer zone.

ICOMOS, in its Interim Report, noted that the ruins of the ducal castle/residence area were partly within the boundary of the nominated property and partly in the buffer zone. As such, it asked the State Party to consider revising the boundary of the nominated property in order to include all the archaeological remains of the ducal residence. ICOMOS also suggested including a larger part of the river scenery. In addition, ICOMOS asked the State Party to consider further alignments between the boundaries of the “urban construction monument” and its “individual protection zone” with those of the nominated property and the buffer zone respectively, to facilitate management.

Consequently, the State Party submitted a new map responding to the recommended adjustments. ICOMOS appreciates the work done by the State Party in such a short period of time to implement fully its suggestions. This is highly commended, particularly when the changes were legally approved. The boundary of the nominated property now largely coincides with that of the “urban construction monument”; exceptions are appropriately justified. With the adjustments provided, the boundary of the buffer zone coincides exactly with that of the “individual protection zone”.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that, based on all the documentation provided, the nominated property justifies consideration for inscription on the World Heritage List, under criterion (v) and not criterion (iii) as proposed by the State Party. On this basis, the authenticity and integrity of the nominated property are demonstrated. The revisions made to the boundaries of the nominated property reinforce the integrity of the property in relation to criterion (v) as well as facilitating management.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

Several comprehensive inventories have been elaborated over the years. The inventory of monuments of state and local importance is updated by the national and local authorities annually. Several of these inventories are available online. When designing alterations or any work in a building, documentation with detailed descriptions of building parts, materials and styles is required by law. The nomination dossier builds on many historical records. The documentation provided as part of the additional information received on February 2022, particularly in relation to the evolution of the urban structure and the development of the built fabric over time, adds to the body of knowledge about the nominated property and can help inform the monitoring of its state of conservation in the future.
Conservation measures
In the recent past, the municipality has invested considerably in the conservation of the nominated property. Since 2014, the municipality has implemented a fifty percent co-funding programme to help the local community and property owners with the conservation of historic buildings. Based on the information provided in the nomination dossier, since many of the buildings have more than one owner, the municipality has delegated their management to the municipal company “Kuldīgas kommunālie pakalpojumi”. Based on the information gathered through the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission a total of 125 residential buildings are managed by this company. Each building is documented by its own file containing all information regarding its condition, repairs and improvements undertaken and the current issues to be addressed.

Established in 2010, Kuldīga’s Restoration Centre plays an important role in the conservation of the town’s built fabric. It provides information as well as practical support regarding the maintenance, conservation and renovation of historic buildings. Another essential aspect of the Centre’s work is the early identification of necessary conservation works in order to avoid irreparable damage to unique building details, such as doors and windows. The role that the Centre plays in helping to safeguard traditional crafts and building techniques, including its training programmes, is critical for the effective conservation and management of the nominated property.

Monitoring
Based on the nomination dossier, the “Kuldīgas kommunālie pakalpojumi” annually monitors the technical condition of each house under its authority. A monitoring programme consisting of twenty-one indicators, covering different types of attributes (e.g. buildings, streets and squares, historical landscapes and green spaces, and water bodies) is included as part of the nomination dossier. This programme establishes the frequency or regularity at which indicators will be monitored, the method to be used and the body responsible.

The monitoring programme is not yet in place; the nomination dossier states the monitoring indicators will be transferred into a geospatial system, should the nominated property be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring programme proposed should be strengthened. Some of the indicators are too vague to act as measures (be they qualitative or quantitative) to assess the state of conservation of the property and look more like management objectives (e.g. preservation of historic water crossings; preservation of historic panoramas and views; or preservation of Ventas Rumba waterfall as a natural monument). In addition, some of the indicators look more like measures of productivity than related to the monitoring of the state of conservation of the property. While such indicators are important for the overall effective management of the nominated property, it is necessary that they do not divert resources from what is truly important to assess.

Furthermore, the high number of indicators proposed raises concerns about the feasibility of adequately collecting data for all the indicators and moreover how that data will be used to make better decisions about the management of the nominated property. This is particularly important given that several bodies will be responsible for monitoring those indicators. The nomination dossier states that the implementation of the monitoring programme will be under the responsibility of the site manager (i.e. a management team of 3-4 specialists) together with the Old Town Environment Commission. Therefore, ICOMOS recommends that the monitoring programme, from a state of conservation perspective, be revised to focus on a lower number of indicators, clearly connected to the main attributes of the nominated property. Such indicators should not only focus on the physical attributes but also on processes and traditional practices. In addition, the indicators should be defined taking into account the main factors affecting the property. Indicators related to the monitoring of the state of conservation of the attributes of the nominated property should also be distinguished from performance indicators of the management system.

ICOMOS considers that existing documentation and conservation measures are adequate. The monitoring programme should be revised and strengthened, and adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
Most of the area of the nominated property is designated as an “urban construction monument” of state importance, (i.e. “The Historic Centre of the Town of Kuldīga”). The Law “On Protection of Cultural Monuments” (with amendments) adopted in 1992 stipulates that it is prohibited to destroy cultural monuments; moving or alteration of a cultural monument can only be done with special permission. The execution of the Law is supported by three regulatory instruments: 1) Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 474 of August 2003 – “Regulations on registration, protection, use, restoration, state pre-emption rights and granting of environmental degrading object status”; 2) Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 473 of August 2003 – “Procedures by which cultural monuments shall be included in the list of state protected cultural monuments and shall be excluded from the list of state protected cultural monuments”; and 3) Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 534 of July 2011 – “Regulations regarding the procedures and terms for use of the priority rights of cultural monuments of state importance”.

During the course of the evaluation process, based on ICOMOS’ recommendations, the State Party adjusted the boundaries of the nominated property to align it closer with those of the “urban construction monument” of state importance. The “urban construction monument” is surrounded by an “individual protection zone”, the boundaries of which now match those of the buffer zone of the nominated property. As a result of this process, the
State Party concluded that the “individual protection zone”, should have national cultural heritage status of its own. Therefore, on 24 February 2022, the Ministry of Culture issued an Order that approves the status of the urban construction monument No. 9320 “The Outskirts of the Historical Centre of Kuldīga with Venta Valley” as a monument of architecture (urban construction) of local importance in the list of state protected cultural monuments, hence granting it national cultural heritage protection status.

The nominated property and its buffer zone include part of the nature reserve “Venta Valley”, therefore the Law “On Specially Protected Nature Territories” also applies. The water bodies of the Venta River, Alekšūpīte River and Māras Pond are also protected by the Protection Zone Law (1997, with amendments).

**Management system**

In terms of governance arrangements, Kuldīga Municipality acts as the main management agency for the nominated property and its buffer zone. There are seven municipal institutions that are part of the administration of Kuldīga Municipality and three municipal enterprises that are directly involved in the management system. These are: the Kuldīga Municipality Building Authority; the Kuldīga Development Agency; the Kuldīga Restoration Centre; the Kuldīga Main Library; the Kuldīga District Museum; the Kuldīga Active Recreation Centre; the Kuldīga Culture Centre; the SIA “Kuldīgas komunālie pakalpojumi”; the SIA “Kuldīgas siltumtīkļi”; and the SIA “Kuldīgas ėdēns”. Of these, the Kuldīga Municipality Building Authority, the Restoration Centre, and the SIA “Kuldīgas komunālie pakalpojumi” play central roles.

The Kuldīga Municipality Building Authority supervises and controls development and conservation activities. Within this multidisciplinary team there is an old town expert who organises the practical measures of management of the nominated property and the work of the Old Town Environment Commission. This Commission advises the Kuldīga Municipality Building Authority on planning and the local level, at present, on all the planning instruments covering different scales. At the local level, at present, there are two main planning instruments: the Sustainable Development Strategy of Kuldīga Municipality (2014-2030) and the Spatial Plan of Kuldīga Municipality (2013-2025). In addition, the “Local plan for the old town of Kuldīga in Venta Valley that amends the spatial plan”, currently under elaboration, will include important provisions that contribute to the protection of the nominated property, such as preventing the construction of big shopping centres and promoting pedestrian flows. The Local plan (now in its third draft version, following public consultations) is being developed in integration with the provisions of the spatial plan and those of the management plan for the nominated property and its buffer zone.

Since the version of the management plan submitted with the nomination dossier was still a draft, ICOMOS enquired about the status of this plan in its Interim Report. Consequently, as part of the additional information sent on February 2022, the State Party shared the final version of the management plan, approved by a decision of Kuldīga Municipal Council on 27 January 2022.

The management plan includes a detailed plan of actions to be implemented between different actors or agencies. In addition, two important annexes were added to this final version; one is the “Kuldīga Old Town Visitor Flow Management Plan”, the other is a “Risk Management Plan”.

**Visitor management**

The “Kuldīga Old town Visitor Flow Management Plan” is included as annex 2 of the management plan. This plan complements and details the provisions of the Kuldīga Municipality Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for 2028. Its content addresses three key areas: traffic intensity and traffic management related to travellers; guest economics, business management and real estate property management. Therefore, it would be important to reinforce their conservation competences.

ICOMOS considers that the role of the National Heritage Board, and in particular its Regional Board at Kurzeme, should be made clearer. Certain areas of the nominated property and buffer zone are part of the nature reserve “Venta Valley” and fall under the authority of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development and subsequently under the Nature Conservation Agency. Hence, it is also necessary to detail how these actors will be involved in the management of the nominated property. The roles and responsibilities of each actor in relation to the management should be further detailed and potential overlaps identified. Clearly defining how the different actors are to coordinate their actions and share information between them is critical, particularly since the nomination dossier highlights governance issues as one of the main factors affecting the property. ICOMOS considers that the governance structure for the nominated property and its buffer zone should be clearly documented and the roles and responsibilities of each actor with management responsibilities detailed.
accommodation; and pedestrian flow management. Each area includes a series of detailed actions to be implemented.

Community involvement
The Restoration Centre offers strong community support to the conservation of private properties. The nomination dossier acknowledges the need to involve local communities in the development of tourism strategies, given that the potential rise in visitor numbers if the nominated property were to be inscribed on the World Heritage List could affect the existing strong sense of belonging.

Over the past decades, the Kuldīga Municipality has implemented a range of measures to foster the involvement of local residents in the conservation of the nominated property. A number of institutions (e.g. Kuldīga Municipality, Kuldīga Restoration Centre, Kuldīga District Museum, Kuldīga Main Library, Kuldīga Artists’ Residence) work together to organise events to present and promote the values of Kuldīga, its rich history and valuable heritage.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
ICOMOS considers that there is a good understanding of the factors affecting the nominated property and that the State Party has developed adequate responses to address the current and potential impacts deriving from those factors. The inclusion of the Risk Management Plan as an annex of the management plan reinforces existing management responses.

Following the revisions to the boundaries sent on 25 February 2022, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property includes all the areas and attributes which are a direct tangible expression of its potential Outstanding Universal Value and is of adequate size.

The boundaries of the nominated property coincide, for the most part, with the national designation of the “urban construction monument” of state importance. The area of the Venta Valley is not included in that designation but is protected as a nature reserve. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated property is adequate. The buffer zone corresponds to the “individual protection zone” and has complementary legal provisions in order to give an added layer of protection to the nominated property.

The planning framework is comprehensive and the different plans that constitute it are well integrated. The management plan and its annexes are adequate and apply both to the nominated property and its buffer zone. The governance arrangements in place are clear and there seems to be a good coordination between the different actors.

ICOMOS considers that the sustainability of the financial resources available for the different actors involved deserves further attention. For instance, ICOMOS notes that the funding for the Restoration Centre seems to be largely dependent on its ability to obtain grants. The financial incentives put in place by the municipality to support owners to undertake conservation works are commendable and should be maintained.

In summary, ICOMOS considers that protection and management mechanisms in place are adequate to address the current management challenges.

6 Conclusion
ICOMOS considers that the justification for inscription of the nominated property as a testimony to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia is insufficiently demonstrated, directly and tangibly, by the physical elements that remain of that period. Kuldīga was an important administrative centre of the Duchy in its early days. However, throughout its duration, the political and economic importance of the Duchy was far more related to other towns (i.e. Jelgava/Mitau, Liepāja/Libau and Ventspils/Windau). Kuldīga is considered today as the best testimony of the Duchy because those other towns were significantly destroyed by wars, fire and lack of conservation efforts, as pointed out in the nomination dossier. The evidence provided by the State Party shows that the architectural remains of the 16th to 18th centuries are scarce within the overall present-day built fabric of Kuldīga.

Based on the information from the expanded comparative analysis, the nomination dossier (and the annexes submitted with it) and the additional information provided, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property stands out as an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, reflecting multiple layers from the 13th to the early 20th centuries. While Kuldīga’s importance in relation to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia merits emphasis, it should be understood in relation to the town’s development prior to and after that period. ICOMOS considers that the interpretation of the nominated property should reflect this broader timeframe. ICOMOS also recommends that the name of the property be changed to become “Old town of Kuldīga”

The delineation of the boundaries, as adjusted and submitted with the additional information sent on February 2022, ensures that all elements that express its potential Outstanding Universal Value, on the basis of criterion (v), are included within the area of the nominated property. The buffer zone is recognised legally and adequately gives an added layer of protection to the nominated property. The state of conservation of the nominated property is generally good and the main factors affecting it (i.e. risks of fire and floods, tourism pressures and deterioration of traditional building materials) are effectively being addressed. The inclusion of two annexes to the management plan addressing risk management and tourism management, reinforces existing management responses being implemented by the State Party.

The craft skills that have been passed down from generation to generation continue to be used in the
contemporary conservation of Kuldīga. The nominated property also meets the conditions of authenticity in terms of location and setting; its urban structure, influenced by the intersection of the Venta and Alekšūpīte rivers, is also retained.

Protection and management arrangements are adequate but the monitoring system should be revised and strengthened. Regarding the watch tower project, ICOMOS notes that the revised management plan submitted as part of the additional information of February 2022, includes a provision to carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment, in case the municipality attracts funds for its construction in the buffer zone of the nominated property. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that this approach is in line with the provisions of paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and should be followed if the construction of the project were to go ahead.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that Kuldīga / Goldingen in Courland, Republic of Latvia, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (v).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Located in the western part of Latvia, in the central Kurzeme (Courland) region, the town of Kuldīga is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a traditional urban settlement. At the confluence of the Venta River and the smaller Alekšūpīte stream, the beginnings of Kuldīga, which was called Goldingen at the time, date back to the 13th century. The rivers’ intersection is a defining element of the town’s structure, contributing to its scenic character. The medieval area of Kalnamiests, located on a hill, is clearly distinguishable in the townscape, given its oval shape.

A significant part of Kuldīga’s history and development is linked to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, which governed a significant part of the Baltics between 1561 and 1795. The town was the primary residence and administrative centre of the Duchy’s first ruler and maintained an important role afterwards. As a result, the town developed into a prosperous trading hub. The international orientation of the Duchy led to a rising number of foreign merchants and craftsmen settling in Kuldīga, who left their mark on the architectural language and building decoration of the region. The town’s structure has largely retained the street layout which developed during the period of the Duchy.

The architectural influences and craftsmanship traditions introduced during the era of the Duchy endured well into the 19th century. However, different laws and regulations, aimed at fire safety, led to the progressive replacement of fire hazardous roofing materials. The proportion of masonry buildings also increased, replacing traditional wooden ones. In the second half of the 19th century, the brick bridge over the Venta River was constructed, connecting Kuldīga to the east.

Unlike other towns in the Baltic region, Kuldīga survived the great wars of the 20th century largely unsathed and modern urban developments were largely implemented far outside its historic centre.

Criterion (v): The old town of Kuldīga is an outstanding example of a well-preserved urban settlement, representative of traditional Baltic architecture and urbanism and of multiple historical periods – from the 13th to the early 20th centuries. Its historic urban fabric includes structures of traditional local log architecture as well as largely foreign-influenced techniques and styles of brick masonry and timber-framed houses that illustrate the integration of local craftsmanship with foreign influences from other Hanse towns and centres around the Baltic Sea as well as Russia. The craft skills are prominent in functional and ornamental building details throughout the town and continue to be employed by craftspeople today. The predominance of clay tiles as a roofing material contributes to the harmonious townscape of Kuldīga.

Integrity

The property encompasses the medieval castle mound plateau, the medieval area known as Kalnamiests, and the urban areas which developed during the ducal period from the 16th until the 19th centuries but continued to organically evolve afterwards. In addition, large areas of the environmental setting of Kuldīga are also included, namely the intersection of the Venta and Alekšūpīte rivers, as well as the Ventas Rumba waterfall, which was essential for the growth of Kuldīga into a trading centre.

In the past, fires destroyed substantial parts of the urban fabric and remain a risk to this day, since the town has many wooden buildings as well as buildings with important wooden elements. Floods are another important factor that can potentially affect the property, particularly in view of climate change. To maintain the harmonious townscape, the town’s general construction rules stipulate maximum building heights within the property and its buffer zone.

The boundaries of the property coincide, for the most part, with the national designation of the “urban construction monument” of state importance. The area of the Venta Valley is not included in that designation but is protected as a nature reserve. The buffer zone corresponds to the “individual protection zone” and has complementary legal provisions in order to give an added layer of protection to the property.
Authenticity

Kuldīga’s urban and architectural heritage is well retained in terms of material, design and craftsmanship. It illustrates continuity in function and use as residences, auxiliary structures and religious spaces for the resident community. The old town further preserves its authenticity in setting and location, which was a fundamental aspect for the development of the urban structure of the town, influenced by the intersection of the Venta and Alekšūpīte rivers. The river landscape has changed over time but not to the extent that it fundamentally alters the environmental setting of the property.

Management and protection requirements

The property was first nationally recognised in 1969 and received the highest level of national protection as a cultural monument under the national Law “On the Protection of Cultural Monuments”. The landscape elements of the Venta Valley have been protected since 1957 and were recognised in 2004 as part of the NATURA 2000 network. The buffer zone also has legal status as a monument of architecture (urban construction) of local importance in the list of state protected cultural monuments.

On a local level, multiple planning documents, such as a local territorial development plan, define strict legal mechanisms that contribute to the protection of the historic urban settlement and further prevent development pressures that might affect the property’s significance.

Kuldīga Municipality acts as the main management authority for the property and its buffer zone. With regards to the conservation of historic buildings, the Kuldīga Restoration Centre is an essential partner of the municipality. The day-to-day management of the World Heritage property is guided by a management plan, which is complemented by subsidiary plans related to risk management and tourism management.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Revising the monitoring programme to focus on a set of indicators clearly connected to the main attributes of the property and taking into account the main factors affecting the property,

b) Ensuring that the interpretation of the property reflects its significance as an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, reflecting multiple layers from the 13th to the early 20th centuries. While Kuldīga’s importance in relation to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia merits emphasis, it should be understood in relation to the town’s development prior to and after that historical period,

c) Conducting a heritage impact assessment, if the watch tower project were to go ahead, in line with the provisions included in the management plan and with paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,

d) Providing updated figures of the areas of the revised boundaries of the property and of its buffer zone;

Based on the recommendation to inscribe the nominated property on the basis of criterion (v), ICOMOS also recommends that the name of the property be changed to become “Old town of Kuldīga”.
Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (February 2022)
Modernist Kaunas (Lithuania)
No 1661

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939

Location
Kaunas City Municipality
Kaunas County
Lithuania

Brief description
Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939, testifies to the rapid urbanisation and modernisation that, within two decades, transformed the provincial town of Kaunas into a modern city that served as the capital of an independent Lithuania between the First and Second World Wars. It represents an example of a community-driven transformation of an urban landscape that occurred by way of a planned adaptation of an earlier town layout. The spirit of post-war optimism and post-independence nation-building marked a process that included incorporation of the new city structure into the surrounding natural environment and integration of parts of the city's 19th-century military fortifications. The quality of modern Kaunas was manifested through the spatial organisation of the Naujamiestis (New Town) and Žaliakalnis (Green Hill) areas, and in public buildings, urban spaces and residences constructed during the interwar period that demonstrate a variety of styles in which the Modern Movement found architectural expression in the city.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a group of buildings.

Included in the Tentative List
10 January 2017 as "Kaunas 1919-1939: The Capital Inspired by the Modern Movement"

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 20 to 25 September 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 12 October 2021 requesting further information about the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, justification of criterion (ii), boundaries and the buffer zone, protection, management, and development projects.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 12 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report regarding the conceptualisation of the nominated property, its protection and its management, including Heritage Impact Assessments.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 25 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The nominated property is situated at the confluence of the Nemunas and Neris rivers in the centre of Kaunas, in central Lithuania. It testifies to two decades (1919-1939) of rapid urbanisation and modernisation driven by the local population who, in the spirit of post-war optimism and post-independence nation-building, aspired to create a modern city that would serve the official administrative functions of the capital of Lithuania while attending to the residential needs of a growing multicultural community.

The nominated property is comprised of two contiguous parts, Naujamiestis (New Town) to the west and the adjacent Žaliakalnis (Green Hill) to the east. Naujamiestis borders the Nemunas River and Kaunas Old Town, which dates from the 13th to 18th centuries. A former administrative centre of the Russian Empire’s Kaunas Governorate, Naujamiestis was developed on an orthogonal street grid from 1847, with three squares arranged in a chessboard pattern, a perimeter block development with two-storey structures, and an urban axis created by Laisvės Alėja (Freedom Boulevard).

Žaliakalnis borders the Kaunas City Zoo and the Kaunas University of Technology campus. Sited on a natural plateau, it was developed as a garden city residential area.
according to a master plan prepared in 1923 by Danish engineer Marius Frandsen in collaboration with the city’s engineer Antanas Jokimas. The plan divided the city into functional zones and reused the remains of the 19th-century Russian Imperial military fortress, defensive mounds and military roads to create a green belt around the city. The 1923 master plan was never fully implemented, but a portion of the city’s perimeter followed the former military infrastructure. The natural environment, and in particular the slopes of the Nemunas River valley and Neris riverbed, were also integrated into the new city structure.

Kaunas was divided into zones, each with its own restrictions on construction, which resulted in a new cityscape and specific characteristic aesthetics in different parts of the capital. In the city centre, only brick buildings with tiled roofs were allowed. Low-rise cottages or urban villas were constructed in brick or wood in the suburb of Žaliakalnis. Multifamily buildings of two or three storeys were erected in the city centre and the outskirts in Naujamiestis and Žaliakalnis. Much higher apartment houses, each building owned by a single individual, appeared in different parts of Naujamiestis. The most affordable residences were simple wooden tenement houses built in sections of Žaliakalnis.

Naujamiestis

The Naujamiestis part of the nominated property includes an administrative centre, Central Naujamiestis (area 1.1); a residential district, Residential Naujamiestis (area 1.2); and an industrial section, Industrial Naujamiestis (area 1.3).

Central Naujamiestis was the core of the capital city. Its key section was created by adding low-rise multi-purpose buildings to the 19th-century street grid. Multiple administrative buildings were erected in Central Naujamiestis to house important national and cultural institutions. Today, they still serve public purposes.

Residential Naujamiestis, composed of two sections to the north and southeast of Central Naujamiestis, developed around the base of the slopes of the Nemunas River valley. With many landmark apartment buildings and villas, it demonstrates the integration of natural topography into the urban fabric. The Christ’s Resurrection Church from 1933 towers over the area. A symbolic image of the rebirth of the Lithuanian nation, it suffered damage under Soviet occupation and was turned into a factory. It was reinstanted as a church and restored following Lithuania’s independence.

Industrial Naujamiestis, situated at the southern end of Naujamiestis, testifies to the arrival of the railway in the second half of the 19th century and industrial reforms in the first decade of the 20th century.

Žaliakalnis

The Žaliakalnis part of the nominated property consists of three residential areas: the Garden City Area (area 2.1), Kaukas Area (area 2.2) and Perkūnas Area (area 2.3), as well as the Ažuolynas Park and Sports Complex (area 2.4) and the Research Laboratory Area (area 2.5).

The Garden City Area is a residential zone with a distinctive semi-hexagonal street layout divided into city blocks. Land plots within the blocks were allocated to residents in line with the original garden city economic model that prescribed community ownership. This low-density area with brick and wooden houses is the most fully developed section of the 1923 master plan.

The Kaukas Area adjacent to the northern section of Residential Naujamiestis incorporates parts of the 19th-century fortifications. A residential area with garden-type development, it contains brick and wooden architecture.

The Perkūnas Area is squeezed between the southern section of Residential Naujamiestis and the Ažuolynas Park and Sports Complex. It was a prestigious residential community in the interwar period, with villas erected on the sloping terrain.

South of the Kaukas and Garden City areas lies the Ažuolynas Park and Sports Complex. Developed as a recreational area using portions of a natural forest, it formed part of a city green belt. Sports facilities constructed in 1920-1922 included the Kaunas Stadium, the Hall of Physical Education and the Basketball Arena. The original stadium was demolished in the Soviet era and replaced by the Darius and Girėnas Stadium in 1978. The Hall and the Arena continue to be used as sports facilities.

The former Lithuanian Defence Ministry’s Armaments Board Research Laboratory Complex constructed in the 1930s stands at the easternmost end of the Garden City Area. Closed in 1940 by the Soviets, it belongs today to Kaunas University and serves research purposes.

The nominated property has an area of 451.6 ha and a buffer zone of 407.4 ha. The western boundary of the nominated property runs along the left bank of Nemunas River and turns west at the northern tip of Nemunas Island. The northern boundary is delimited by Savanorių Avenue and Radvilėnų Road, the eastern boundary continues along Radvilėnų Road, and the southern boundary is delimited by Tunelio Street.

The buffer zone includes, on the west, Kaunas Old Town and Nemunas Island; on the east it includes the area of Kaunas University of Technology and the Kaunas Zoo. On the southeast there is no buffer zone.

Archaeological records show evidence of commercial activities here in the 10th century. The name Kaunas first appears in historical records of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 14th century. A commercial centre in the 15th and 16th centuries, it became one of the largest cities in Lithuania. Following a fire in 1537, a more regular street grid was developed in the city, probably the earliest attempt at town planning in the country. After a series of fires, the city received its first formal town plan in 1774. At
the end of the 18th century Lithuania fell under the jurisdiction of the Russian Empire. Kaunas became the administrative centre of the Kaunas Governorate, and in 1879 became a Class I Russian Imperial border garrison city. A ring of military facilities was then installed around Kaunas.

During the First World War Kaunas was captured by the Germans, who remained in control until 1918, when Lithuania gained independence. Kaunas served as capital of the new nation-state from 1919 to 1939. During that time it underwent a rapid transformation, the focus of which was the concept of modern town planning borrowed from Western Europe and the United States of America.

Lithuania was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 and the city of Vilnius was declared the capital of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. From 1941 to 1944 Lithuania was occupied by Nazi Germany, Kaunas being the administrative centre of the German General Commissariat. When Lithuania was re-occupied by the Soviet Union in 1944, Kaunas was transformed into a Soviet industrial hub. A construction boom that started when Lithuania re-established its independence in 1990 resulted in some damage to Kaunas’ interwar modernist architecture.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested more information about the history of town planning in Kaunas and the related socio-political context of the development of the city. In additional information sent in February 2022, the State Party explained in more detail the status of Kaunas and its population when the city became the capital of Lithuania, and described the challenges that Kaunas overcame to grow exponentially in a short period of time.

The State Party described the stages of Kaunas’ development between 1919 and 1939 and the impact different town planning mechanisms had on the image of the city. Kaunas saw a rapid, spontaneous expansion in 1921-1922, and then again in 1931 when, with state investments and a continued flow of funds from community enterprises, it reached a construction peak. The largest single expansion of Kaunas’ city limits in the history of the city came in 1943, after it lost its capital status to Vilnius.

State of conservation
In Naujamiestis, public buildings and infrastructure are generally in good condition. Many public properties have been undergoing renovations during the 2000s, including on Laisvės Alėja, the urban axis of Central Naujamiestis, and on Vytauto Prospektas (Vytautas Avenue), the main axis of Industrial Naujamiestis.

In Industrial Naujamiestis, the condition of the buildings varies from satisfactory to poor. Some of the zone’s industrial buildings have been lost or substantially altered due to changes in industry type and technology. There are plans to convert more buildings and surrounding land to other uses. The urban structure of this area was partially damaged in 2007 with the construction of the Akropolis shopping centre, when two city blocks were merged, thus limiting the visual connection with the river. The Nemunas River was functionally cut off from the city in 1985 after the construction of the riverside Karaliaus Mindaugo Prospėt (King Mindaugas Avenue).

In Žaliakalnis, major renovations were completed in recent years in the Kaukas Area around the Kaukasas and the waterworks complex. Fountains and an amphitheatre were constructed on the slopes. In the Ažuolynas Park and Sports Complex, the sports arena was reconstructed during the Soviet period and the original stadium was replaced in 1978. The latter is now undergoing reconstruction work. The Research Laboratory Complex lost eight of its twelve buildings but the condition of its remaining buildings is satisfactory. An administrative building added to the structure interjects into the northern part of the Complex.

The state of conservation of privately-owned buildings varies in both Naujamiestis and Žaliakalnis. The owners do not always carry out necessary maintenance work or restoration. Some of the buildings are deteriorating due to improper maintenance and have lost their attributes because of substandard restorations. In the Kaukas Area, approximately eighteen percent of the pre-1940 buildings have been substantially altered through renovation, and two to five percent of the buildings have undergone reconstruction. In the Perkūnas Area, reconstructed buildings make up approximately two to five percent of all structures, with about two percent of pre-Second World War homes having been significantly modified during reconstruction. In worst condition are the wooden buildings, a predominant feature of the Garden City Area and the Kaukas Area. Some of the wooden houses are in a precarious state or have already been replaced by contemporary buildings.

Natural landscape features in Naujamiestis and Žaliakalnis are in a good state, with erosion slightly affecting the slopes. The condition of the vegetation is satisfactory. In the Perkūnas Area, the landscape around the radio station has been deteriorating; the place is abandoned, awaiting redevelopment.

ICOMOS observes that the conservation history of the nominated property along with the restoration methodology is patchy. Information on losses, restorations and alterations in the nominated property is scant. Current conservation activities are targeting elements of urban structure, urban morphology and natural topographical features of the sites listed in the National Register of Cultural Heritage. Similarly, only selected features of sites listed in this register are undergoing maintenance and conservation. Consequently, in Žaliakalnis, building exteriors are undergoing conservation as protected features, while changes to the interiors of buildings, which have historical value, are not regulated.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is variable but overall is satisfactory.
Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factor affecting the nominated property is development pressure. Potential environmental factors also exist.

Within Naujamiestis, the city is seeking higher intensity of urban structures and functions to sustain and increase the area's vitality. Risk exists of demolitions of older buildings to be replaced with modern constructions. Growing vehicular traffic in the city centre may potentially have a negative impact on the spatial quality of Naujamiestis. The city intends to create a ring road around the inner city and construct multi-storey and underground parking garages to respond to the demand for parking spaces. One such garage is planned on K. Donelaičio Street within the nominated property.

Other major development projects planned for Naujamiestis include a 'Commercial Passageway and Showroom Development Zone' in Central Naujamiestis and retail developments in Industrial Naujamiestis. Within the buffer zone of the nominated property (and the visual protection zone of Naujamiestis), in the Lower Freda area, construction of high-rise buildings facing Industrial Naujamiestis has been proposed. The project requires an Environmental Impact Assessment and approval by the Kaunas Architecture and Urban Planning Experts Council. Other large developments within the buffer zone are proposed on Nemunas Island.

At Žaliakalnis, the most extensive development projects are located in the Ąžuolynas Park and Sports Complex area and in the area of the Kaunas Zoo.

Owners' lack of awareness of the cultural value of their interwar properties contributes to neglect, low-quality maintenance and substandard renovations or even demolitions of private houses. Owners and developers also face challenges when adapting buildings to contemporary needs. The State Party helps owners to fund maintenance and conservation works through the Kaunas City Municipal Heritage Restoration Programme.

Among potential environmental factors, heavy rains made worse by climate change may lead to slope erosion in the Nemunas River valley. Erecting buildings on the slopes and the loss of landscaped areas may exacerbate the problem. Cases of rainfall affecting the slopes, damaging underground construction of buildings and destroying land-supporting walls have been experienced in the Perkūnas Area. A minor risk from floods exists in the western part of Naujamiestis, which lies within the rain and snowmelt flood risk zone. Monitoring of slope erosion is included in the nominated property's management plan, but no remedial actions are proposed.

In additional information sent in November 2021, the State Party informed ICOMOS that new constructions planned in Naujamiestis and redevelopment of 'non- valuable' buildings and areas would be regulated through legislation protecting listed sites, and be in line with spatial planning documentation. The State Party further explained that the city's plans for adaptive reuse of heritage buildings consist of adapting properties to meet contemporary fire safety rules and hygiene requirements, and making them suitable for use by people who are living with disabilities.

The growth of contemporary Kaunas and the approaches taken in the construction of new buildings represent a threat to the interwar heritage. The negative impact of the recently built Akropolis shopping centre in Industrial Naujamiestis exemplifies the damage new construction can cause to the historical value of modernist Kaunas. The multi-purpose building of the Vytautas Magnus University or the new residential building currently under construction at the corner of K. Donelaičio and Maironio streets in Central Naujamiestis further threaten the authenticity of the modernist aesthetic by not abiding by requirements regarding their scale.

ICOMOS considers that the high-rise structures and large-scale new developments proposed within the nominated property and its buffer zone risk affecting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, including its integrity and authenticity, and the landscape panoramas.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is variable but satisfactory, but factors affecting the nominated property, particularly development pressure, are not being controlled effectively.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Kaunas, the capital of Lithuania from 1919 to 1939, represents an outstanding example of urbanisation and modernisation processes that took place across Eastern and Central Europe in the interwar period. Driven by the local population who aspired to create a modern city imbued with post-war optimism, these processes reflected the socio-economic conditions of the time and responded to the changed status of the city.
- Kaunas testifies to the rapid transformation of the urban landscape that occurred by way of a planned adaptation of the existing urban layout incorporated into the surrounding natural environment and integrated with the 19th century military fortifications to form a new urban structure of diverse morphology and fabric.
- The interwar period of the city's development testifies to the exceptional multitude of styles in which the Modern Movement found expression in the architecture of Kaunas. It represents a time of creative
exploration by local architects and artists searching for new artistic forms and aesthetics. Architectural modernism in Kaunas, in its variety of stylistic languages, included a local interpretation of the international modern style and a modern national style.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information, the key attributes of the nominated property can be grouped as follows: attributes that reflect the evolutionary modernisation of the urban plan of Kaunas; attributes that represent the optimistic construction of Kaunas as the capital city; and attributes that demonstrate the plurality of architectural styles representing the Modern Movement in Kaunas.

As mentioned its Interim Report, ICOMOS considers that this nomination poses some key problems with regard to the conceptualisation of the nominated property. The explanations provided on how it conveys its proposed Outstanding Universal Value through attributes reflecting the evolutionary modernisation of the urban plan of Kaunas, optimistic construction and plurality of architectural styles are not specific enough.

In additional information sent in February 2022, the State Party added details to the description of the attributes of the nominated property to better demonstrate how they represent the processes that took place in Kaunas. ICOMOS considers that, while the types of attributes are clearly described, it is still difficult to translate some of the more abstract concepts, such as optimistic construction, into tangible structures.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed in relation to 20th-century architectural heritage representing modern (capital) cities that were developed in the interwar period. Current capitals, modern capitals, regional capitals and primary cities (cities having primacy in their respective national contexts) are used as typological categories. The comparators have been selected based on similarities regarding evolutionary town planning processes that incorporated natural landscape features, and modern architecture assimilating local and international characteristics. The comparative analysis examines properties within the region, and throughout the world inscribed on the World Heritage List, included in the Tentative Lists of States Parties, as well as other sites. The analysis does not include any properties that are not towns. The chosen geo-cultural area is global.

The comparative analysis mentions a number of 20th-century Western European Modern Movement properties on the World Heritage List, such as Bauhaus and its Sites in Weimar and Dessau (Germany, 1996, criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi)); Rietveld Schroderhuis (Rietveld Schroeder House) (Netherlands, 2000, criteria (i) and (ii)); and Ivecia, industrial city of the 20th century (Italy, 2018, criterion (iv)). However, these properties are not assessed qualitatively. The nominated property is considered an example of a local interpretation of modernism, and is therefore treated as a category different than Western modernism, and juxtaposed instead with Brasilia (Brazil, 1987, criteria (i) and (iv)); White City of Tel-Aviv – the Modern Movement (Israel, 2003, criteria (ii) and (iv)); Rabat, Modern Capital and Historic City: a Shared Heritage (Morocco, 2012, criteria (ii) and (iv)); Asmara: a Modernist African City (Eritrea, 2017, criteria (ii) and (iv)); and Modernist Centre of Gdynia (Poland, Tentative List).

Although the comparative analysis includes a brief statement related to the national context, no local cities are discussed. Within the regional context, the capitals of Latvia (Riga), Estonia (Tallinn), Finland (Helsinki) and Poland (Historic Centre of Warsaw (1980, criteria (ii) and (vi)) are considered, as well as primary cities in Poland (Krakow and Gdynia), Ukraine (Lviv) and Czechia (Brno). The differences in modernisation processes in these cities are briefly discussed but the attributes of the properties are rarely compared using the proposed framework. Instead, the political status of Kaunas as a capital that functioned only during two interwar decades tends to be used to differentiate it from other cities and thereby claim its outstanding character.

Within the global context, the analysis includes current capitals such as Asmara (Eritrea), New Delhi (India, Tentative List), Pretoria (South Africa), Rabat (Morocco), Tirana (Albania) and Tripoli (Libya), which share the experience of urbanisation through large-scale town planning and modernisation motivated by political agendas. Within the category of modern capitals, the comparative analysis examines Changchun and Nanjing (China), which, similarly to Kaunas, were developed based on ambitious town planning. Among regional capitals, three cities are considered as comparators: Casablanca (Casablanca, Ville du XXème siècle, carrefour d’influences (Morocco, Tentative List)), Shanghai (China) and the Complex of the Capitole in Chandigarh, component part of The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (India et al., 2016, criteria (i), (ii) and (vi)). The primary cities of Mumbai (Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai, India, 2018, criteria (ii) and (iv)) and Tel Aviv (Israel) complement the analysis.

In additional information provided in February 2022, the State Party added that, in the Eastern and Central European context, Hungary and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes underwent ambitious modernisation processes in the interwar period that were similar to Kaunas. However, no qualitative analysis of the associated capitals has been provided. The State Party also explained that, in the process of shaping Kaunas as a new Eastern and Central European metropolis, architecture followed ideology, linking urban planning to the humanistic goals and expectations of improved human wellbeing.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis is incomplete. Cities within the national context are absent, and the analysis should also be further developed with respect to key cities in the former Soviet Union.
Furthermore, a more detailed comparative analysis with Western European cities is needed, particularly the capitals of this sub-region, which were used as points of reference in the development of Kaunas. Many concepts related to town planning applied in Kaunas were borrowed from Western Europe.

ICOMOS also considers that the comparative analysis has been developed around differences between Kaunas and other modern cities instead of demonstrating the nominated property’s outstanding characteristics in relation to its proposed Outstanding Universal Value and the attributes that support that value.

ICOMOS does not consider that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List at this stage.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii) and (iv).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning and landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the modern architecture of Kaunas created between 1919 and 1939 represents a local inflection of radical and international architectural modernism that reflects social, political and cultural conditions of the context. It represents an exceptional example of an attempt at expressing the local character and national spirit of a country in a modern architectural form. Modernism in Kaunas occurred in a diversity of styles and inspired expressions of the Modern Movement in other Lithuanian cities, providing motivation for generations of Lithuanian architects throughout the 20th century.

In additional information sent in November 2021, the State Party explained that the modern architectural expressions in the city demonstrate a mix of modernist and traditional solutions. The nominated property is seen as a site of architectural experimentation, where influences of Italian Rationalism, German Functionalism, the Bauhaus, Russian Academicism and Constructivism, as well as other popular styles and trends such as Art Deco and Neo-Baroque, were interpreted by local architects trained in European architectural schools. The exceptionality of the nominated property is said to lie in its architectural language being more diverse, in comparison to the relatively uniform architectural expressions in other cities. The State Party added that Kaunas city provided inspiration to other Lithuanian urban centres and shared with them administrative resources. Architects who developed their practice in Kaunas trained other practitioners while undertaking architectural projects in different cities of the country.

ICOMOS considers that Kaunas contributed to the development of modernism in Eastern and Central Europe by adding its own local elements to the diversity of modernist architectural expressions. However, the existence of a plurality of styles that co-existed and influenced the creation of a local architectural response to international modernism is not enough to justify this criterion. The way in which the city’s modernist architecture of the interwar period contributed to an important interchange of ideas in terms of developments in architecture that could be considered to have had a lasting influence on, or spread over, different areas of the geo-cultural region or world has not been demonstrated. ICOMOS also considers that the nominated property’s developments in modernist architecture have not been shown to stand out, beyond being different.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) has not been justified.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is an outstanding example of an existing city that was subjected to rapid urbanisation and modernisation between 1919 and 1939, the result of which illustrates a local version of the global project of modernity characterised by optimistic construction, continuity with the past and integration of the historic urban context with the natural setting. The transformation of an industrial and fortress city into a modern capital of a newly formed nation-state within two decades through extensive implementation of modern town planning is an outstanding example of the urbanisation and modernisation processes that Eastern and Central Europe experienced during the interwar period. The nominated property demonstrates the aspirations of the local population who, under the auspices of the new state government, created a modern city that responded to the needs of a growing society while serving as the official administrative centre of the country. It also represents a local response to the Modern Movement in architecture in the specific socio-economic context of a newly established capital.

In additional information sent in November 2021, the State Party described the nominated property as the best-preserved example of urban transformation in Eastern and Central Europe during the interwar period. It also explained that the notion of ‘optimism’ is used to express the global belief in a long-term peaceful future born after the First World War. It symbolises the opportunity to build new societies and states, and to construct modern cities based on principles of efficiency, order and function.

ICOMOS considers that the concept of ‘optimistic construction’, said to be a defining attribute of the city’s urban form and the associated architecture, is abstract, which makes it difficult to understand how it is reflected in
the nominated property’s built environment and historic landscape.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested more information about the history of town planning in Kaunas and the related socio-political context that underpinned the transformation and expansion of the city. The State Party, in February 2022, explained the conditions and challenges under which Kaunas developed in the interwar period, and described in detail the stages of city’s expansion. ICOMOS considers that the process of the transformation and the specific conditions under which it took place have now been more clearly explained. Nevertheless, how the nominated property might exemplify Eastern and Central European modernity in an outstanding way remains unclear. Since the key features of this regional modernity have not been defined explicitly, it is difficult to understand what the outstanding contribution of Kaunas is, within this stage of human history and in this particular geo-cultural region.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iv) has not been demonstrated at this stage.

ICOMOS does not consider that any of the cultural criteria have been justified at this stage.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the wholeness of the interwar urban fabric and urban morphology, incorporated purposefully into the natural setting of the city in the early 20th century and integrated with the inherited pre-war urban structure. It is further articulated by the intactness of the architectural heritage and design elements expressed through the street layout, open spaces, gardens and related infrastructure.

ICOMOS notes that the attributes conveying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property often refer to abstract concepts, the physical manifestations of which have not been clearly articulated. Therefore, it is not possible to confirm at this stage whether the attributes included within the proposed boundaries are sufficient to express the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. Moreover, parts of the green belt created around the city by repurposing pre-war military infrastructure and the slopes of the Nemunas River valley and Neris riverbed, which were key features of the interwar urban plan, are not included within the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that parts of the nominated property suffer from neglect. The focus of conservation measures is on the maintenance of public buildings and landmark residential houses listed in the National Register of Cultural Heritage. Unlisted buildings do not benefit from these measures. Inexpensive modernist wooden housing, emblematic of the city’s building traditions, is in a dilapidated state, with a number of houses in a critical condition. There are currently few specific measures in place to preserve this modernist heritage and to protect it from the potential of fire or intentional destruction. In addition, pressure to upgrade the houses has resulted in additions, extensions or other alterations that have a negative visual impact on the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that new developments that have been taking place in different parts of the city threaten both physical and visual aspects of the nominated property. Such developments began in the Soviet era with the construction of large landmark structures that ignored the existing historic urban morphology. Currently, the most critical intrusions are taking place in Industrial Naujamiestis, and additional developments are planned. Furthermore, a zone of high-rise buildings proposed for development in the buffer zone of the nominated property, facing Industrial Naujamiestis, is likely to affect the historical, architectural and landscape panoramas.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not yet been demonstrated, and therefore the attributes cannot be confirmed, integrity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, cannot be confirmed at this stage.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the forms and designs, materials and substances, and uses and functions of the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The urban landscape of the nominated property combines an administrative centre, residential districts, an industrial zone and a recreational park, each of which reflects its function and character through street patterns, types of buildings, land division, and construction materials and fittings. It is integrated with the surrounding natural environment, of which the main features are the slopes of the Nemunas River valley and Neris riverbed, and with aspects of the inherited 19th century urban layout.

ICOMOS considers that the historic street grids in the different areas of the nominated property are well preserved, representing a variety of authentic patterns, though the distribution and division of plots were altered during the Soviet era. The greatest transformation affecting the authenticity of the nominated property occurred in residential neighbourhoods, where Soviet policies contributed to alterations of the interiors and communal spaces. The Garden City Area experienced the most changes in this regard, the plot structure having been distorted in some sections. Subdividing land plots within the listed cultural heritage areas is currently prohibited, and density is controlled.

ICOMOS further considers that landscape elements are well preserved and authentic, despite slight erosion of slopes. The part of the green belt included in the
nominated property is well maintained, and the greenery is monitored. Oak groves are still a landmark of the city.

Public buildings and private houses listed in the National Register of Cultural Heritage have retained their forms and exterior appearances, despite cases of considerable losses in some of the structures (the Ažuolynas Sports Complex and the Research Laboratory Complex, for example). There is a tendency for private residences to succumb to the pressure for upgrades that threaten their authenticity. Renovations to private houses are not always done to a high standard, including replacing original features and materials with low-quality or otherwise inadequate substitutes, which further compromises the authenticity of these properties. The most affected are residences in the Kaukas Area and the Perkūnas Area. The lack of a comprehensive record of all alterations and renovations made within these areas, and within the nominated property as a whole, makes an assessment of authenticity difficult.

ICOMOS notes that the majority of the key historic buildings have retained their historic or similar functions. The most notable exceptions have occurred in Industrial Naujamiestis, where buildings are gradually being converted to commercial and residential functions, and the entire area is losing its industrial character. While the administrative function of Central Naujamiestis and the recreational function of Žaliakalnis are being protected by law, the function of Industrial Naujamiestis is not.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not yet been demonstrated, and therefore the attributes cannot be confirmed, authenticity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, cannot be confirmed at this stage.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have not been met at this stage.

**Boundaries**

The boundaries of the nominated property have been delineated on the basis of the existing listed cultural heritage sites and areas protected by national law.

The buffer zone has largely been defined by the existing protection established for listed cultural heritage areas and complexes and their visual protection zones. There is no buffer zone on the southeast side of the nominated property. A valley with a transportation corridor is said to constitute a natural boundary in this case.

There are 13,472 residents in the nominated property and 7,895 within the buffer zone (data from 2020).

In additional information sent in November 2021, the State Party clarified that the boundary of the nominated property considers the urban layout of the city during the interwar period, and that it exemplifies the city’s modernisation during this time period. The 1923 master plan of Kaunas was used to delimit the boundary on the Žaliakalnis side of the nominated property. The State Party also explained that the 1,500 buildings included within the boundaries of the nominated property, out of the 6,000 from the interwar era that survive in Kaunas overall, constitute the greatest concentration of buildings of the interwar period. The rest are dispersed throughout Kaunas. Not all 6,000 buildings have been preserved in their original form or have retained their original materials.

The State Party further explained the lack of a buffer zone on the southeast side of the nominated property by referring to the General Plan of the Territory Kaunas City Municipality, which restricts building on the slopes of the deep valley that runs along this side of the nominated property. This restriction is considered by the State Party to be sufficient in terms of protection. In addition, this area is said to comprise other listed cultural heritage properties and their buffer zones.

ICOMOS considers that the logical association between the boundaries of the nominated property and the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is not explicit. For instance, the ring of fortifications dating from the 19th century had a considerable effect on the direction of city development and was used to create a green belt around the city. It is not clear how much of this green belt concept was implemented. However, ICOMOS notes that only a portion of the green belt has been included within the boundary of the nominated property in Žaliakalnis. The green belt on the left bank of the Nemunas River, which follows fortifications and military roads, has been left outside. Moreover, ICOMOS notes that the slopes of the Nemunas River valley and the Neris riverbed, which were key elements of the natural environment integrated into the city structure in the interwar period, have been left outside the nominated property, and only partially included in the buffer zone.

ICOMOS also notes that a segment along Savanorių Avenue, proposed as the boundary of the nominated property, does not follow the boundary of the Naujamiestis listed protected area. It is unclear why a piece of the protected historic urban area was excluded from the nominated property.

With regard to the boundaries of the buffer zone, ICOMOS considers that the northern boundary seems arbitrary. The area around Aušros Street lies between two visual protection zones and does not benefit from any protective regime. Similarly, the area around the Kaunas Zoo, east of the nominated property and within the proposed buffer zone, is left without protection.

ICOMOS also considers that the protection provided by the visual protection zones of listed cultural heritage sites and complexes is inadequate, as it only prohibits activities that may have an impact on the views to and from the listed sites.
ICOMOS also considers that conservation reports for effectively protect and manage them. Conservation measures and monitoring

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the way the nominated property conveys the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is explained through concepts that are often too abstract. As their features are not well articulated, it is difficult to understand how they may be supported by clearly defined tangible attributes. The comparative analysis, developed around the idea of Kaunas being different, does not demonstrate the exceptionality of the nominated property, whether as an example of post-war urbanisation and modernisation processes or an expression of the Modern Movement in architecture. The plurality of styles used in Kaunas is not sufficient to justify criterion (ii), and the contribution made by the nominated property to an important and influential interchange of ideas in terms of developments in architecture during the interwar period has not been proven to be exceptional. Furthermore, the exceptionality of Kaunas as a regional expression of the global project of modernity, a significant stage in history, has not been demonstrated at this stage. The proposed concept of ‘optimistic construction’ is not easily translated into the city’s urban form. For that reason, criterion (iv) is not justified at this stage. And since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not yet been demonstrated, the conditions of integrity and authenticity cannot be confirmed.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

Conservation and monitoring reports stored by the Department of Cultural Heritage’s Kaunas Division and the Kaunas City Municipality Administration’s Cultural Heritage Division relate to the listed sites and cultural heritage protected areas. They are accessible online. A separate database exists for vegetation monitoring reports and for the Heritage Restoration Programme. Digitised archival material and historic images of Kaunas are stored in key Lithuanian heritage institutions.

ICOMOS notes that it is unclear whether there is a single integrated inventory of all 1,500 buildings from the interwar era situated within the nominated property. It is also unclear whether their state of conservation has been recorded in a consolidated fashion, or if an inventory exists of restoration works and alterations within the nominated property – or of all interwar modernist buildings in Kaunas. ICOMOS considers that an inventory of all buildings and structures from the 1919-1939 period located within the nominated property, as well as information on their state of conservation and alterations made over time, is needed to effectively protect and manage them.

ICOMOS also considers that conservation reports for selected parts of the nominated property are outdated. These materials should be updated and made part of the baseline documentation.

Conservation measures

Special plans regulating cultural heritage conservation have been approved for Žaliakalnis, a Historic District of Kaunas (Conservation Regulation Plan No. PR-22148 of 2004) and Žaliakalnis 1, a Historic District of Kaunas (Special Conservation Plan of 2013). The Provisional Protection Regulation for the Valuable Attributes of Immovable Cultural Heritage (Kaunas Ažuolynas) No. 08-371 (2008) is in place for the Kaunas Ažuolynas Park Complex. The Park Complex also has a Nature Management Plan for the vegetation. The conservation management plan for the Research Laboratory building alone is under preparation through a Getty Foundation grant awarded in 2019.

In additional information sent in November 2021, the State Party confirmed that the preparation of a Special Conservation Plan for Naujamiestis was suspended in 2017 and will be resumed in the years 2022-2023.

ICOMOS notes that there is no integrated conservation plan that would consider the nominated property as a whole and ensure the conservation of all attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, some of which are not protected through the provisions of the legislation and special planning that applies to the cultural heritage sites or properties listed in the National Register of Cultural Heritage. ICOMOS considers that the development of an integrated conservation plan is critical to protect the nominated property from negative impacts. Current conservation management is uneven, as different regulations apply to different parts of the nominated property.

ICOMOS further notes that it is not clear what measures have been put in place for the regular maintenance of landscape elements and conservation of public spaces and infrastructure within the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that applying appropriate conservation measures to the modernist wooden architecture in particular is an urgent necessity, given its importance for the nominated property.

Monitoring

State-protected listed sites and buildings are monitored every five years by the Kaunas Division of the Cultural Heritage Department. The Žaliakalnis 1 historic district, protected at the municipal level, is monitored by the Kaunas City Municipality Administration’s Cultural Heritage Division. Monitoring focuses on the assessment of changes in site conditions, analysis of affecting factors, and a prognosis based on the assessment of anthropogenic and environmental impacts. Vegetation and the quality of landscaping are monitored. There is no integrated monitoring database. Data regarding conditions of the properties is publicly available online.

Monitoring of the nominated property, in the event of its inscription on the World Heritage List, will be conducted annually and coordinated by the Site Management Unit at the Kaunas City Municipality Administration’s Cultural
Heritage Division, in cooperation with the Kaunas Division of the Cultural Heritage Department. The Kaunas City Municipality Administration will be responsible for compiling and storing the monitoring data, and preparing annual monitoring reports. The annual reports, integrated into a 6-year periodic monitoring report (in line with the World Heritage Periodic Reporting questionnaire), will inform future amendments to the management plan.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system is inadequate in its present form, as it focuses on listed sites and landmark buildings instead of the full range of attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. For instance, the condition of historic wooden structures, despite acknowledged deterioration of this typology that threatens their survival, is not monitored. Similarly, monitoring changes to the character and function of Industrial Naujamiestis, the authenticity of which is currently under threat, is not considered.

ICOMOS considers that the documentation regarding inventories and data collection is unclear and potentially deficient. Conservation measures are not comprehensive. The monitoring system should be further developed to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, take into account the main factors affecting the nominated property, and be adapted to facilitate easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The primary legal protection for the nominated property is the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Protection of Immovable Cultural Heritage (22 December 1994, No. I-733). It protects cultural properties listed in the National Register of Cultural Heritage by prohibiting construction of any structures within the sites and their protection zones that could eclipse them in height, size and appearance. The views to and from these listed sites are also protected. Adaptation of the listed site for other uses is restricted in terms of additions, extensions or other refurbishment that would destroy the authenticity of the buildings in terms of their form and structure. Subdividing land plots or changing land use practices, density, intensity and type of development or purpose of buildings is allowed only with permission from the institution in charge of protection, unless special territorial planning documents state otherwise.


The General Plan of the Territory of Kaunas City (master plan), valid through 2023, regulates spatial development in the city and defines urban management issues. The General Plan stipulates restrictions on building activities and traffic flows. In additional information sent in November 2021, the State Party informed that correction of the General Plan has been initiated. The new document is expected in 2022.

The listed cultural heritage areas are of either local or national significance. The protection requirements for both types are the same. Different features have been identified for protection in each area. These include, for example, urban structure and morphology, designated street elevations, landscape elements, landmark buildings, and functions related to historical use. The essential restrictions on activities in and around these areas depend on the conservation goals established in conservation management plans, which complement the requirements set by legislation.

ICOMOS notes that the nominated property is covered by protection assigned to seven sites and complexes listed in the National Register of Cultural Heritage, with one exception: a plot bordering Žemaičių Street, which is a ‘visual protection zone’ and a ‘specialized complexes zone’ under the General Plan of the Territory of Kaunas City. Within visual protection zones, activities that may have impact on the views to and from the listed sites are prohibited. The boundaries of these protection zones are determined according to the Republic of Lithuania Law on Territorial Planning (1995, 2004, 2013) and the Republic of Lithuania Law on Protected Areas (1993, 2001). It is unclear how the ‘specialised complexes zone’ is regulated. With regard to the buffer zone, two areas – around Kaunas Zoo and Aušros Street, between two visual protection zones – do not fall under any protective regime.

ICOMOS considers that it is not clear what measures are envisaged to ensure the protection of buildings that are located in the nominated property but not included in the National Register. Wooden houses can be considered an example.

Management system

The management system of the nominated property is based on the national management system of heritage properties, which focuses on protecting the cultural heritage sites and buildings listed in the National Register of Cultural Heritage. At the national level, the Department of Cultural Heritage performs the functions of heritage identification and inventorying, and is the overseeing authority with regard to heritage management and protection. The day-to-day management of listed sites resides with the municipalities.

The management of the nominated property will be coordinated by a Site Manager working with a Site Management Unit. The Site Manager will be responsible for implementing the nominated property’s management plan and its associated action plan. The Site Management Unit will oversee the on-site protection, maintenance and monitoring of the nominated property. The function will be
based in the Kaunas City Municipality Administration and supported by the Kaunas Division of the Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Department. An inter-institutional Executive Committee will oversee the strategic management of the nominated property at the national level. Appointed by the Minister of Culture, it will consist of representatives of different ministries and the Mayor of Kaunas City. It will be assisted by an Advisory Board appointed by the Minister of Culture and composed of experts and representatives from civil society and Kaunas City Municipality.

The management plan for the nominated property was developed in 2017-2021 by the Kaunas City Municipality Administration in collaboration with external experts and management partners. It was approved by the Kaunas City Municipal Council as a strategic planning document and presented to the local communities in a series of engagements. The timeline for making it operational is unclear. The plan will be reviewed every seven years and will be linked to the Kaunas City master plan to secure funding for its implementation.

Currently, the Kaunas City Municipality Administration allocates funds for cultural heritage research, inventory and dissemination. Some projects are funded from a national budget or by means of external funders. The municipality also provides funds for the maintenance and renovation of privately-owned heritage properties through the Kaunas City Municipality Heritage Restoration Programme.

In additional information received by ICOMOS in November 2021, the State Party informed that the Heritage Restoration Programme is financed from the municipal budget. Funding is allocated based on needs and requests. A co-financing programme, funded from the State budget, exists for state-protected heritage buildings.

The management plan does not include procedures for public participation in the management of the nominated property. A basic risk assessment is included in the management plan, based on emergency plans developed for the municipality, but is not specifically oriented toward the protection of heritage resources. Heritage Impact Assessments are mentioned in the management plan, but are not considered obligatory. Environmental Impact Assessments are mandatory under the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment of Planned Economic Activity, but only for larger-scale projects.

In additional information provided in February 2022, the State Party explained that Heritage Impact Assessments are a pre-requisite for any development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the nominated property, as is required under paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

ICOMOS notes that the current management system is developed around sites and buildings listed in the National Register for Cultural Heritage and does not cover the full range of attributes that express the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

Visitor management
Organised tours of the nominated property give a general overview of the interwar legacy of the city as well as more specialised thematic programmes exploring different aspects of the cultural heritage of the interwar era. Tours for people with hearing disabilities are also presented. Guidebooks are available in many languages.

A tourism strategy is included in a Kaunas City Cultural Strategy (valid until 2027), with the objective of promoting a cultural tourism model linked to local heritage and the community. There remains a need to explain the value and benefits of a World Heritage property to the tourism industry and the business community.

Community involvement
Raising awareness among the population with regard to the importance of the nominated property has been indicated in the management plan as an ongoing process and an opportunity for educational initiatives.

ICOMOS considers that raising awareness of the values of the nominated property and actively engaging owners in initiatives geared toward the protection of the nominated property is critical, considering that most of the buildings within the nominated property and buffer zone are privately owned.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the management system does not cover the full range of attributes that express the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. Protection is ensured only for buildings included in the National Register. Heritage Impact Assessment processes must be integrated into the management system as a pre-requisite for any planned development projects and activities. Greater awareness of the local community in the values of the nominated property and their involvement in its management will be essential to ensure long-term protection of the nominated property.
6 Conclusion

Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939, testifies to two decades of urbanisation and modernisation that transformed a provincial town into a modern city, which in the years from 1919 to 1939 served as the capital of the newly independent Lithuania. This process included architectural explorations within modernist idioms.

ICOMOS acknowledges the effort made by the State Party in elaborating the nomination dossier and in investing resources for conservation and protection over a considerable span of time.

ICOMOS considers that at this stage the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is not demonstrated, although there could be some potential if a number of specific shortcomings can be satisfactorily resolved. ICOMOS considers that this nomination poses some key problems with regard to the conceptualisation of the nominated property. The explanations provided on how it conveys its proposed Outstanding Universal Value are often based on concepts that are either abstract or not well defined, which makes it difficult to understand how they are reflected in the nominated property’s built environment and supported by tangible attributes.

ICOMOS considers that an important interchange of human values that had a significant influence over space and time, as expressed in the nominated property’s modernist architecture, has not been demonstrated. Neither has the nominated property, at this stage, been shown to be an outstanding example of the process of urban transformation characteristic of Eastern and Central European post-war nation-states that illustrates a local experience of a significant stage in history within the global project of modernity. The urban transformation of the nominated property, including the ideas and solutions of modern town planning implemented in Kaunas, needs to be reconsidered to provide more evidence of the potential Outstanding Universal Value related to the city’s experience with 20th-century urbanisation and modernisation within the framework of Eastern and Central European modernity.

The comparative analysis does not establish how or in what way the nominated property might be considered outstanding in comparison to other properties, especially those already inscribed on the World Heritage List. The analysis needs to be deepened to present more compelling evidence of the nominated property’s potential to be seen as the best exemplar or representative of the Eastern and Central European model of modernisation.

Given that the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated, and therefore the attributes cannot be confirmed, the conditions of authenticity and integrity cannot be confirmed at this stage.

ICOMOS also considers that problems concerning the protection and management of the nominated property have been identified. The management plan addresses only selected features of the protected areas and landmark buildings listed in the National Register of Cultural Heritage. There is no integrated conservation plan for the nominated property to complement the management plan. A long-term conservation programme will need to be prepared and integrated into the management plan to ensure the adequate protection of the nominated property.

Documentation regarding inventories and data collection is unclear and potentially deficient, conservation measures are not comprehensive and the monitoring system is inadequate in its present form.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that further work is needed to refocus the proposed justification for Outstanding Universal Value and restructure the line of reasoning based on clearly identified attributes. A mission to the property will be necessary once the nomination has been through these significant revisions.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939, Lithuania, to the World Heritage List be deferred in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to:

- Define the model of modernisation developed within Eastern and Central Europe and stipulate its key features in relation to Western modernity in order to situate the specific contribution of interwar Kaunas within this framework;
- Explore the possibility of proposing a new justification of Outstanding Universal Value under criterion (iv) based on a comprehensive analysis of interwar Kaunas’ contribution to the project of modernity as produced and experienced by the countries in the Eastern and Central European geo-cultural region;
- Define the attributes of the nominated property that express the new proposed Outstanding Universal Value under criterion (iv) based on the analysis of Kaunas’ model of modernisation and its position within Eastern and Central European modernity;
- Deepen the comparative analysis to demonstrate the exceptionality of the nominated property within this conceptual framework;
- Revise the boundaries accordingly, so they reflect the proposed justification of Outstanding Universal Value and include all the necessary attributes that have a
bearing on the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property;

- Prepare an inventory of all the buildings and structures from the 1919-1939 period within the nominated property, with details on their state of conservation and restoration history, to be able to identify attributes of the nominated property and effectively manage and protect the interwar modern heritage of Kaunas;

- Design new management mechanisms that will ensure protection of the full range of attributes that express the potential Outstanding Universal Value and not just the sites and buildings listed in the National Register for Cultural Heritage;

- Prepare an integrated conservation plan that considers the nominated property as a whole and ensures the conservation of all attributes that support the potential Outstanding Universal Value;

- Ensure the proper protection and conservation of modernist wooden architecture, given its importance for the nominated property;

- Ensure that Heritage Impact Assessments are undertaken as a pre-requisite for any development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the nominated property, as is required under paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention;

- Propose a different name for the nominated property that will reflect the reconceptualisation of the nomination.

Any revised nomination should be visited by a mission to the site.

**Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Strengthening management instruments to protect privately-owned buildings and structures within the nominated property and support the owners in maintaining their properties,

b) Raising awareness among the local community about the values of the nominated property and creating procedures for public participation in the management of the nominated property to ensure its long-term protection,

c) Developing a monitoring system that encompasses all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and takes into account the main factors affecting the nominated property;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Head Office and Garden

Location
District of Lisbon
Municipality of Lisbon
Portugal

Brief description
Constructed between 1959 and 1969 in the centre of Lisbon within part of the existing urban Parque de Santa Gertrudes, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Head Office and Garden complex consists of three interrelated buildings: the Head Office administration building, a Museum and Art library, and a Grand Auditorium, set in a landscaped garden. The Modern Movement buildings characterised by symmetry and horizontality, were designed by architects Alberto Pessoa, Pedro Cid and Ruy Jervis d’Athouguia while the surrounding garden was re-landscaped by António Vianna Barreto and Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles in a flowing naturalistic style. The complex was built to further the activities of the Foundation in relation to arts, education, science and philanthropy, a purpose that it still fulfils.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

Included in the Tentative List
31 January 2017 as “Head Office and Garden of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation”

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 27 to 28 September 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 5 October 2021 requesting further information about the boundaries, the construction techniques, and the garden concept.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 10 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, the buffer zone, and the Modern Art Museum.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 25 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation complex, was conceived as single entity of three interrelated buildings, the Head Office which houses offices, conference and exhibition spaces, the Gulbenkian Museum and the Art Library, and the Grand Auditorium, linked by a landscape garden. And in order to maximise the garden space, only a third of the built structures are above ground level, the remaining two thirds being excavated basements.

Constructed between 1959 and 1969 within part of the existing urban Parque de Santa Gertrudes, the complex was built as a civic centre to reflect modernity and the democratic principles of the Gulbenkian Foundation at a time when local dictatorial political structures in Portugal were linked to restrictive freedoms.

The architects Alberto Pessoa, Pedro Cid and Ruy Jervis d’Athouguia took inspiration from a range of Modernist buildings, from the early 20th century Prairie Houses of Frank Lloyd Wright to the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo by Le Corbusier.

Using three basic materials, exposed concrete, stone and glass, the buildings are seen to manifest a regional form of Modernism incorporating architectural traditions of Portugal and the Mediterranean, to embody innovative construction techniques, and to include new environmental approaches relating to construction physics, acoustics, lighting, air conditioning and audio-visual equipment. Since construction, the nomination dossier explains, the buildings have been “constantly reinforced with the subsequent introduction of more
advanced technical solutions as they became available on the market”.

Large windows in all three buildings overlook the garden whose design brought together typical Portuguese landscape characteristics of copse, boundary and clearing, with the use of both native and exotic plants, while maintaining a few elements of the earlier Parque de Santa Gertrudes garden such as water features and isolated stands of eucalyptus and beech trees. The garden did not have a specific plan but rather ‘plant association schemes’, which reflect different physiographical and microclimatic situations. Overall, it is seen to reflect a new concept of garden art, with the vegetation “viewed as a dynamic and evolving system and not a static plantation”.

Within the garden is a large open-air amphitheatre above which a temporary roof or ‘sound sail’ was added in 2006. Since it was laid out, the garden has been the subject of two renovation schemes described as the garden’s second and third phases. These were undertaken in 1979-1981, 1999 and 2000, with the earlier tackling the impact of Dutch Elm disease, and the later introducing new designs to cope with increased visitors.

At the time the three main buildings were constructed, the garden extended beyond what has now been nominated to encompass an area to the south of the original Parque de Santa Gertrudes. A Modern Art Centre was built in this area in 1983 designed by the architect John Leslie Martin. A children’s pavilion was added in 1985. Both are visually part of the overall design of the complex as the Art Centre was orientated towards the other buildings and aligned with the water areas as well as with the amphitheatre. The Modern Art Centre, now renamed as the Modern Collection of the Gulbenkian Museum, and its landscape surroundings have been excluded from the nominated area, and included in the buffer zone, as they are not seen to be part of the founding phase of the Gulbenkian complex. Thus, the park is divided by an invisible boundary across the landscape garden, while the overall Gulbenkian collections are partly within and partly outside the nominated area.

Beyond the Modern Art Centre area, the Gulbenkian Foundation has recently acquired almost all of the rest of the Parque de Santa Gertrudes. It has launched a tender for extending the Modern Art Museum, for re-landscaping the surrounds of the museum together with the newly acquired area, and for creating a new entrance along the southern boundary of the park. The tender was awarded to architect Kengo Kuma, and landscape architect Vladimir Djurovic. Work is currently underway. The full designs for this work were not submitted with the nomination nor the design briefs, but in the additional information received in February 2022, the State Party included visualisations, outline plans and cross-sections for the proposed revisions to the building, and for the garden design and planting schemes.

The nominated property has an area of 6.8 ha, and a buffer zone originally of 14.7 ha.

State of conservation
Since its creation, the conservation of the buildings (together with their contents) and the garden have been the responsibility of a specific unit within the Foundation.

In 1999, a major rehabilitation project was initiated for both the buildings and the garden that took fifteen to twenty years to complete.

For the buildings, rehabilitation was based on detailed study of construction history. Technical aspects were updated to make them more energy efficient, with solar panels and extra insulation being added to some of the roof structures, and administrative spaces modernised. All other interventions were carried with respect for the original designs, materials and principles of construction. In some areas the original layout was adapted to make it more usable, or to meet current building and fire regulations.

For the second rehabilitation scheme of the garden, one of the original garden designers, Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles, was brought back to oversee the project and collaboration was arranged with one of the original architects, Ruy Jervis d’Athouguia. The designer was requested to devise a ‘new’ rehabilitation project for the garden which encompassed managing its maturity, removing some planting that perverted its original concept, extending paths and creating a new leisure area on the edge of the lake. The project also encompassed the installation of a more efficient irrigation system.

Over and above this major project, technical audits of both the buildings and garden are carried out on a regular basis and any structural anomalies are mapped and addressed.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is very good as a result of regular maintenance and rehabilitation projects, underpinned by excellent documentation.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors that could have potential to affect the nominated property are limited and relate to the re-development of the Modern Art Museum and the future development in the buffer zone that could impact on views out of the garden. Other potential threats are well managed by the State Party.

Even though it is outside the proposed boundary, (as it is not considered as part of the original Calouste Gulbenkian complex), the Modern Art Museum is a highly visible part of the overall complex, and is perceived as part of the whole. A project to reconfigure the building and its surrounding landscape is underway. Visualisation and plans have
recently been provided and these are said to involve a “substantial transformation of the building itself, with a new, imposing South façade and partial glass walls allowing for a transparent visual, see-through perspective of both sides of the garden” – that is towards the original garden on one side and towards the recently acquired portion of the Parque de Santa Gertrudes on the other side. This project will clearly have an impact on the nominated property, and although further details of this project have recently been received, these are insufficient to allow a full evaluation of its impact on the relationship between the original complex and the Modern Art Museum.

Further development on the surrounding urban spaces could have an adverse impact on views out of the property, although there has already been considerable development since the complex was built. It is understood that several development plans and projects are underway in the buffer zone, and beyond in the setting of the property, which could have a visual effect on the property and these need careful monitoring. They include a wide elevated pedestrian and cyclist walkway that will impact on views out towards the Spanish Embassy. Planting and shielding of urban building through high rows of poplars on the eastern edge has been partially but not fully implemented but this measure is unlikely to be sufficient to protect against development up to eight storeys that is currently permitted in the immediate setting.

A Protection and Surveillance Unit has been established to prevent risks. Although Lisbon is known as an area prone to earthquakes and in the last hundred years has been touched on various occasions by the side effects of light earth tremors (level 3-4) these have not caused damage to the complex.

During the construction phase of the buildings and grounds in the 1960s, the construction site was flooded from water coming from the northwest of the property. Since then, a wall and embankment surrounding the entire north area, which serves as flood protection and can be closed with flood gates, has proved effective.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is very good, with most of the on-going internal factors that might affect the nominated property being well controlled. The main threats are external. The current limited boundaries of the buffer zone mean that the property could be highly vulnerable to new urban development projects in its immediate setting, unless the buffer zone is considerably extended and appropriate protection put in place.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

The Calouste Gulbenkian complex, as an integrated whole of buildings and landscape garden:
• Is pioneering for the way it combines modern architecture, engineering, art, design, and landscape, to attain an “artistic synthesis”,
• Has conceptual unity for its set of functionalities,
• Has a spatial interpenetration of buildings and landscape garden.

Its buildings:
• Represent the most monumental affirmation of post-war regional modernism in Portugal, reflecting traditional Mediterranean and Portuguese elements,
• Are a masterpiece,
• Use modern technology and materials in an innovative, sustainable, and ecological way,
• Testify to intercultural dialogue, the multicultural dimension of the artistic collections, and the values promoted by the Foundation.

Its garden:
• Reflect a new concept of garden design that is a landmark in the design of the modern garden.

Based on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value in the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are the buildings and landscape garden.

As proposed, the Outstanding Universal Value is an assembly of many different facets of the complex that do not readily combine in a convincing way to explain its exceptionality. A much clearer analysis is needed of the context within which the complex was constructed and how it relates to the many other cultural institutions that were constructed in the two decades following the Second World War, so as to understand whether, and if so, how the complex might be seen as outstanding as an ensemble of buildings and landscape within the particular period in history which fostered the Late Modern Movement.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis in the nomination dossier was developed on the grounds of the property being a combination of a stand-alone architectural and landscape complex, a living organism that testifies to the action of time, and a collection of spaces that have been appropriated to symbolise collective memory. A difficulty arises from the fact that the aspects being compared are not the same as a combination of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and its attributes, as the former includes the idea of the property being pioneering,
using innovative technology, being a pioneering form of regional modernism and reflecting intercultural dialogue.

The scope of the comparative analysis is global. It examined properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, but does not make comparisons with sites included on Tentative Lists, and in terms of other properties the analysis is not systematic, rather pragmatic and limited.

A further key weakness is that it has not identified an appropriate timeframe for the comparisons. The comparisons span the whole timeframe of Modernism. In ICOMOS’s view the timeframe should have been post-Second World War in the period of what is called Late Modernism. That period is characterised by the production of significant architecture around the world sponsored by cultural centres and educational institutions. Such a time frame would have allowed comparisons to be made with architecture that was created in a similar context to the complex and this could have produced more meaningful conclusions.

To address these weaknesses, the ICOMOS Interim Report requested the State Party to submit further worldwide comparisons to show how the Gulbenkian complex relates to Modern Movement buildings and designed landscapes built in the two decades after the Second World War, and commissioned by cultural centres or educational establishments.

The State Party provided further limited comparisons but did not offer a framework to show how the extra sites were chosen. They asserted that the starting point for these comparisons was that the Gulbenkian complex was unique in three ways: 1) a unique pioneering integration of architecture and landscaping into a single project; 2) a unique coherent and efficient, highly flexible multifunctionality; 3) and a unique spatial experience.

The new analysis mentions sites in Europe, such as the Southbank Centre in London, the Kulturhuset or House of Culture in Stockholm, the House of Culture and Finlandia Hall in Helsinki, and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark. And in the United States of America, the Smithsonian Complex, the Fort Worth Modern Art Museum in Texas, and the Kimbell Art Museum were mentioned. These are all seen as not having an integrated conception of buildings and landscape or multifunctionality, apart from the Kimbell Art Museum where nature surrounds but is not part of the buildings.

The conclusions presented for the overall comparisons are that for already inscribed properties, there is no property inscribed that combines the identified cultural values in a single complex or that expresses a perfect unity of buildings and garden; that the new comparisons further support what it seen as the undeniable proof of the uniqueness of the asset; and that the Gulbenkian complex will fill a gap in the still largely under-represented Twentieth Century Heritage category and particularly buildings associated with Late Modernism.

Although the complex might well fill such a gap, what has not been demonstrated is that there are no other sites that could equally well or better fill such a gap, as, in spite of further comparisons, insufficient relevant sites have been compared to demonstrate how the Gulbenkian site can be seen as exceptional. It might be unique but that does not necessarily equate with exceptionality. More detailed work would be needed to sit the Complex within the context of cultural foundations in the two decades following the Second World War in order to understand whether, and if so, in what way it might be seen as exceptional.

ICOMOS does not consider that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List at this stage.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii), (iv) and (vi).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the complex combines major international modern architectural currents from primarily North and Latin America, with Portuguese and Mediterranean vernacular traditions; exemplifies the integration of monumental construction and natural landscape and exterior and interior architecture; and reflects and brings together built and mobile, as well as tangible and intangible artistic heritage.

ICOMOS considers that the essence of this criterion is the need to demonstrate that the property reflects in an outstanding way the high point of an architectural artistic style.

What has not been demonstrated is how the building form, which reflects ideas borrowed from several well-known architects such as the horizontality of Frank Lloyd Wright’s buildings and the form of Le Corbusier’s museum of unlimited growth, and also Portuguese and Mediterranean architectural ideas, when combined with its natural landscape garden might be seen to reflect artistic genius in delivering an architectural style. ICOMOS considers that criterion (i) has not been justified.

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the complex is a paradigm for the way it testifies to the principles of the Modern Movement, particularly as regards the synthesis between landscape, innovative construction techniques and new ideas of environmental composition. It also displays a welcoming monumentality, and an apparent simplicity of construction, and is a living
testimony to the values of tolerance and intercultural dialogue.

ICOMOS considers that the architectural design reflects a fusion of ideas from other architects combined with local regional styles, but it has not been shown how this fusion might be seen as exceptional, or to have had influence “over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world”. For the property to fulfil this criterion, it would need to demonstrate that its specific interchange of ideas was either exceptional or had long-standing influence in specific areas or more generically over time. ICOMOS does not consider that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the complex shows, in an outstanding fashion, the use of state-of-the-art technologies and materials, innovative integration of built spaces with the natural landscape, a new concept of garden art, and, overall, the humanisation of architectural spaces.

ICOMOS considers that although the property included innovative approaches to various services at the time it was constructed, most of these have been modified over the years. Certainly, up to date materials were utilised in the fabric, and the scale of the buildings demanded creative structural engineering for their successful use, but these alone do not make the complex outstanding.

Rather, ICOMOS considers that the complex might have the capacity to be seen as an outstanding example of an integrated architectural and landscape ensemble within the Late Modern Movement period, but precisely how its exceptionality might be framed needs to be more fully researched on the basis of further in-depth comparisons with other buildings commissioned for similar purposes in a similar timeframe. Uniqueness is not sufficient. A robust analysis is needed that sits the complex clearly within an acknowledged 20th-century historic thematic framework, to show how it relates to the many other cultural institutions that were developed after the Second World War, in terms not only of their designs but also in the way these designs reflected their aims, and how it might be seen to stand apart. Besides clarifying the value of the complex, such an analysis would be highly beneficial to the management of the complex and its outreach.

If such an analysis is undertaken, a further consideration would be the relationship between the complex and the Modern Art Museum, in the light of the current museum project which is said to be creating more integration between the two.

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the built complex gives substance to the mission and objectives of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation which provides the public with an artistic programme of Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that an association necessary to justify this criterion needs to be a defined event, tradition, idea, belief or work that can be seen to be of outstanding universal significance – which, if combined with tangible or direct links, might allow the property to justify Outstanding Universal Value. The Foundation’s programmes of artistic works, whose future iterations cannot yet be defined, however beneficial to the community, cannot be seen to hold outstanding universal significance.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (i), (ii) and (vi) have not been demonstrated, but that the property might have the potential to justify criterion (iv) on the basis of further work but it has not been justified at this stage.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of a nominated property is based on the need for the boundaries to contain all the attributes necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Integrity is also a measure of the intactness of the attributes, and how far they are free from threat.

With regards to the potential for Outstanding Universal Value to be justified on the basis of further work, consideration will need to be given to the boundary of the property where it currently lies between the original complex and the Modern Art Museum, in relation to its logic in enclosing all necessary attributes.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be identified, and thus integrity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated at this stage.

Authenticity

The authenticity of a nominated property is based on how well the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value convey its value.

With regards to the potential for Outstanding Universal Value to be justified on the basis of further work, consideration will need to be given to defining more precisely which aspects of the complex of buildings and garden can be considered as attributes.
ICOMOS considers that since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated at this stage, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be identified, and thus authenticity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated at this stage.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have not been met at this stage.

**Boundaries**

Based on the nomination dossier, there are no inhabitants living within the nominated property, and the number of inhabitants within the buffer zone is estimated at 3,822.

The nominated complex consists of three inter-related buildings that are the Head Office administration building, the Museum and Art Gallery and the Auditorium, while the Modern Art Centre, which is a visible part of the landscape and one that is visually interconnected to the nominated parts, has been excluded. Even within the nomination dossier there appears to be a lack of clarity as to what comprises the complex, as the comparative analysis refers to all four structures and the four structures together, with their surrounding landscapes, are protected as one unit at a national level.

The buffer zone as proposed is aligned with the boundaries of the Special Protection Zone (ZEP) of the National Monument, but is only fifty-metre wide in most places. Given the high degree of inter-relatedness between the property and its urban surroundings, it is vital that the buffer zone does offer sufficient protection. The State Party was requested to consider this issue. The State Party responded that the complex was designed to be separated from its surrounding urban form by a wall and a thick curtain of trees, with the one exception being the view in the north towards the 17th-century Spanish Embassy building (that is now being compromised by an overpass). They did acknowledge the need to redesign and expand the current buffer zone, and to unify and strengthen the legal instruments already in place. While this would be a lengthy bureaucratic process, the relevant public institutions have stated their willingness to examine the issues. The State Party submitted a suggested revision to the boundaries of the buffer zone with a small extension to the northeast and a larger one to the northwest. The rationale for these changes is not explained. Nor can they be seen to address the need to consider views from within the property towards the rapidly changing and densifying metropolitan development. The curtain of trees around most of the boundaries is not impermeable or high enough to screen eight-storey buildings, the maximum currently allowed in the adjoining urban areas.

If the complex is to be maintained as a secluded green heaven, within a rapidly developing urban area, a larger buffer zone will be needed than the fifty metres currently proposed, together with discrete planning constraints designed on the basis of sight lines.

A new delineation of the buffer zone would need to be based on a detailed analysis of the most important visual axes and visual relationships between the complex and its immediate urban setting, such as the view of the Spanish Embassy from the entrance area of the Museum and Head Office building, and the views to the east of the modern spire of the Igreja de Nossa Senhora de Fátima, as well as what areas might have a visual impact from potential development at the maximum height allowed in its immediate and wider setting.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the complex has not so far been compared adequately with other similar buildings within a meaningful context during the Late Modernism period after the Second World War when the majority of architecturally significant buildings around the world were sponsored by cultural or educational organisations in a similar way to the complex.

ICOMOS considers that the complex cannot be seen as being a masterpiece of human creative genius in terms of manifesting the peak of an architectural style, either as an exemplar of the international Modernist style or the suggested local Portuguese and Mediterranean influences which are hard to identify. And while the complex has clearly been influenced by other ideas, in turn it has not been influential in an outstanding way. In terms of innovation, the fittings or materials cannot be seen as outstanding in terms of their persistence or their use, nor does the garden, as it now exists, clearly reflect an innovative 1960s approach to design.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (i), (ii) and (vi) have not been demonstrated, and that criterion (iv) has not been justified at this stage.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

The complex is very well documented. The entire design, planning and construction history of the site from the 1950s and 1960s, through the subsequent interventions and supplementary measures of the 1970s and 1980s, and up to the redevelopment and restoration measures of the last thirty years, are in the Foundation's own archive, catalogued, and in part already digitised and accessible to interested parties.

**Conservation measures**

The conservation and renovation measures carried out so far have been part of integrated and comprehensive planning processes, with detailed documentation of these interventions being published by the Foundation.

Regular and well-prepared maintenance interventions are the direct responsibility of the Foundation, as is the
planning of future measures. A ten-year maintenance schedule for the buildings is undertaken by a combination of resident and non-resident multidisciplinary maintenance teams, and a resident maintenance engineering team.

While the maintenance of the garden involves a large team of people, much of the work is outsourced to consultancy firms. ICOMOS is concerned as to how the ethos of the garden’s planting is being sustained over time in relation to its dynamic, environmental approach.

**Monitoring**

The monitoring system that is in place focuses on direct observation of interventions that have taken place as part of rehabilitation activities and on detecting deterioration in the fabric or in the health of the plants.

While all this is relevant, what the system does not formally address are the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. And nor are there any indicators to monitor satisfaction or the public’s appreciation and perception of the property.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable for the monitoring system to be further developed so as to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and on the basis of the affecting factors for the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

**5 Protection and management**

**Legal protection**

The property is protected at both national and local levels. There is no specific protection at the regional level.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Head Office complex and its Garden were classified as a National Monument in 2010. The complex is also incorporated into the City of Lisbon’s Master Plan. The property is classified for purposes of ground use as a Consolidated Green Recreational and Production Space and included in the Urban Rehabilitation Areas as per Notice nº 8391/2015.

The regulatory agency for the national designation is the State authority working in collaboration with the owners and this arrangement is seen to work well.

The protection of the buffer zone coincides with the Special Protection Zone (ZEP) for the National Monument. Urban development within it is the responsibility of the Lisbon City Council. Should the property be inscribed, the City Council would have responsibility for ensuring a balance between the needs of urban development with the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS considers that the buffer zone is currently limited and needs to be extended to allow it to offer effective protection of the immediate setting of the property. There is also a need of some sort of consultative body to be set up to bring together national authorities to support the City Council, as well as the representatives of local stakeholders.

**Management system**

Management is entirely the responsibility of the Gulbenkian Foundation and its work is well resourced. However, it does only cover the nominated property, not the buffer zone.

A detailed and sophisticated management system prevails that is inter-disciplinary and covers management, conservation and the use of the property. It is coordinated by the Board of Directors of the Foundation under the guidance of the Secretary-General.

Currently there is no public management plan. While it is stated that in case of inscription a Coordination Office will be set up to be responsible for updating, implementing and monitoring the management of the property to include strategic guidelines issued by the Foundation’s Board of Directors, and when necessary, proposals submitted by the stakeholders or by a group of consultants in different strategic areas, this new internal structure that was referred to as a management plan has not yet been set out as a public document.

While the management system is robust, it could be improved in terms of allowing more external engagement and articulating a direction of travel for the future.

Having a single management and ownership of the complex is clearly a great advantage, particularly where this is combined in a highly efficient non-profit organisation. Nevertheless, bringing in some outside views would be of value to demonstrate how management respects the views of the conservation community as well as those of its users, and how it collaborates with local authorities and local communities. It is noted that the nomination dossier states that the Foundation will create specific mechanisms to involve stakeholders – with emphasis on the regulating authorities such as Lisbon City Council, the local community, national and international cultural agents, the general public, visitors and beneficiaries, patrons and employees of the Foundation. ICOMOS notes that this would be an important step, as while many people participate in the activities of the Foundation and enjoy its spaces, it is clearly desirable that participation can also be structured to include a degree of involvement.

In terms of how the complex moves forward, ICOMOS considers that the development of a public masterplan for the next decade would be desirable as means of allowing a clear understanding of how future changes and development will be managed, how he garden’s ethos will be sustained, and how the park edges will be managed.

In terms of the buffer zone, there remains a need to establish some sort of consultative body in which the City Council, the State, the Foundation as well as local stakeholders are be represented.
Visitor management
The Foundation is aware of the impacts of increasing visitor numbers, which, it acknowledges, could be further magnified by inscriptions. Currently, the Foundation does not have a visitor management strategy. The State Party suggested that over-visiting could be ameliorated by a digital ticketing system with online pre-booking and timed slots.

Community involvement
Although various organisations connected to the local community have been encouraged to support the nomination, ICOMOS notes that it is not apparent that there is any current mechanism for on-going involvement – although it is stated that this is planned.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the current management of the property is good but could be improved through the introduction of specific mechanisms to involve stakeholders, through the preparation of a master plan to set out future programmes, and through the creation of an associated body to address the management of an enlarged buffer zone.

6 Conclusion
The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Head Office and Garden complex is clearly a valued part of the Lisbon urban landscape for its provision of open access to visitors and of a wide range of educational facilities.

Its creation between 1959 and 1969, in an existing park and during a time of restrictive political freedoms, was a bold move.

The form and design of the complex evolved from the work of a large collaborative team of architects and designers who drew in, from various parts of the world, then current ideas on both buildings and garden. The complex thus does not have the mark of one architect but rather reflects a fusion of ideas, including by Frank Lloyd Wright’s prairie style and Le Corbusier’s museum concept. The complex is said to be a regional version of Modernism for the way it reflects local Portuguese and Mediterranean influences, but these are hard to identify and, indeed, it could be said that Japanese influence seems to be more prominent.

As proposed, the Outstanding Universal Value is an assembly of many different facets of the complex that do not readily combine in a convincing way to explain its exceptionality. ICOMOS does not consider that the complex can be seen as being a masterpiece of human creative genius in terms of manifesting the peak of an architectural style that would be necessary for criterion (i). The complex has clearly been influenced by external ideas, but it has not been shown how this fusion might be seen as exceptional, or how it has had influence over a span of time or within a specific area, in order to satisfy criterion (ii). And while acknowledging the importance of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation’s artistic programme, this cannot be seen as being of outstanding universal significance to satisfy criterion (vi).

A much clearer analysis is needed of the context within which the complex was constructed and how it relates to the many other cultural institutions that were constructed in the two decades following World War II, in order to understand whether and how the complex might be considered outstanding, not just unique, as an ensemble of buildings set in a garden that reflect the particular period in history within which the Late Modern Movement flourished.

Where the complex might perhaps be seen as innovative is in terms of how the massive Late Modern Movement buildings have been integrated into their garden in a harmonious and restrained way. But this specific aspect would need to be more clearly articulated and the complex more thoroughly compared within other post-Second World War Late Modern Movement period buildings sponsored by cultural centres and educational institutions, which are now seen to have produced some of the most significant Late Modern Movement buildings, many set within landscaped grounds.

The feasibility of this approach would also depend on whether the boundaries could be revised so that they do not cut across the landscape garden and the visual inter-linkage between the complex and the Modern Art Museum, in order to allow the whole park, now in the ownership of the Gulbenkian Foundation, to be perceived as a single entity. Whether this can be achieved would depend on how the current re-modelling of the Modern Art Museum impacts on the integrity of the complex and its landscape garden.

Thus, at this stage the Outstanding Universal Value has not been demonstrated. But ICOMOS considers that there might be potential to justify Outstanding Universal Value if the issues above can be satisfactorily addressed or resolved.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Head Office and Garden, Portugal, to the World Heritage List be deferred in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to:

- Explore the potential for the justification for inscription to be re-focused towards the complex as an exemplar for Late Modern Movement buildings integrated into their landscape garden in a harmonious and restrained way, through further detailed comparative analysis, with architecturally significant buildings sponsored by cultural and educational institutions in the Late Modernist post-Second World War period;
• Consider whether and how the current proposed boundaries can be extended to encompass the whole of the park in the ownership of the Gulbenkian Foundation, if the integrity of the ensemble of buildings, as well as the landscape garden, is not impacted adversely by the current redevelopment of the Modern Art Museum;

• Enlarge the buffer zone, on the basis of a detailed analysis of the immediate setting of the property, including a view analysis and put in place appropriate protection for the enlarged area;

• Augment the management system through creating a consultative body that allows the involvement of stakeholders in management;

• Develop a public master plan for the next decade to encompass the property and its setting as means of allowing a clear understanding of how future development will be managed, how the garden’s ethos will be sustained, and how the park’s setting will be consolidated;

• Establish a consultative body for the buffer zone in which the City Council, the State, the Foundation as well as local stakeholders are represented.

Any revised nomination should also be visited by a mission to the site.
Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (February 2022)
Historic Centre of Gorokhovets  
(Russian Federation)  
No 1630

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Historic Centre of Gorokhovets

Location
Gorokhovets town
Gorokhovets District
Vladimir Region
Russian Federation

Brief description
Gorokhovets, located about 340 kilometres east of Moscow, is picturesquely sited on an elevated terrace on the right bank of the Klyazma River. As an ancient Russian town founded in the 12th century as a border outpost of the Vladimir-Suzdal principality, it underwent a major socio-economic and cultural upheaval in the late 17th and early 18th centuries when it became a district trade and craft centre. The historic centre’s impressive religious and residential monuments created at that time and the town plan demonstrate Russian architectural traditions as well as the influence of contemporary European trends. Found here is evidence of the cultural transition from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern era amidst the turbulent transformation of the later period of the Russian State into the Russian Empire.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a group of buildings.

Included in the Tentative List
3 July 2017

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 20 to 25 September 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 5 October 2021 requesting further information about the comparative analysis, legal protection, management, tourism and factors affecting the nominated property.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 12 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report on the justification for inscription, the boundaries, management and conservation.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The historic centre of Gorokhovets features religious ensembles and residential buildings set in a picturesque landscape on a historically important waterway, the Klyazma River, about 340 kilometres east of Moscow.

The historic centre presents two distinctive landscape features on the right bank of the Klyazma River: the Nikolskaya hill, where the medieval fortification (detinets) was initially founded and which, from the 17th century onwards, has been the location of the Nikolsky Monastery; and the settlement (posad) at the river below, with the main public square and the most important religious and residential buildings of the town. The historic centre is scenically spread out on the elevated right bank of the river, with a view of the floodplain.

The religious and residential buildings preserved from the 17th and 18th centuries speak to the upheaval of the town during that period, intertwined with important political, socio-economic and cultural processes in the region. The plan of the historic centre represents a synthesis of the medieval layout with the grid planning introduced to the Russian Empire in the 18th century. Exhibiting the architectural and planning traditions of ancient Russia as well as the influence of European architectural styles, they form the distinctive character of the historic centre of Gorokhovets.

Twelve buildings/ensembles are listed as constitutive elements of the nominated property, and are considered by the State Party to represent the core historical-cultural values of the historic centre of Gorokhovets. The majority of these architectural ensembles were built in stone by the
local benefactor, wealthy merchant Semyon Ershov, in the late 17th century.

Nikolsk Monastery ensemble

This monastic ensemble was founded on the order of Tsar Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov in 1643 as an ensemble of wooden buildings on the Nikolskaya hill, where formerly an ancient fortification had stood. The present stone buildings date to the late 17th century. The stone construction transformed the monastery into the main architectural and spatial landmark of the town. The central element of the ensemble is the five-domed Trinity Cathedral with adjoining hipped-roof bell tower (1686-1689). The cathedral was built according to new requirements established by the church reforms of Patriarch Nikon, and thus reflects important political and cultural events of the period. The proportions of the cathedral and characteristic features of the bell tower – a raised octagon over a quadrangular base, hipped roof with three-tiered dormer windows crowned with the bulbous dome – can be seen replicated in other religious ensembles of Gorokhovets.

Other important components of this ensemble include the Church of John Climacus (1710-1716), an elegant single-domed building with a refectory, adjoining by a two-storey abbot’s house (largely reconstructed in the 19th century), brick and stone ciborium (late 19th century) and 18th-century fence with turrets. Other structures, such as the Church of the Intercession (1698), have not survived. The monastery was confiscated after the introduction of Soviet rule and ownership was transferred to the regional museum, under which it accommodated many different functions. Its interiors were plundered, and some buildings were dismantled and others severely damaged. Scientific studies and restoration work were commissioned by the Soviet government in the mid-20th century, followed by legal protection. The reinstatement of its religious function took place in the 1990s, accompanied by further restoration and reconstruction work.

Sretensky Monastery ensemble

Located on the ancient central square of the posad, this ensemble was founded as a female convent in 1658 on the order of Patriarch Nikon. The present stone ensemble dates from 1689 to 1764. In 1764, as a result of church reforms, the monastery was abolished and partially transferred to civic authorities, which led to different functions. The monastery was reinstated in the 2000s following substantial restoration work.

The Sretensky ensemble comprises the cathedral along with a typical hipped-roof bell tower built over the holy gate; the Church of St. Sergius of Radonezh, a sparsely decorated late 17th-century winter refectory church built on a high basement; monastic cells of the same period; and an early 18th-century almshouse. Only a small fragment of the 18th-century fence is preserved. The refectory, main volume and apse of the cathedral’s three-part structure are located along a west-east axis. The central volume is a slender double-height quadrangle, crowned by five domes resting on drums decorated with columnar arcatures.

Distinguished by the richness of its volumetric, planning and decorative solutions, the Sretensky cathedral is one of the most remarkable buildings in the town.

Temple complex: Cathedral of the Annunciation, bell tower and Church of John the Baptist

The present stone building of the Cathedral of the Annunciation and its impressive free-standing bell tower date to 1700. It has a double-height volume and drums resting on slender pillars. Interior paintings from the 19th century are enclosed in stucco frames. Stucco moulding is also used in the design of the column capitals. The cathedral changed function during Soviet times, but its religious remit was restored in the 1990s. Restoration works implemented in the 1970s and 1990s were complemented by a comprehensive exterior restoration in 2017-2018, including gilding the domes. The adjacent Church of John the Baptist (early 18th century) is an example of a small church of the period with decorations in the Naryshkin style.

Church of the Resurrection

The parish Church of the Resurrection is a two-storey building embellished with five slender, widely spaced drums with large onion domes. It represents a dynamic combination of volumes of different heights and facade compositions. Based on its strong similarity to the Nikolsky Trinity Cathedral, its construction may date to the same period, the late 17th century. The bell tower and the smaller Church of the Three Saints that were added to the complex in 1743 have not survived. The interior of the church was restored to some degree during its conversion to a sports school in the 1970s. Restoration of the facades was carried out in 2017-2018, but the interior restoration is yet to be completed.

Residential buildings

Apart from the religious ensembles, the important features of the nominated property are the residential chambers of wealthy merchants. These include the “House of Sapozhnikov with a gate,” originally built by Semyon Ershov as a manor house (1680) and later owned by the Shiryaev and Sapozhnikov families; “House of Sudoplatov,” the oldest surviving residential building in the posad, built by Semyon Ershov near Sretensky Monastery (1670s) and later owned by the Sudoplatov family; “House of Selin,” originally built by Matvey Oparin (17th century); “House of Kanunnikov” (17th century); and “House of Shumilin,” originally built by Grigory Shiryaev (end of the 17th century) and later owned by the Shumilin family. The houses of Belov and Rumyantsev, two 18th-century residential chambers located on the slope of Nikolskaya hill, complete the notable early historic residential fabric of the town.

The nominated property also features wooden residential buildings decorated with folk woodcarving techniques as well as masonry buildings from the 19th and early 20th centuries. These constitute the majority of the historic urban fabric and add important material evidence of the history of Gorokhovets. The oldest surviving wooden houses – several
small buildings with carved ornamentation in the so-called Yakushev style – date back to the middle of the 19th century. The majority of historic wooden buildings feature sawn decorative trim and fretwork, which was widely seen in the central provinces of Russia. Several houses present original carving designs as well.

Urban plan
The historic centre of Gorokhovets represents a synthesis of the medieval layout (so-called “free planning”) with a European-inspired grid plan introduced in the 18th century. The core of the grid plan that was approved in 1788 was a large rectangular square with a shopping arcade and a city cathedral, opening to the bank of the Klyazma River, the sides of which were occupied by the Sretensky Monastery and the Resurrection church. The plan was carried out, but with significant deviations, particularly in the central part of the settlement’s irregular medieval layout, which remained almost unchanged. The result is an amalgam of two planning approaches.

Also listed by the State Party as a constitutive element but located outside the nominated property in the proposed buffer zone across the Klyazma River is the Znamensky-Krasnogirovsky Monastery ensemble. Founded in 1598, this important landmark is the earliest of the existing monasteries. The main stone buildings of the ensemble – the Church of the Sign of the Mother of God, adjoined by the chapel of John the Theologian and the refectory – were established in 1679 by the benefactor Semyon Ershov. Features that later developed in Gorokhovets’ architecture had already been defined here: a cubic volume; three-part apses; rows of decorative kokoshniki under the cornice, resting on an ornamental belt; and decorated windows of the double-lighted quadrangle and the apses. A hipped-roof bell tower, attached to the church in about 1753, also features local architectural motifs.

This monastery lost its independence in 1723, and two centuries later was abolished by the Soviet government. The buildings were converted to various non-religious functions, and were largely abandoned after the monastery fence was demolished in the 1960s. Since the 1990s the monastery has had its religious function restored and, following substantial restoration, has housed a Diocesan convent and hosts regular religious services.

The nominated property has an area of 23.3 ha, and a buffer zone of 68.3 ha, incorporating the main visual connections between the landscape, the historic centre and the architectural landmarks. The boundary encompasses the historical layout of the ancient fortification (detinets) on Nikolskaya hill, part of the adjoining Puzhalova Hill and the ancient settlement (posad) outlined by the Klyazma River.

Historical documents and archaeological evidence suggest that Gorokhovets was founded in the late 12th century as a border outpost of the Vladimir-Suzdal principality. The first fortified detinets was built on the Nikolskaya hill, with a foothill posad at the Klyazma riverbank. Political instability in the following centuries and several military defeats of the town were followed by the consolidation of the Romanov dynasty and state reforms that created favourable conditions for civic growth. These upheavals strengthened the role of cities and the merchant class, and intensified local crafts and trade. As a result, Gorokhovets experienced substantial social and cultural development in the second half of the 17th century. However, the expanding borders of the Russian Empire, emerging new cities, increasing international trade and other events soon saw Gorokhovets’ local industries outcompeted, leading to its decline.

The town underwent important changes in the 20th century when the Soviet Union’s industrial developments significantly increased its population and territory. Its historic core, however, was preserved largely intact, opening an era of scientific and archaeological exploration, and the legal protection of individual buildings, archaeological sites and the historic town as a whole.

ICOMOS notes that the nomination and additional information provides a detailed description of the selected architectural elements and planning features of the historical centre of Gorokhovets as well as of the particularities of socio-economic development of the town. However as mentioned in the Interim Report, a coherent analysis linking Gorokhovets’ preserved heritage with the socio-economic processes and conditions characteristic to the transition from the late Russian State to the Russian Empire, which prompted the upheaval and later the decline of the town is missing. In addition, the urban dimension of the historic centre lacks the necessary highlights: clear explanation of the approach followed towards an interrelated positioning and designing of the individual monuments within the landscape; accurate description and illustration of the urban system as a whole, particularly with regards to the residential and civic buildings; the historical retrospective of the formation of land plot layout, street network and public spaces; a well-referenced description of features of traditional Russian model of the so-called free planning, highlighting the principles and criteria of free planning, providing reference to precise examples of application of these principles in the planning structure of Gorokhovets as well as its integration with the later period town planning. The additional information presents rich details on the development of the urban structure of the town, however the sources for demonstrating the Russian model of free planning are not submitted. The provided references are insufficient to explain the planning model of free planning and its application in Gorokhovets.

State of conservation
Throughout the 20th century, the historic centre of Gorokhovets underwent periods of plunder, neglect and change, followed by the establishment of regular state protection, maintenance and restoration. The first scientific research and professional restoration works took place in the second half of the 20th century, as heritage policies gained increasing importance in the Soviet Union. The religious properties, although transformed into various non-religious functions, also received legal protection and
scientific treatment during this period. In the 1990s the
disintegration of the Soviet Union was followed by a revival
of church authority and restoration of religious practices
across the country, which, in turn, led to substantial
restoration and reconstruction works for religious
properties.

As a result of these processes, restoration-reconstruction
works were implemented on all major monastic ensembles
and churches in Gorokhovets. In some cases, such as the
Annunciation cathedral and the Resurrection church, the
most recent restoration works were limited to the exteriors
of the buildings, while the restoration of interiors is yet to be
completed. In additional information sent to ICOMOS in
November 2021, the State Party confirmed the possible
reconstruction of the Resurrection church bell tower, which
was dismantled in the 1930s, as well as the possible
reconstruction of the Intercession Church in the Nikolsky
Monastery and the church of the Three Saints next to the
Resurrection church.

The most important merchant houses from the 17th century
have been listed as cultural heritage and converted into
house museums and various public functions, and have
been maintained in a relatively good state of conservation.
The 18th-century houses of Belov and Rumyantsev are
dilapidated, though conservation works are apparently in
discussion with the private owners.

The state of conservation of the public spaces and urban
fabric varies. Some of the recent urban regeneration
interventions reflect a lack of adequate planning and quality
of execution. The natural landscape elements are well-
 preserved, inter alia with the protected natural area formally
established on the left bank of the Klyazma River.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and
the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation
mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is
satisfactory, but notes the need for a long-term integrated
conservation programme paired with a careful conservation
approach that allows for the long-term conservation of key
architectural monuments and the respectful modernisation
of the urban fabric without compromising their authenticity
or their historical and cultural values.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and
the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS
considers that the main factors affecting the nominated
property are water infiltration and wind erosion due to the
extreme temperature variations caused by the large
number of freeze-thaw cycles. A lack of regular
maintenance and conservation amplifies this problem. To
minimise the impact, the State Party indicates that
standard protection measures such as permanent and
temporary roofs and lime coating are applied.

According to the State Party, an important factor for
consideration is the recurrent spring flooding of the
Klyazma River, which contributes to a rising groundwater
level, alteration of the riverbed and changing
hydrogeological conditions. Although the nominated
property is located on the elevated right bank of the river,
safe from the immediate risk of flooding, this factor
requires study and monitoring in the context of climate
change and its long-term effects on the cycles and scales
of flooding.

No development pressures are reported in the nominated
property or its buffer zone. Overhead transmission lines,
which disturb visual perception, are the subject of planned
improvements to the historic centre’s public spaces and
urban infrastructure.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation as a
whole is satisfactory, and that factors affecting the
nominated property are primarily environmental and
potentially susceptible to climate change.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party
to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural
property for the following reasons:

- The historic centre of Gorokhovets is a unique, well-
  preserved example of a Russian town of the late 17th
  century, set in the scenic natural landscape of a hilly
  riverbank and a vast floodplain.
- The religious and residential buildings and the
  planning layout of the historic centre of Gorokhovets
  illustrate in a most authentic way the transition of
  Russian architecture and planning from the aesthetics
  and philosophy of the Middle Ages to the Early
  Modern era, influenced by European trends, in the
  context of the transformation of the later period of the
  Russian State into the Russian Empire.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the
nominated property are the 17th- and 18th-century
religious and residential ensembles and buildings of the
historic centre of Gorokhovets, and its urban layout.

The justification for inscription of the nominated property
as put forward in the nomination dossier is based on very
general arguments that may be relevant to many other
small historic towns in Russia and the chosen geo-cultural
region.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed around an
examination of sites in the same geo-cultural region that
are closest to the nominated property in terms of
characteristics, and an analysis of properties on the World
Heritage List expressing values similar to those of the
nominated property.

In total, seven properties are considered in the
comparative analysis. The geo-cultural region is not
explicitly defined, but is inferred to focus on Eastern
Europe. Four of the properties are located in the Russian Federation and already inscribed on the World Heritage List: White Monuments of Vladimir and Suzdal (1992, criteria (i), (ii) and (iv)); Historic Monuments of Novgorod and Surroundings (1992, criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi)); Churches of the Pskov School of Architecture (2019, criterion (ii)); and Historical Centre of the City of Yaroslavl and Surroundings (2005, criteria (ii) and (iv)). The other two comparators from the World Heritage List are the Historic Centre of Riga (Latvia, 1997, criteria (i) and (ii)) and the Historic Centre of Sheki with the Khan’s Palace (Azerbaijan, 2019, criteria (ii) and (v)). One site from the immediate vicinity, the town of Vyazniki (Russian Federation), is also presented for comparison.

ICOMOS considers that the importance of the nominated property has not been adequately demonstrated in its relevant context, as related to the claimed values, nor why the nominated property should be seen as the best exemplar or representative. While the State Party has attempted to make the case that there are no fully comparable properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List, the aim of the comparative analysis is not to demonstrate that the nominated property is unique, but that it has an exceptionally strong claim to be of Outstanding Universal Value in a defined context.

The comparative analysis in the nomination dossier does not provide sufficient evidence of the outstanding character of the historic centre of Gorokhovets in relation to the chosen comparators. The comparisons are based mainly on the difference in periods, the homogeneity of the preserved ensemble of Gorokhovets and cultural and religious differences. For Riga and Yaroslavl, the analysis raises questions about the authenticity of these already inscribed World Heritage properties to accentuate the importance of the material heritage of the nominated property.

The historic centre of Yaroslavl is the closest comparator on the World Heritage List. The comparison with Yaroslavl does not indicate that the nominated property is an equal or better exemplar or representative, as related to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and attributes. The analysis does not include other similar properties in the Russian Federation – which could conceivably include the historic centres of towns and cities such as Kazan, Sviyazhsk (Assumption Cathedral and Monastery of the town-island of Sviyazhsk (2017, criteria (ii) and (iv))), Sergiev Posad, Rostov Veliky, Irkutsk, Yeniseisk (Historic Center of the Yeniseisk (Tentative List)) or Vyatskoe (Vyatskoe village (Tentative List)) – or historic centres from the wider geo-cultural region, possibly including Central and Western Europe, which could greatly assist in understanding and assessing the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

In response to ICOMOS’ request, the State Party provided additional information in November 2021 on small Russian merchant towns of the same period. Four were presented: Kirzhach, Aleksandrov, Kineshma and Shuya. Additional information was also provided on Vyazniki, which was among the original properties analysed. The additional information indicates that the medieval plans in the four merchant towns were fully remodelled into grid plans in the 18th century, and the most important religious buildings were demolished in the early Soviet period. The historic centre of Gorokhovets differs from these comparators by the degree of preservation of its religious monuments as well as its pre-grid medieval plan. Additional information provided on 28 February 2022 in response to the ICOMOS Interim Report confirmed that Gorokhovets’ 18th-century grid plan was adapted to the difficult local terrain and the existing masonry buildings. This adaptation resulted in elements of its 17th century plan surviving.

Despite the valuable additional information, the comparative analysis lacks convincing and coherent arguments for demonstrating that the historic centre of Gorokhovets is the best exemplar or representative, based on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and attributes. While the nominated property has cultural and historical importance, there is a need for a thorough, well-structured, criteria-based qualitative analysis of relevant comparators presented in a clear and comprehensive manner to determine whether it stands out in its geo-cultural context.

ICOMOS does not consider that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List at this stage.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated based on cultural criteria (ii) and (iv).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the religious and residential buildings and planning layout of Gorokhovets illustrate in a most authentic way the transition of Russian architecture and planning from the aesthetics and philosophy of the Middle Ages to the Early Modern era, influenced by European trends, in the context of the transformation of the later period of the Russian State into the Russian Empire.

ICOMOS considers that the evidence of the cultural interchange provided in the nomination dossier and the additional information does not attest to the importance of the nominated property beyond limited regional and chronological constraints. The use of architectural ornaments from Gorokhovets in some buildings in the Neo-Russian style in the late 19th century is mentioned marginally, although it is difficult to credit Gorokhovets’ architectural heritage with an important or substantive role in the formation of Neo-Russian architecture, as traditional Russian architecture is represented in many other Russian properties on the World Heritage List.
influence of European architectural styles is demonstrated to a certain degree, although without sufficient evidence of the exceptional character of such a cultural interchange.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble, or landscape that illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the urban landscape of Gorokhovets illustrates the later period of the Russian State in its ambivalence between new European thoughts and older Russian traditions before the formation of the Russian Empire and its modernisation approaches.

ICOMOS considers that the nomination speaks of the special quality of the historic centre of Gorokhovets as a well-preserved example of a late 17th-century Russian town, with an expressive silhouette that integrates urban and architectural design into a scenic natural landscape. However, convincing arguments in support of the nominated property being outstanding under this criterion have not been provided. The justification does not succeed in demonstrating how or in which way the architectural monuments or the urban landscape of the historic centre of Gorokhovets stand out in illustrating a particular significant stage in human history or how it illustrates in an outstanding way the history and historical development of the wider geo-cultural region.

ICOMOS notes that the nomination and the additional information provide a detailed description of the selected architectural elements and planning features of the historic centre of Gorokhovets as well as the particularities of the town’s socio-economic development. However, the analysis of the links between Gorokhovets’ preserved heritage and the wider socio-economic processes that characterised the transition of the late Russian State into the Russian Empire is not sufficiently clear. The analysis does not demonstrate that the role of Gorokhovets in these processes was exceptional, nor outstanding in terms of its historical and cultural values.

Concerning the urban plan, additional information provided by the State Party in February 2022 includes informative details on the development of the urban structure of the town, but, regrettably, sources that demonstrate the Russian model of open landscape “free planning” have not been submitted. The references provided are insufficient to explain this type of planning model and its application in the nominated property.

ICOMOS does not consider that any of the cultural criteria have been justified at this stage.

**Integrity and authenticity**

**Integrity**

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the wholeness and intactness of the historic centre of Gorokhovets. With the notable exception of the Znamensky-Krasnogrivsky Monastery ensemble, which is located in the buffer zone, the nominated property incorporates the major architectural, planning and landscape elements, including the 17th century religious and residential buildings, the two-part planning of the ancient town and the relationship of the hills with the river floodplain. It includes parts of the Nikolskaya and Puzhalova hills, which are maintained as a municipal public park comprising a forested area and an archaeological zone. These hills form a natural border for the nominated property, enclosing its panorama. The north-western, northern and north-eastern borders are partially enclosed by the Klyazma River and are open to an “endless” horizon, where visual continuity of the historical landscape is secured by planning regulations. The left bank portion of the buffer zone is protected as a wetland nature reserve.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not yet been demonstrated, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be confirmed and integrity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated at this stage.

**Authenticity**

The historic centre of Gorokhovets can be said to be authentic in its location and setting, its forms and designs, and its materials and substance, which truthfully and credibly express its cultural values through its attributes.

Despite certain material losses and partial alterations related to changes in functions and, in some cases, a poor state of conservation, the monuments of religious and residential architecture can be described as authentic. A number of residential buildings have been adapted as museums and to other public uses, but retain to a large degree their forms and designs. The churches and monasteries of Gorokhovets had their original function restored at the end of the 20th century, after being interrupted during the Soviet period.

During restoration works in the 1990s and 2000s the material authenticity of churches and monasteries was sometimes compromised regarding details such as stairs, flooring, window frames and ironwork; nevertheless, the overall restoration approach has shown respect for authenticity.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated at this stage, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be confirmed and authenticity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the
World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated at this stage.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have not been met at this stage.

Boundaries
The boundary of the nominated property encompasses the historic core of Gorokhovets, incorporating all major 17th- and 18th-century historical monuments, town-planning and landscape elements with the exception of the Znamensky-Krasnogrivsky Monastery ensemble, which is located in the buffer zone. The rationale for the boundaries is based on the historical planning structure and the natural landscape features. This approach has been applied consistently by the State Party.

The proposed buffer zone surrounds the nominated property on all sides. It partially coincides with the formal protection boundary of the historical settlement of federal significance, but also extends to the left bank of the Klyazma River to incorporate the Znamensky-Krasnogrivsky Monastery and the main panorama of the floodplain.

The north-western corner of the nominated property’s boundary intersects with the buffer zone boundary. The buffer zone boundary therefore does not provide an added layer of protection at this particular location. The explanation provided by the State Party refers to the natural landscape characteristics, where the Nikolskaya hill forms a visual barrier to the nominated property. There is, however, no visual, mapping or viewshed analysis presented to support this approach.

Only a small percentage of the 12,619 residents of Gorokhovets inhabit the historic centre: there are 567 residents in the nominated property, and 823 in the buffer zone (2020 figures).

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the justification for inscription of the nominated property is based on very general arguments which may be relevant to many other historic towns in the chosen geo-cultural region. The exceptionality of the historic centre of Gorokhovets has not yet been demonstrated through an appropriate comparative analysis, and neither of the two proposed criteria have been justified at this stage. The nominated property’s integrity and authenticity cannot be confirmed since the criteria have not yet been justified. In relation to the boundaries of the nominated property and the buffer zone, considerations should be given to the exclusion of the Znamensky-Krasnogrivsky Monastery ensemble from the nominated property and the north-western corner of the nominated property.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
An inventory of cultural heritage objects in Gorokhovets was initiated in the 1960s. The ongoing list of registered monuments is today administered by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. The “passports” for each of the registered monuments include baseline data: a description and an art-historiographical analysis, accompanied by written, photographic and graphic documentation of restoration and reconstruction works if conducted.

The documentation is stored in the Technical Archive of the State Inspection of the Vladimir Region for the Protection of Cultural Properties, as well as the Ministry of Culture. Various types of archival documentation on Gorokhovets’ monuments are stored in the archive of the Gorokhovets Architecture and History Museum, and in regional and national archives.

Conservation measures
Russian Federation legislation requires conservation and restoration measures to be based on thorough scientific research. The conservation and restoration measures in place for the historic monuments of Gorokhovets incorporate actions focused on individual monuments as well as a more holistic approach to the rehabilitation of the historic centre. These measures are funded through federal and regional budgets, as well as extra-budgetary sources, including international investments.

As a result of conservation and restoration measures undertaken in the 20th century and recent decades, the main historical buildings of Gorokhovets as well as some public spaces have been repaired and restored to various degrees. The most recent works (2016-2021) involved the Nikolsky and Sretensky monasteries, the Znamensky-Krasnogrivsky Monastery in the buffer zone, the Annunciation cathedral, the Resurrection church and some of the 17th-century merchants’ houses. ICOMOS notes that there is a need for various restoration and conservation measures and that there are respective funding plans presented in the nomination and the additional information provided by the State Party.

The main framework for the rehabilitation of public spaces, urban infrastructure and residential buildings is a joint project between the Ministry of Culture and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) New Development Bank, which provides funding for the Russian Federation’s “Comprehensive Development of the Territory and Infrastructure of Small Historical Settlements” programme. The works on cultural heritage monuments, including religious properties, are funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

A requirement for regular maintenance is included in the formal agreement established between the authorities and the owner/users of listed monuments. To ensure the protection and proper use of privately-owned monuments, the State Inspection of the Vladimir Region for the
Protection of Cultural Properties has developed “Methodological Recommendations on Cultural Heritage for the Gorokhovets Residents”.

Legislation entitles the government to formally request an owner to carry out needed conservation, repair or restoration work. The official order for restoration work includes an act of technical condition and a list of works to be completed by a specified deadline.

ICOMOS considers that a comprehensive conservation programme integrating different actions within a single methodological framework is needed.

Monitoring
Legislation requires comprehensive monitoring of cultural heritage properties every five years. Additional regular supervision and monitoring activities are carried out for restoration work, access to monuments, museum objects, fire systems and environmental indicators. Monitoring of cultural heritage objects in Gorokhovets is carried out by the State Inspection of the Vladimir Region for the Protection of Cultural Properties. The work of the State Inspection is regularly supervised by the Ministry of Culture.

The local community and the general public can contribute to monitoring by delivering information or complaints about violations in the use of monuments. These complaints are reviewed by the State Inspection of the Vladimir Region for the Protection of Cultural Properties.

ICOMOS considers it would be advisable to further develop the monitoring system to encompass all the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and take into account the main factors affecting the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation and monitoring measures are generally adequate, although there is a need to create a comprehensive integrated conservation programme and to further develop the monitoring system. ICOMOS further suggests that the monitoring system be adapted to easily integrate the results of the monitoring exercise into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire, for purposes of efficiency.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
There are comprehensive and robust legal and policy frameworks at the national, regional and local levels for the protection of the cultural and natural attributes of the nominated property. Federal Law No. 73-FZ of 25 June 2002 “On the protection of cultural heritage objects (historical and cultural monuments) of the peoples of the Russian Federation,” defines the hierarchy of monument protection and the management requirements and norms governing conservation and restoration, use and state protection.

The historic centre of Gorokhovets, including its major architectural ensembles, planning and landscape features within, have been declared monuments of federal significance. The respective ministerial Orders define the boundaries and subjects of protection of the historic centre (18 March 2015 No. 415) and the requirements for urban planning regulations within the historic centre (21 June 2019 No. 815). The Orders also establish the list of protected panoramas and views, the interrelationship of open and populated areas, the volume and spatial structure, as well as buildings composition and silhouette, vegetation (planting patterns of the Klyazma riverbanks), and the relationship between different town spaces.

Special state protection of key landscape and natural components has been in place since the 1980s. The Nikolskaya and Puzhalova hills are protected as a “City Park of Culture and Leisure” by a Decision of the Executive Committee of the Vladimir Regional Council of People’s Deputies (25 February 1986 No. 143), and the wetland on the left bank of the Klyazma River is protected as a “State Natural Complex (Landscape) Reserve of Regional Significance” by a Decision of the same committee (12 January 1980 No. 1181/23). These protective measures are supported by a more recent Resolution of the Administration of the Vladimir Region (14 March 2016 No. 204).

Furthermore, detailed rules for land use and development are set out in local normative acts. The master plan of Gorokhovets was developed in 2016 and approved by a Decision of the Gorokhovets District council in 2017.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection is adequate to safeguard the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

Management system
The management structure for the nominated property includes the Russian Federation’s Ministry of Culture and the State Inspection of the Vladimir Region for the Protection of Cultural Properties. According to the State Party, public organisations, religious communities, tourism and construction businesses, and local administrative bodies represent state institutions and the local community. General supervision of the requirements of Russian and international law regarding the nominated property is carried out by the Ministry of Culture and the
Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Administration of the Vladimir Region ensures the conservation of federal and regional property located in the Vladimir Region.

Management of the nominated property and its immediate surroundings is carried out jointly by multiple bodies, including, among others, the State Inspection of the Vladimir Region for the Protection of Cultural Properties (management of cultural properties), the Department of Nature Management and Environmental Protection of the Vladimir Region (management of natural heritage) and the Murom diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church (management of religious activities).

The Commission for Consideration of Issues of Preservation, Use and Popularization of Cultural Heritage Objects of the Gorokhovets District has been established to form public opinion on the resolutions of the district administration on the conservation, use and popularisation of cultural heritage objects. The Commission considers construction projects in the historic part of the town of Gorokhovets, reconstruction projects of objects of historical and cultural heritage, issues related to the maintenance and use of objects in historic buildings, etc.

Additional information provided by the State Party in February 2022 included Decree No. 1558 of Gorokhovets District Administration, dated 20 December 2021, “On establishing the Council on managing the property “Historic Centre of Gorokhovets”.” The Council is set up with the participation of the representatives of the regional, district and municipal bodies as well as religious and civic organisations and community groups, and is endorsed to facilitate management and coordination of the nominated property.

The management plan, although not legally enacted, acts as an agreed operational programme among the stakeholders. The conservation and sustainable development of the historic centre of Gorokhovets is the main goal of the management plan in terms of the architectural monuments, urban realm and landscape. Tourism is seen as a strategic tool for ensuring conservation and economic revitalisation. The management plan is thus in line with the Socio-economic Development Strategy of the Vladimir Region, which defines the development of tourism and recreation clusters as one of the main priorities in the region for the period 2022-2030.

Funding for the rehabilitation of the residential monuments and urban public space of Gorokhovets is secured through the “Comprehensive Development of the Territory and Infrastructure of Small Historical Settlements” urban regeneration project, jointly managed by the Ministry of Culture and the BRICS New Development Bank. Work under this project is expected to start in 2022 and be carried out within six years. The management plan does not present details on funding and implementation for other strategic activities listed in the plan. However, the additional information provided by the State Party in February 2022 includes a list of funding applications for the restoration and conservation of cultural heritage monuments to be discussed by federal authorities in 2022.

ICOMOS observes that the action plan set out in the management plan includes only the projects that are included in the joint Ministry of Culture/BRICS New Development Bank urban regeneration project. ICOMOS takes note of additional information provided in February 2022 on the ongoing funding applications for conservation programmes for cultural heritage monuments, notably the religious ensembles.

No specific Heritage Impact Assessment process is embedded in the management system, although a comprehensive system of monitoring and risk management is presented in the management plan. Cooperation of the stakeholders is presented as the main lever for enabling monitoring and timely elimination of negative impacts on the nominated property, and for minimising risks.

ICOMOS considers that the government agencies at the local and regional levels have sufficient staffing levels and capacity. The work of these agencies is covered by respective budgets.

Visitor management

The nomination is built around the idea of employing tourism as a driver for economic revitalisation. The measures that should protect the nominated property from the possible negative impacts of tourism are embedded in the site management. Visitor capacity is not limited for most elements in the nominated property, since the current tourist flow is significantly lower than is permitted. However, limits may be put in place to avoid negative impacts if the number of visitors increases. Preservation Orders established between the government authorities and users/owners of monuments define the permitted uses and the rules for visiting.

According to the State Party, 62,400 tourists visited the Gorokhovets District in 2019. About one in eight stays at the Puzhalova hill ski resort, which is located in the proposed buffer zone. The ski slope, while short, represents a significant attraction in a largely flat region.

Some of the historic merchant houses offer tourist access and ethnographic, local history and art exhibitions. The exhibitions are supplemented with Russian-language explanation panels and screens, audio guides and guided tours. In some, QR (Quick Response) applications provide extended information in Russian and English. Educational programmes in these museums have been carried out since 2012. The churches of the Nikolsky and Sretensky monasteries are open to the public.

The visitor infrastructure is suitable for the current level of tourism. Some tourist destinations have been made accessible for people with mobility impairments.
Improvements are planned within the joint Ministry of Culture/BRICS New Development Bank project.

The State Party describes various plans to develop the interpretation and presentation mechanisms and visitor reception, including redevelopment of former industrial facilities in the buffer zone to create site welcoming and presentation facilities. The nomination does not present detailed plans, and no specific project is currently being discussed.

Community involvement
Community involvement represents an integral part of the proposed property management coordination scheme. Involvement of the local community in the conservation of the nominated property is included in the management plan's strategic objectives, in both passive (e.g., raising awareness) and active (e.g., public participation) forms. The involvement of the community in decision-making and management is reinforced by the legal and policy framework. The Coordination and Management Council established in December 2021 includes the representatives of local community organisations.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers the legal protection to be adequate. The management plan should be legally enacted, a Heritage Impact Assessment process should be embedded in the management plan, the management plan's action plan should include a full range of projects, and integrated management measures and coordination structures should be made operational at the earliest opportunity.

6 Conclusion

The most remarkable aspect of the Historic Centre of Gorokhovets is its impressive late 17th-century and early 18th-century religious ensembles and residential buildings picturesquely sited on an elevated terrace beside the Klyazma River.

ICOMOS acknowledges the effort made by the State Party in elaborating the nomination dossier and in providing informative additional information, as well as the evident commitment of the State Party and the local community to the conservation of this property.

ICOMOS considers that, at this stage, the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property has not been demonstrated. A critical concern is that the justification for inscription of the nominated property is based on very general arguments which may be relevant to many other historic towns in the chosen geo-cultural region. Insufficient evidence and argumentation has been provided of the cultural interchange alluded to in the justification, or how in which way the architectural monuments or the urban landscape of the historic centre of Gorokhovets stand out in illustrating a particular significant stage in human history, or how the nominated property illustrates in an outstanding way the history and historical development of the wider geo-cultural region. Since the proposed criteria have not yet been justified, the nominated property’s integrity and authenticity cannot be confirmed.

The outstanding character of the historic centre of Gorokhovets, as determined through an appropriate comparative analysis, has not yet been demonstrated. Overall, the limited analysis lacks convincing and coherent arguments for demonstrating that the historic centre of Gorokhovets is the best exemplar or representative, based on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and attributes. As a consequence, ICOMOS does not consider that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List at this stage.

ICOMOS also considers that the management plan should be legally enacted and improved to include a Heritage Impact Assessment process and an action plan that includes a full range of projects, and that integrated management measures and coordination structures be made operational at the earliest opportunity.

ICOMOS acknowledges that determining the most appropriate approach to resolving these important shortcomings will take time and effort, but considers that doing so is in the best interests of the community and the conservation of the nominated property over the long term. ICOMOS considers that a mission to the property will be necessary once the nomination has been through these significant revisions.

ICOMOS remains ready and willing to offer advice on the above issues, if requested by the State Party.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of the Historic Centre of Gorokhovets, Russian Federation, to the World Heritage List be deferred in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to:

- Develop coherent argumentation for the justification for inscription of the nominated property in order to demonstrate how or in which way the architectural monuments and/or the urban landscape of the historic centre of Gorokhovets stand out in illustrating a particular significant stage in human history or how it illustrates in an outstanding way the history and historical development of the wider geo-cultural region;
- Develop an appropriate comparative analysis, including a thorough, well-structured, criteria-based
qualitative assessment of relevant comparators, presented in a clear and comprehensive manner;

- Revise the boundaries as may be necessary to ensure the integrity of the nominated property in light of a revised justification, as well as its appropriate protection.

Any revised nomination should be visited by a mission to the site.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Preparing a long-term integrated conservation programme paired with a careful conservation approach that allows for the long-term conservation of key architectural monuments and the respectful modernisation of the urban fabric without compromising their authenticity or their historical and cultural values,

b) Legally enacting the management plan once a Heritage Impact Assessment process has been embedded in it and a full range of projects have been included in its action plan,

c) Considering the inclusion of the Znamensky-Krasnogrivsky Monastery ensemble in the nominated property, if relevant with the revised justification for inscription,

d) Expanding the buffer zone boundary at the north-western corner of the nominated property, or providing visual, mapping or viewshed analyses that justify the current delineation,

e) Further developing the monitoring system to encompass all the attributes that support the potential Outstanding Universal Value, while also taking into account the main factors affecting the nominated property,

f) Mapping important urban features and architectural elements of the nominated property as a whole in order to analyse and demonstrate the different construction types, interventions and evolution of the historic centre, and of the individual constitutive buildings and ensembles by means of detailed architectural drawings;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Gordion

Location
Polatlı
Ankara
Turkey

Brief description
Located in Central Anatolia, in an open rural landscape, the archaeological site of Gordion is a multi-layered ancient settlement, encompassing the remains of the ancient capital of Phrygia, an Iron Age independent kingdom. The key elements of this archaeological site include the Citadel Mound, the Lower Town, the Outer Town and Fortifications, and several burial mounds and tumuli with their surrounding landscape. Archaeological excavations and research have revealed a wealth of remains that document construction techniques, spatial arrangements, defensive structures, and inhumation practices that shed light on Phrygian material culture and economy.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

Included in the Tentative List
13 April 2012

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees’ members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 2 to 8 August 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 30 September 2021 requesting further information about the historical context of the nominated property, the comparative analysis, the documentation, protection, planning framework and planned development, and the management system.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 12 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: additional documentation, expansion of the boundaries of the nominated property and its buffer zone at precise locations, protection arrangements, looting, development projects, and long-term management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 25 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history, and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
Gordion is an archaeological site located in Central Anatolia, adjacent to the rural village of Yassıhöyük, in a steppe-like landscape, crossed south-north by the Sakarya River, some twenty kilometres south of its confluence with the Porsuk River.

The region where Gordion is located corresponds to ancient Phrygia, an independent kingdom which at its peak extended from the southern shore of the Marmara Sea to the northwest, to the territory delimited by the great bend of the Kızılırmak River to the east.

The nominated property bears witness to multi-millennial human occupation, from 2500 BCE to 1400 CE, and the larger area demonstrates human occupation up until the present day with little interruption. However, the major in situ remains revealed by decades of archaeological investigations are associated with the emergence and flourishing of the Phrygian culture, between the 10th and the 6th centuries BCE.

The nominated property, following the proposed expansion of the boundaries presented in the State Party’s response to the Interim Report, has an area of 1,064 ha and a buffer zone of 4,430 ha.

The main areas of the nominated archaeological site comprise the Citadel Mound, the Lower Town, and a large area with a high density of tumuli, which are located outside the former fortified settlement. They are discussed below.
Citadel Mound

The mound, featuring a rather flattened top, rises about thirteen to sixteen metres above the plain, east of the current course of the River Sakarya; it covers about ten hectares. The excavated portion of the mound – about two hectares – has revealed monumental structures and their spatial organisation, which shed light on Phrygian culture. A monumental gate – named the East Gate – has been revealed on the south-eastern side of the mound. The Palace Area and the Terrace Complex include two large courts and megaron-type buildings of different and large sizes, attesting to the Phrygian capacity for building with timber as well as to sophisticated construction techniques.

The buildings in the Temple Complex have revealed rooms with remains of grinding stones and evidence of textile production, from wool spinning to weaving; adjacent rooms contain mudbrick-and-clay ovens and other cooking installations.

A disastrous fire, which occurred around 800 BCE, created a 'destruction level' marked by a thick layer of ash that preserved a wealth of precious and fine objects in the Palace Area: they shed light on the skills and taste of the Phrygians, during the Early Phrygian period.

The new citadel, constructed after that fire, was built as a single plan, at a considerably higher level, which required substantial efforts to raise the height of the mound. A new gate was built, supported by a stepped retaining wall which was constructed with multi-coloured blocks. The plan of the new citadel is largely similar to the previous one.

A building with elaborate mosaics adorning the floors of its rooms, named the Mosaic Building, was built in the 6th century BCE: the central room was possibly a throne or cult chamber.

Finally, a building named the Painted House was probably constructed around 500-490 BCE. The excavations revealed fragments of painted plaster and friezes decorated with human figures – mainly women but also athletes and birds. The friezes are rare depictions of Phrygian women. The building was probably a shrine of the goddess Matar.

The Lower Town, the Outer Town, and the fortifications

A large, residential area – roughly forty-five hectares – the Lower Town was protected by a massive fortification system, which included two forts, corresponding to the two mounds known as Kuştepe and Küçük Høyük, of which only the latter has been excavated, and square towers. The Lower Town was connected to an adjoining residential area to the west, known as the Outer Town.

Archaeological campaigns at both areas have revealed stone buildings on the east and smaller, mudbrick buildings on the west. Objects found during the excavations included hearths, ovens, grinding implements, and other installations related to food processing. Archaeological evidence attests that around 700 BCE settlement activity ended by fire, and the area was subsequently used as a cemetery, known as the Common Cemetery, where members of the lower classes of Phrygian society were buried.

The tumuli and their surrounding landscape

Surrounding the Citadel Mound and the Lower and Outer Towns, more than one hundred tumuli – earthen mounds protecting the burials of the ruling class – dot the landscape of Gordion. Their size is variable, from small humps on the ground to large-scale mounds, such as the tumulus known as the Midas Mound (Tumulus MM), fifty-three metres high and 300 metres in diameter. Several mounds have been explored archaeologically since 1900 and documented in publications.

The tumuli contain tombs ranging from the early Phrygian period (mid-9th century BCE) to the early Hellenistic period (late-4th century BCE). The earlier burials are usually inhumation-type whilst the cremation-type appeared later, around the 7th century BCE.

The wooden burial chambers all show similar layouts. The construction sequence included the creation of a rectangular pit, in which the tomb chamber was constructed by assembling and joining timber elements. After the body was placed in the chamber with its funerary equipment, the chamber was completed by a timber roof and then covered with stone and rubble.

The objects found in the largest tumuli included banquet sets of refined workmanship, in bronze and ceramic, but also personal items such as fibulae, textiles, and belts. The largest of this type of burial is Tumulus MM, which features a timber burial chamber measuring 5.15x6.20 metres, and 3.30 metres in height, covered with a pitched roof, resembling a Phrygian megaron. Juniper wood and pine wood were used to build the chamber and its construction was followed by the construction of the mound over it, for structural reasons.

Most of the finds and the structures that emerged from the excavations at Gordion pertain to the Iron Age. The Bronze Age level was explored through sample excavations, which yielded artefacts and structures suggesting a complex Bronze Age settlement.

Evidence suggests that the first phase of settlement came under the influence of the Hittites during the Late Bronze Age, until the collapse of that Empire, around 1200 BCE. An economic and cultural resurgence at Gordion is attested to in the Early Iron Age and reached its apogee under its King, Midas, around the 8th century BCE and continued until the mid-6th century BCE. Afterwards, Gordion fell under the influence of the Persian Empire.

Under the Persians, the administrative and public part of the citadel was remodelled: the Painted House belongs to
this period as well as several industrial and residential structures.

During the Hellenistic period (late 4th century BCE), Gordion became a large, multi-ethnic, and multicultural town.

Gordion’s thriving life ceased suddenly in 189 BCE and it was only in the 1st century CE that it was refounded as a colony with a military function under Roman control. Subsequent periods of occupation are linked to the Byzantine and Ottoman presences.

The most recent phase of occupation of the area dates to 1920’s when the village of Yassihöyük was founded and populated by families that moved there mainly from Bolu.

Upon ICOMOS’s request, the State Party provided an expanded descriptive and historical narrative covering also competing powers contemporary with the Phrygian polity, that has assisted in better placing the Phrygian culture in its historical and geo-cultural context.

State of conservation
A long-term conservation programme has been in progress since 2011 and will continue for at least another decade to ensure the appropriate conservation and protection of the excavated structures and remains. The Gordion Archaeological Project (GAP), managed by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (hereinafter The Penn Museum), provides the necessary funds through donor schemes. The tumuli are overall in good condition, with the exception of the smallest ones, as they are prone to damage by ploughing. Tumulus MM has recently been the subject of careful structural stabilisation and conservation.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation programme developed by the State Party and its partners is crucial for securing the archaeological site and needs to be continued and supported by reliable financial and human resources.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is acceptable but can be improved, particularly in excavated areas.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are looting, development plans within the vicinity of the buffer zone, the expansion of the Gordion Museum within the nominated property, deep ploughing, flooding and erosion, the latter affecting particularly the mounds. Tumulus MM is threatened by the heavy traffic on the nearby main road. Plans for the rerouting of the road are prioritised in the management plan. In response to the Interim Report, the State Party explained that the initial plans to divert the road have been converted into a less intrusive approach, based on traffic speed reduction devices (bumps) on the existing road.

ICOMOS considers that urgent measures are needed to prevent looting, including upgrading the protection regime of the part of the nominated property currently covered by the 3rd degree archaeological conservation area to the 1st degree, to ensure the same strict level of protection and control to the whole of the nominated property.

Equally important is to find appropriate solutions that can meet the needs both for protection of the buried archaeological remains scattered in the fields and for the local farmers to continue to practice compatible agriculture, an activity that, so far, has contributed to preserving the landscape of the archaeological site.

ICOMOS notes the scale of development envisaged for the village of Yassihöyük, particularly the Special Project Area (ÖPA), for which thermal and touristic facilities are planned, is sizeable, taking into account the dimension of the village and its socio-economic profile.

ICOMOS is seriously concerned about the plans for upgrading and quadrupling the size of the Gordion Museum, which is planned to be built within the nominated property. This type of development is not consistent with the protection needs of the nominated property and it is recommended that a different location be identified for this new infrastructure.

In response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the State Party replied that concrete plans for development in the village are not currently being considered, but should this happen in the future, consultation will be activated as well as impact assessment mechanisms, as prescribed by paragraphs 172 and 118bis of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The State Party also clarified that a project for a new museum was approved by the Ankara Regional Conservation Council for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage Properties in 2017. However, the implementation of this project is not yet envisaged and not included in the 2022 budget for investment.

Finally, the State Party explained that, while the management bodies of the nominated property agree that local farmers should not be disadvantaged by the existence of the archaeological site, urgent measures are needed to protect the archaeological remains, including fencing, signage, and awareness-raising.

ICOMOS observes that a strategy to support farmers and their livelihood is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of envisaged measures for archaeological protection. Direct or indirect support and/or compensation mechanisms would need to be explored in dialogue with local farming community members. Developing possible additional heritage-related economic opportunities targeting farmers who may be more significantly negatively affected by restrictions on farming activities would also need
3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Gordion is one of the most important historical centres in the ancient Near East, with a long and complex sequence of human occupation spanning some 4,500 years, from the Early Bronze Age until 1400 CE.
- Gordion was the capital of the Phrygian polity and, after seventy years of archaeological research, with its wealth of still-unexcavated structures and remains, is a key site for understanding the Phrygian civilisation, and its technological achievements in construction and textile production.
- An unusually high density of burial tumuli surrounds the former town, some of which count among the largest in the world. Tumulus MM preserves inside it the oldest known still-standing wooden building, along with a precious collection of ancient furniture.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information the key attributes of the nominated property include the East Gate, the Citadel, the Lower Town, the Outer Town and their fortifications, the tumuli, particularly Tumulus MM, and the surrounding archaeological landscape. Within the Citadel, major attributes relate mainly to the Early and Middle Phrygian periods and include the East Gate, the Terrace Complex with its Megarons, the Terrace Building, the CC ("Clay Cut") Building, what survives from the New Citadel, built after the great fire (circa 800 BCE), and the Mosaic Building; and the Painted House, dating back to the Late Phrygian period. The Lower and Outer Town, which have only been partially archaeologically explored, preserve undisturbed remains from different Phrygian periods. The landscape setting of Gordion, shaped by the Sakarya River, its expansive steppe-land appearance dotted by hills, natural and human-made mounds, and its rural character, is inextricably linked to the nominated property and its historic development. The visual and archaeological connection of the nominated property with its setting is a crucial attribute that supports the understanding and the enjoyment of the archaeological site of Gordion and of its heritage significance.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed on the grounds of other settlements located in Anatolia that have yielded Phrygian material, and has also considered other important ancient Anatolian centres with comparable chronology, including sites on the World Heritage List and the Tentative List of Turkey.

ICOMOS noted that the comparative analysis presented in the nomination dossier is far too limited in terms of geo-cultural scope and asked the State Party to expand the comparative analysis to examine properties and sites in the wider relevant geo-cultural context.

In the additional information received in November 2021, the State Party expanded the comparative analysis, but only focused on the tumuli. The properties included within the augmented analysis have been drawn from all regions of the world, although a deeper analysis was carried out for sites in the Balkans, Central and Mediterranean Europe, and in Anatolia, on the World Heritage List, on Tentative Lists of States’ Parties, as well as other sites.

ICOMOS considered the augmented comparative analysis useful, although not completely satisfactory, and, in its Interim Report, asked the State Party to further expand the context of the Phrygian culture in comparison with other competing powers.

ICOMOS observes that, in its analysis, the State Party did not consider enough relevant comparable properties in the wider region such as Ashur (Qal’at Sherqat) (Iraq, 2003, criteria (iii) and (iv)), the first capital of the Assyrian Empire; or Babylon (Iraq, 2019, criteria (iii) and (vi)), a long-lasting ancient city and capital of successive empires; or Susa (Iran, 2015, criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)). From the Tentative Lists, the State Party could have examined Nimrud and The Ancient City of Nineveh (Iraq, Tentative List), both serving as capitals of the Assyrians, or Nippur (Iraq, Tentative List), a site bearing witness to 6,000 years of continuous occupation and Sumerian, Akkadian, and Parthian cultures.

However, based on the additional information provided by the State Party, ICOMOS considers that, despite the weaknesses in the comparative analysis, Gordion reflects in an exceptional manner, through its tangible attributes, associated archaeological vestiges and in situ remains, and the preserved condition of its surrounding landscape, the Phrygians, an advanced Late Bronze and Iron Age
civilisation which developed in Anatolia and excelled in timber construction, wood carving, and metalwork.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated based on cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi).

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Gordion offers today the best preserved and documented testimony to the Phrygian civilisation. As the capital city of the Phrygians, the site preserves remains of monumental architecture and of large-scale production areas, a well-preserved destruction level (800 BCE) in the citadel, which ensured the preservation of thousands of artefacts and not only of built structures, and numerous wealthy tombs offering exceptional insight into the Phrygian culture.

ICOMOS considers that the additional information provided by the State Party on the surviving structures and archaeological layers from both the Early and Middle Phrygian periods has clarified that the former period is more extensively represented in excavated areas than the subsequent one, particularly at the Citadel. However, the Middle Phrygian layer survives either reburied in the Lower Town or still unexcavated, particularly in the Outer Town. Where excavations have been carried out, these have been carefully recorded and documented, and finds have been removed and catalogued.

ICOMOS considers that the in situ archaeological remains – both excavated and unexcavated, suffice in terms of attributes to support the demonstration of criterion (iii).

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble, or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Gordion is an unequalled architectural statement of royal power and technological achievements in building construction (megalon-type buildings, burial chambers in the tumuli, particularly Tumulus MM), decoration (mosaics and painted decoration), and textile production. Several achievements attest to the ingenuity of the Phrygians: the first known example of coloured stone mosaic; some of the earliest known and elaborately decorated roof tiles; imposing royal burial mounds with wooden inner chambers attesting to the exceptional skills of Phrygian carpenters; the most elaborate wooden furniture known from antiquity; and refined skills in bronze metalwork.

ICOMOS considers that the State Party has referred to individual attributes, as well as to movable artefacts, to justify different facets of this criterion, namely building typology, architectural ensemble, or technology. ICOMOS observes that the whole nominated property should justify this criterion and not just individual elements of it. ICOMOS further considers that movable artefacts, although closely related to the nominated property, cannot be seen as attributes supporting the justification of criteria.

Finally, ICOMOS does not consider that the comparative analysis, even in its augmented form, supports the justification for this criterion.

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Gordion is directly associated with the Gordian Knot described in ancient written sources and cut, according to the legend, by Alexander the Great of Macedon, who fulfilled an ancient prophecy and demonstrated his capability to master Asia.

Gordon is also associated with King Midas, who ruled over the Phrygian kingdom in the 8th century BCE and was so renowned in antiquity for his immense wealth that a legend arose that he could turn into gold whatever he touched.

ICOMOS considers that the two legends linked to Gordion cannot be considered as enduring living traditions or beliefs. Although they have made their way into the everyday language, proving a remarkable continuity and diffusion within specific cultural realms, they do not represent intangible dimensions of outstanding universal significance.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iii), but that criteria (iv) and (vi) have not been demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The nomination dossier states that the nominated property includes all the necessary elements and is of adequate size to illustrate its proposed justification for inscription. All attributes and the entirety of the nominated property are covered by designation and statutory protection, and the physical fabric is in good condition and not suffering from neglect or uncontrolled processes of deterioration.

ICOMOS considered that, although the boundaries of the nominated property were largely adequate, some attributes and areas would need to be included within the nominated
property (see boundaries section) to ensure that the requirements for integrity are fully met.

ICOMOS also observes that the long-term conservation programme under implementation is important to ensure that all excavated areas are conserved and protected from erosion, to guarantee their ability to convey the proposed justification for inscription over time.

ICOMOS considers that to safeguard the integrity of the attributes of the nominated property, the protection designation of the nominated area west of the Sakarya River and covering the Lower Town and the Outer Town should be strengthened so that more effective monitoring mechanisms against looting and measures against deep ploughing can be implemented.

The integrity of the landscape surrounding the nominated property, having preserved its rural character, is particularly important for the appreciation and understanding of ancient Gordion, the relationship between the ancient town and the tumuli, and its success as an important urban centre throughout the millennia. Hence, the preservation of this landscape is of utmost importance to support the property’s proposed justification for inscription.

With the additional information provided by the State Party that supports the demonstration of criterion (iii) and the enlargement of the boundaries of both the nominated property and the buffer zone, ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property to justify criterion (iii) has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The nomination dossier holds that the authenticity of the nominated property is high, thanks to seventy years of archaeological research, which has revealed a wealth of architectural structures of remarkable quality, and finds that complement the information provided by the immovable remains. Careful in situ conservation and stabilisation works continue to be implemented on the basis of detailed documentation. The key sources of information for the authenticity of the nominated property rely on the form and design of the excavated structures, their original substance and material, and on the location and setting, which have only limitedly changed over time, with the exception of the forested areas which have been progressively depleted since the Bronze Age.

ICOMOS concurs with the State Party, to a large extent, although it notes that the course of the Sakarya River has changed, due to natural circumstances, and the village of Yassihöyük was established at its current location in the 1920s. The scale and density of the village’s built fabric have had no negative impacts on the nominated property, whilst its economy, revolving around agriculture, has contributed to safeguarding the landscape of Gordion. Deep ploughing, however, represents a threat, especially for smaller tumuli. Measures to avoid this impact and, at the same time, sustain local farmers, would need to be conceived and deployed in coordination.

The conservation methods adopted include both traditional and highly sophisticated contemporary techniques, but all respect the ancient built fabric. Reconstruction is limited to much older interventions.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated property and of its attributes to credibly convey the justification for inscription on the basis of criterion (iii) has been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met.

Boundaries

There are 54 people living within the nominated property and 160 within the boundaries of the buffer zone.

The boundaries of the nominated property have been determined on the basis of the known extension of the Phrygian settlement and include the central Citadel Mound, the Lower Town, the Outer Town, and seventy-three tumuli out of more than a hundred being inventoried.

The delineation of the boundaries of the buffer zone follows geographical features, transportation infrastructure, and field limits. The buffer zone includes some forty mounds and the surrounding rural landscape, which strongly contributes to the understanding of Gordion ancient settlement.

ICOMOS considers that, although the boundaries of the nominated property are largely adequate, some attributes and areas would benefit from being included within the nominated property, namely Tumulus T67 as well as the areas immediately adjacent to the supposed line of the fortifications, in the north-eastern side of the property.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked for some minor expansion of the boundaries of the nominated property and, accordingly, of the buffer zone.

The State Party replied by proposing enlarged boundaries of the nominated property and of the buffer zone at different points. ICOMOS considers that, in this way, all key attributes of the nominated property are included within its boundaries and the buffer zone encompasses “important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the nominated property and its protection”.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that, despite the weaknesses of the comparative analysis, the additional information provided by the State Party that supplements the nomination dossier have proved that Gordion reflects in an exceptional manner, through its tangible attributes, associated archaeological vestiges and in situ remains,
and the preserved conditions of its surrounding landscape, the Phrygian civilisation, an advanced Late Bronze and Iron Age culture which developed in Anatolia. The tangible attributes and the comparative analysis support only the justification for criterion (iii), whilst criteria (iv) and (vi) have not been justified: neither the proposed justification, nor the comparative analysis support these criteria. With the expansion of the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone, all key attributes are now within the nominated property and the buffer zone delineation ensures an adequate layer of protection. The conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met, thanks particularly to the preserved rural character of the surrounding landscape, which significantly contributes to the understanding of Gordion and the appreciation of its value.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
An inventory of all archaeological sites within the nominated property, the buffer zone, and in the wider setting has been carried out and is accessible at the Ankara Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural Properties.

All movable finds are recorded, temporarily kept at the depository in the excavation house, and delivered to the Gordion Museum in Yassıhöyük which is in charge of the objects discovered at Gordion. The Penn Museum has been doing research and archaeological excavations over the last seventy years within the framework of the Gordion Archaeological Project (GAP) and preserves the archives of these investigations. These have been digitised and are accessible to all scholars. As per the Turkish legislation, yearly reports are submitted to Turkey’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism and to the Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations.

ICOMOS considers that the documentation of the nominated property is adequate but recommends that a copy of all documentation produced during archaeological excavations be preserved on site, at the Gordion Museum, as well as at the Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, for safety reasons and to facilitate access to it both for academic and conservation aims.

Conservation measures
After several decades of excavations, since the end of the 19th century, a comprehensive conservation programme has been developed by the Gordion Archaeological Project (GAP), based on risk assessment. The conservation programme integrates academic research, site conservation, and training. It started in 2008, with funds allocated by the Penn Museum and the 1984 Foundation, a Philadelphia-based archaeological foundation, and its implementation continues to this day.

The ordinary maintenance of the site is provided by a local team from the village, who cut the grass and remove bushes as well as monitor the vegetation covering of the ruins. Tumulus MM, which is the largest and most important among the excavated ones, is continuously monitored and regularly maintained to avoid erosion and overgrowth of vegetation.

ICOMOS considers that the active conservation measures are adequate for the site and should be continued. In this regard, ICOMOS notes that much of the resources to carry out these works are provided by the Penn Museum and other American foundations. Should, for any reason, the commitment of international donors change, the State Party needs to guarantee the necessary resources to continue the conservation programme.

ICOMOS suggests that some conservation measures be put in place for the recently excavated Tumulus 52 and that the prospection holes scattered over the site be refilled to preserve the stratigraphy and avoid any potential accidents. It is further recommended that earth be added on the top of smaller tumuli to make them more visible and therefore less prone to inadvertent damage by ploughing.

Monitoring
A monitoring programme exists and is linked to the management plan objectives and actions. It defines a set of indicators, methods of measurement, periodicity and location of records.

ICOMOS observes that in some cases the timeframe for monitoring would need to be shortened, for example, as in the case of the condition survey, which is currently set at a six-year interval, to ensure that potential issues be detected in good time and do not worsen. Indicators to monitor the effectiveness of planned and implemented anti-looting measures would need to be developed and included in the monitoring programme. Indicators would also need to be further developed and better tied to attributes of the nominated property, to guarantee that monitoring can inform management improvement. Generic periodicity (i.e., ‘as appropriate’) would need to be better explained. Finally, a clear indication of the body responsible for the monitoring would be needed. For efficiency purposes, it is further suggested that the State Party consider facilitating the integration of the monitoring system with the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

ICOMOS considers that the documentation and conservation are adequate for the long-term conservation of the nominated property; however, it would be advisable that a copy of the archival documentation preserved at the Penn Museum be also kept in Turkey, at the Gordion Museum and/or the Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations.

The conservation programme for excavated areas is crucial for their integrity; therefore, its implementation should be continued and supported by a reliable flow of resources.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is further developed to encompass all the attributes of proposed Outstanding Universal Value
and adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire. Monitoring indicators of anti-looting actions would also need to be included in the monitoring programme.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
The nominated property is protected under the Law on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties n. 2863/1983 as amended. Part of the nominated property is designated a 1st degree archaeological conservation area, whilst the portion west of the Sakarya River is designated a 3rd degree archaeological conservation area. Three mounds and more than a hundred tumuli have been registered as individual cultural properties through different decisions. Policies for the protection of archaeological heritage are set out in the Regulation n. 658 on Protection and Use Principles of Archaeological Sites.

Protection mechanisms established by the law are complemented by spatial planning documents, their objectives, and provisions. Development in the 3rd degree archaeological conservation area is subject to provisions set out in the Gordion Conservation Development Plan (scale 1:5000) and in the Gordion Conservation Development Implementation Plan (scale 1:1000), which were approved in 2013 by the Ankara Regional Conservation Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties. These plans regulate development in terms of density, height, and function.

Upon ICOMOS’s request, the State Party has clarified that the protection of the buffer zone is guaranteed through national, regional, or local plans, as well as through designation as ‘agricultural land’, subject to provisions of the Soil Protection and Land-Use Law n. 5403/2005. Beyond the buffer zone, District Rural Settlement Development Plans include provisions that strengthen the agricultural character of the wider setting.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested further clarification on the protection mechanisms for the buffer zone and expressed its concerns about the size of the Special Project Area (ÖPA), which is planned to accommodate functions serving tourism purposes rather than the needs of the villagers.

The State Party informed in February 2022 that it agrees to designate Tumulus T67 as a 1st degree archaeological conservation area. On the other hand, the upgrade of the protection designation on the north-western and western limits from a 3rd to a 1st degree archaeological conservation area can begin only when the line of the fortifications between Küştepe and Küçük Höyük and of the Outer Town has been determined. The State Party on this matter offers an implementation timeframe that sets late December 2022 as the deadline for the approval of the extension of the 1st degree archaeological conservation area based on the results of the archaeological investigation planned for July-August 2022.

The State Party has confirmed that the area west of the nominated property designated under the 3rd degree archaeological conservation regime is not covered by any specific plan. However, safeguarding measures are in place to ensure that development is controlled during the transitional period between the designation and the development of the conservation plan.

Management system
The nomination dossier focuses on the illustration of the management plan rather than on the management system. Hence ICOMOS requested additional information. The State Party clarified that the management system relies on an existing legal and institutional framework. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations are key actors for the protection of the nominated property and its movable remains. The municipalities are responsible for regulating spatial development within conservation sites.

The Gordion Archaeological Project (GAP) excavation team from the Penn Museum submits yearly a request to carry out archaeological research and conservation activities and is granted authorisation if the requests meet all necessary requirements set out in the legislation.

Coordination between the excavation team and the Museum Directorate is guaranteed by an inspector, the representative of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism during the excavation season.

The legal framework in Turkey (Regulation on the Rules and Procedures of the Establishment and Duties of the Site Management and the Monument Council and Identification of Management Sites) provides for the establishment of management areas, for which coordination in planning and conservation is ensured among relevant actors and defined through a wide consultation process. Hence the management plan of the nominated property provides a framework for management and coordination mechanisms. As per the above-mentioned Regulation, a site manager was appointed in 2019, tasked with the coordination, programming, and implementation of management activities.

A Management Plan Coordination and Audit Board and an Advisory Board for the management of the nominated property were established in June 2020.

The Management Plan for the nominated property for the period 2021-2025 was approved by the Coordination and Audit Board in 2021. The plan sets out the objectives and actions needed to ensure the protection of the property and its sustainable use. It also defines the responsibilities of the relevant managing bodies in implementing its actions.

ICOMOS observes that a large role is played by the Penn Museum, with its significant financial investment in the research and conservation of the nominated property. Although the engagement of the Penn Museum and the collaboration between this institution and the Turkish authorities has been continuous over the last seventy
years, this international cooperation is subject to annual authorisations, according to the Turkish legal framework on archaeological concessions.

ICOMOS, therefore, asked confirmation in its Interim Report from the State Party that if for any reason the cooperation with the Penn Museum and its international partners were to cease, the State Party will deploy all necessary instrumental, financial and human resources to continue the study and conservation of the nominated property in the long-term.

The State Party confirmed that the cooperation with Penn Museum is based on the yearly renewal of permission, as per the national regulations on the matter. This is a quality control mechanism for the State Party to ensure that legislation and international good practice are respected. Therefore, as long as expected standards are respected, research permissions are renewed. In any case, the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums is fully committed to sustaining the management of the nominated property with adequate resources.

ICOMOS further notes that some of the actions envisaged in the management plan would need to be given higher priority, such as those related to Land–Use and Spatial Planning (i.e., actions 13.3, 14.2, and 14.3), as a response to local needs and aspirations, in line with the long-term preservation of the nominated property and its setting.

Risk management is addressed through coordinated activities included in the action plan of the management plan, which also envisages the preparation of an emergency plan.

Visitor management
The nomination dossier explains that strategies at the national and regional scales exist and include Gordion within a larger network of tourist destinations linked by common themes. Local spatial plans include provisions for the development of facilities and services that can serve both locals and tourists.

ICOMOS observes that developing infrastructure to support an increase in tourism at the nominated property needs to respect the built character and the socio-economic profile of Yassıhöyük as well as the needs of local inhabitants. In this regard, the guidelines for rehabilitating traditional buildings in the village and for in-fill constructions envisaged in the management plan would be very useful tools to guide development. ICOMOS also reminds of the provisions of paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* which invites the State Party to notify the World Heritage Committee about any development projects planned to be undertaken in the area of the nominated property.

ICOMOS recommended as an urgent action the preparation of a visitor management plan for Tumulus MM. The State Party explained that measures are in place to control visitor numbers at this site and the duration of the visits is limited in number and time. The wooden chamber is not accessible, and is subject to permanent monitoring of the indoor environmental parameters.

Community involvement
The additional information provided by the State Party in November 2021 clarifies that local communities have been involved in the project through the research and excavation and this has contributed to the long-term conservation of the nominated property. Local authorities and village representatives have been involved in the preparation of the management plan. Local communities are also represented in the Advisory and Coordination and Audit Boards. Specific actions in the management plan promote the participation of local communities in the management of the nominated property.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated property can be considered acceptable but could be strengthened by upgrading the designation of the entire nominated property from a 3rd to a 1st degree archaeological conservation regime and by preparing a conservation plan covering the entirety of the nominated property. In this regard, the decision to designate the area of Tumulus T67 as a 1st degree archaeological conservation area and the calendar presented by the State Party to approve this upgrading at the west and north-west of the nominated property by the end of 2022 is welcomed and supported by ICOMOS. This upgrading will have to be accompanied as a priority by strengthened anti-looting measures and mechanisms that combine measures to avoid deep-ploughing in archaeologically sensitive land and support/compensations to negatively impacted farmers. The protection in place for the buffer zone relies on large-scale planning instruments and legislation; although acceptable, it would benefit from additional mechanisms to guarantee that the rural character and agricultural use will be continued and to prevent looting. The additional clarification about the respective role of international research institutions and of the State Party confirms that the management system is adequate. A management plan has been approved and it forms a good basis for managing the nominated property and its buffer zone, although some reorganisation of outlined priorities may be beneficial. Current measures for managing visitors at Tumulus MM represent a good point of departure; however, ICOMOS stresses the need for visitor management for Gordion and the Tumulus is necessary, in view of increased numbers of visitors.
6 Conclusion

Located in Central Anatolia, Gordion is a multi-layered ancient settlement that has been nominated because it bears exceptional testimony to Phrygian culture, an Iron Age independent kingdom that emerged after the fall of the Hittites. The nominated property comprises the archaeological remains of the Citadel Mound, the Lower Town, the Outer Town and Fortifications, and several burial mounds and tumuli with their surrounding landscape. Several decades of archaeological excavations and research have revealed a wealth of remains that attest to the Phrygians’ construction and craftsmanship achievements, most of which are preserved in situ or have been rigorously documented. Despite some shortcomings in the comparative analysis, ICOMOS has found that Gordion bears exceptional witness, through its tangible attributes, associated archaeological vestiges and in situ remains, and the preserved condition of its surrounding landscape, of the Phrygian civilisation. Gordion has demonstrated that it fulfils criterion (iii) but not criteria (iv) and (vi), as neither the wording of the justification of these criteria nor the comparative analysis supports them. Some issues concerning the delineation of the boundaries have been resolved through the evaluation process and now the boundaries of both the nominated property and of its buffer zone are fully satisfactory.

The State Party is to be commended for the efforts deployed to nominate the entirety of ancient Gordion and to define an adequate area as a buffer zone for the protection of Gordion’s landscape, which includes “important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection”.

The preservation of the expansive, rural character of the landscape surrounding Gordion is critical to the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property and to allow the understanding and appreciation of its Outstanding Universal Value. To this aim, current protection mechanisms need to be consistently implemented and strengthened through adequate planning and land-use provisions aimed at preserving both the rural character and the archaeological remains in the landscape. In the light of the above, the scale of some development proposals for Yassihöyük would need to be reconsidered, and mechanisms to support farmers negatively impacted by protection measures for buried archaeology would need to be set out as a priority.

A long-term conservation programme of the excavated remains has been elaborated: its implementation has begun and its continuation is crucial.

Looting represents a concern in the outer parts of the nominated property and in the buffer zone. Upgrading the designation for the entirety of the nominated property to the highest level would strengthen protection mechanisms: the State Party has proposed a timeframe for this upgrading which seems viable.

A management system is in place and a management plan has been approved, forming a good basis for the management of the property, although some actions may need to be given higher priority, e.g., mechanisms to support farmers and the restoration of old traditional houses in the village.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property can be recommended for inscription; ancillary proposed recommendations would need to be carefully implemented and regularly reported.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Gordion, Turkey, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iii).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The archaeological site of Gordion ranks as one of the most important historical centres in the ancient Near East. Gordion lies approximately ninety kilometres south-west of Ankara in central Turkey, at the intersection of the great empires to the east (Assyrians, Babylonians, Hittites) and the west (Greeks, Romans). Consequently, it occupied a strategic position on nearly all trade routes that linked the Aegean and Mediterranean seas with the Near East. Gordion is an outstanding archaeological site for understanding the Phrygian civilisation and its achievements. The buildings of its Early Phrygian citadel, and the burial mounds of the city’s rulers, constitute the exceptional exemplars of monumental architecture in the Iron Age Near East.

The entrance to the Phrygian citadel features the best-preserved Iron Age (10th-8th centuries BCE) fortified gate complex that has yet been discovered, with stone masonry still preserved to a height of ten metres. The elite buildings within the citadel feature the earliest known coloured floor mosaics. The citadel’s industrial quarter, or Terrace Complex, was dedicated to large-scale food preparation and the production of textiles. With a length of over a hundred metres, the complex is without parallel in the ancient world. The roofing systems of the citadel’s buildings featured timber beams over ten metres in length with no internal supports, which is a daring, unparalleled feat of engineering for the period. The large concentration of monumental tumuli in the vicinity of Gordion creates an exceptional landscape of power, different from any other site in the Near East. The largest of the tumuli, the “Midas Mound” (Tumulus MM), rises to a height of fifty-three metres and the burial chamber within is the oldest known standing wooden building in the world (ca. 740 BCE), and inside it was found the best-preserved wooden furniture known from antiquity.
Criterion (iii): Gordion was the political and cultural centre of ancient Phrygia and today it represents the best surviving testimony to Phrygian civilisation, an Iron Age civilisation which developed in Anatolia and excelled in timber construction, woodcarving and metalwork.

Integrity

The property fully includes all the attributes that reflect its Outstanding Universal Value and is large enough for the context of these to be properly appreciated and understood. A long-term conservation programme under implementation ensures that an appropriate state of conservation is progressively achieved for all excavated areas. The tumuli and the unexcavated areas are overall in good condition, although smaller tumuli suffer from the effects of deep-ploughing. Measures are being envisaged to prevent their further erosion.

Authenticity

The level of authenticity of all attributes of the property is high. Seventy years of excavation and research have revealed a remarkable quality, quantity, and variety of archaeological remains, with high levels of preservation. There has been in situ consolidation work on parts of the structures on the Citadel Mound. The substantial amount of data recovered from the archaeological excavations has ensured that the archaeological remains subject to stabilisation/consolidation work retain a high level of authenticity in terms of material and design. All stabilisation work has been based on complete and detailed documentation.

Management and protection requirements

The property has the highest level of site designation, having been designated as a 1st and 3rd degree archaeological conservation area by the Decision No.1096, 16/02/1990 of the Ankara Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties. In addition, the status of 3rd degree archaeological conservation area designation ensures that the immediate setting of the Citadel Mound at the west and north peripheries is protected from adverse development. This is also protected and managed within the framework of the Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties Law (Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu) No. 2863, 23/07/1983 as amended by the Law No. 5226, 14/07/2004.

The buffer zone is protected through national, regional, or local plans and through its designation as agricultural land, subject to provisions of the Soil Protection and Land-Use Law n. 5403/2005. The wider setting is covered by District Rural Settlement Development Plans. A management system and mechanisms are in place and include a management plan: its implementation through a participative approach towards the local community will guarantee its effectiveness.

Proactive measures to prevent looting and mechanisms to support the farming community vis-à-vis the necessary restrictions to preserve buried archaeological deposits are key for the long-term sustenance of the integrity and authenticity of the attributes of Gordion’s Outstanding Universal Value, as is the preservation of the rural character of its immediate and wider setting.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Relocating the planned new museum outside the property’s boundaries,

b) Considering a reduction of the currently permissible development in the village of Yassıhöyük, particularly of the Special Project Area (ÖPA),

c) Implementing the proposed programme for upgrading the protection of all areas of the property from a 3rd degree to a 1st degree archaeological conservation area, according to the timeframe set out in the February 2022 additional information,

d) Preparing a conservation plan for all designated archaeological areas within the property and the buffer zone that are not currently covered by such a plan,

e) Ensuring regular patrolling in all areas included in the boundaries of the property and developing measures to prevent looting,

f) Developing strategies and mechanisms to support the farmers that may be affected by restrictions on agricultural activities to preserve underground archaeological remains,

g) Preparing a visitor management strategy for Gordion, with a particular focus on Tumulus MM, based on the outcomes of indoor parameters’ monitoring and modelling, to ensure that a potential increase of visitors does not negatively affect the Iron Age wooden chamber,

h) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the recommendations set out above;
Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (February 2022)
III Cultural properties

A Africa
New nomination
Extension

B Asia – Pacific
New nominations
Nomination referred back by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

C Europe – North America
New nominations
Nominations deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

D Latin America and the Caribbean
New nomination
Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops (Czechia)
No 1558rev

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops

Location
Ústecký Region
Czechia

Brief description
Located south of the Ore Mountains in north-western Bohemia, Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops has been shaped for centuries by the living tradition of cultivating and trading the world’s most renowned hop variety, which is used globally in beer production. The serial property is composed of a rural hop landscape and parts of the town of Žatec. The rural component (component part 01) of this cultural landscape consists of particularly fertile hop fields near the river Ohře that have been farmed continuously for hundreds of years, two historic villages and other buildings associated with the processing of hops, as well as related road and railway infrastructure. The urban component (component part 02) encompasses the medieval centre of Žatec and its 19th to 20th century industrial extension known as the “Prague Suburb” (Pražské předměstí). Together, the agricultural and architectural testimonies of both component parts illustrate the development of the agro-industrial processes and socio-economic system of growing, drying, certifying and trading hops from the Late Middle Ages to the present.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of two sites.

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021) paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

Included in the Tentative List
29 May 2007 as “Žatec – the Hops Town”

Background
This is a revised nomination. The World Heritage Committee examined the nomination of Žatec – the Town of Hops, Czechia, at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018):

Decision: 42 COM 8B.26

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/18/42.COM/8B and WHC/18/42.COM/INF.8B1,
2. Defers the examination of the nomination of Žatec – the Town of Hops, Czechia, to the World Heritage List, in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to deepen the research on the theme of hop growing and processing, as well as on the proposed property and its wider setting to bring into focus areas of potential significance and areas where traditional hop farming and processing and its impacts on the landscape can be identified and, if a robust case can be made, then reconsider the scope of the nomination;
3. Considers that any revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the site.

As recommended by the World Heritage Committee, an ICOMOS advisory process took place from January to July 2019.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

Comments on the natural attributes of this nominated property, their conservation and their management were received from IUCN on 4 March 2022.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 30 August to 5 September 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 27 September 2021 requesting further information about the summary of revisions, the concept and presentation of the nominated property, the legal protection, factors affecting the property, development projects and conservation works, management, and intangible heritage expressions related to the cultivation and processing of hops.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 12 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the justification for inscription, protection, conservation framework for urban areas and historic hop-processing buildings, conservation of landscape features of component part 01, residential development north of Stekník, Hop Lighthouse, and mid- and long-term financial resources.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 24 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.
2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The riparian landscape of the Žatec Basin south of the ridge of the Ore Mountains in north-western Bohemia offers very favourable climatic and natural conditions for the cultivation of hops. This region is the origin of the world’s most famous hop variety, named after the town of Žatec (German: Saaz). Of the highest aromatic quality, Saaz hops have been continuously cultivated, processed and exported here from the Late Middle Ages to the present and are currently used in beer production throughout the world. Constituting one of the primary sources of livelihood in this region, hop production and trade have visibly shaped both the rural and urban environments over centuries. The agricultural and architectural testimony of this evolved and continuing cultural landscape illustrates the entire hop cycle from growing to processing to international trade, as well as its development over the centuries and the socio-cultural context of the agro-industrial system.

This serial property consists of a rural and an urban component. Component part 01 – Saaz Hop Landscape – is located in the alluvial terrain. Component part 02 – Žatec – with its 19th to 20th century industrial expansion known as the “Prague Suburb” (Pražské předměstí), is located on an elevated promontory about five kilometres from the rural component. The meandering river Ohře, roads and railways routes that were formerly used to transport hops constitute historical connections between the complementary component parts within a shared buffer zone.

Saaz Hop Landscape (component part 01)

This rural component part encompasses the highest concentration of particularly fertile hop fields within the Saaz hop growing region located near the river Ohře to the east of Žatec. The State Party presents evidence that the selected fields have been cultivated continuously from at least the second half of the 18th century. Their appearance changes with the seasonal growth and harvest of hops. The fields’ trellises, which originally consisted of wooden poles with wires, have become a permanent feature since the introduction of concrete poles.

Within the fields lie two historic villages as well as historic road and railway infrastructure. The architectural testimony of rural hop production in the historic village core of Stekník includes residential and farm buildings (stables and granaries) and eleven rural hop drying kilns. It also includes the Stekník Chateau and in its vicinity a large granary from the 1780s which was adapted into a hop drying structure at the turn of the 20th century. Remains of early hop drying technology is preserved in several buildings throughout the nominated property.

Most farmsteads in Stekník, which typically enclose a square and a pond, date back to the planned reconstruction of the village after a fire in 1784. The buildings are mostly single-storey, brick built, with gabled roofs and a rectangular layout. Large openings in the roofs and smaller openings in the facades make up a ventilation system to regulate air flow when hops are dried in the lofts. Tower-like buildings testify to the addition of hop drying kilns to the farmsteads since the end of the 19th century.

The Stekník Chateau, with its terraced garden and preserved Rococo-style interiors, is part of the socio-cultural testimony of hop production and trade. First mentioned in 1539, the building was bought in 1681 by a burgher family active in hop production at Žatec. About 1765 it was reconfigured in the Rococo style. A contextual feature in Stekník is the Hop Research Institute. The institute was founded in 1925 and has been in the ownership of the Hop Growers Union since 1992. New buildings were erected in the back of the farmstead in the 1970s and 1980s, and the hop drying kiln was converted into workers’ accommodation.

Trnovany village is located along the railway line connecting Žatec and Louny and on the historic hop road from Žatec to Jimlín. The urban structure of the village is less well preserved, but it features some of the most iconic hop-processing buildings of the entire Saaz hop growing area in terms of location and technological and architectural design. Among them are a multi-storey hop drying kiln in Neo-Gothic design from 1908 and another early 20th-century four-chamber hop drying kiln in a farmstead with a residence, barn and stable near the confluence of the river Ohře and Blšanka stream. The railway station at Trnovany, with several hundred metres of railway line currently not in use, dates from 1878. The line was used to transport hops to the processing sites and warehouses in Žatec, and workers to the fields.

Žatec (component part 02)

This urban component part is characterised by historic monuments related to the history of hop production and trade. Among them are burgher houses with hop drying lofts (38) and kilns (2), hop warehouses (35), villas of hop entrepreneurs (13), various buildings for administration and certification and other buildings which are of particular importance as testimonies to the local socio-cultural context of hop production.

The historic centre of Žatec is characterised by its organic medieval urban plan. The mostly two-storey Baroque and Renaissance fabric relates primarily to hop production during the 17th to 19th centuries, when most burgher houses had hop gardens as well as drying lofts in the attics; many of the latter are still discernible in the town’s rooftops. Eight hop warehouses, most of them from the late 19th century, one of them with a hop packaging room and one
with a hop drying kiln, testify to the industrialisation of hop production and trade in the town’s historic centre.

Further socio-cultural features include a synagogue (built 1871-1872), which testifies to the Jewish community’s former involvement in hop production and trade, a Capuchin monastery (founded 1675), Žatec Municipal Theatre (built 1848), Elysium Cinema (built 1928-1932), Austro-Hungarian State Bank (built before 1914) and several hotels from the first half of the 20th century.

The Prague Suburb (Pražské předměstí) is a mid-19th to early 20th century industrial expansion to the south of Žatec’s historic centre. It consists of six groups of industrial hop-processing buildings and associated residential and administrative buildings. Its skyline is characterised by high-rising chimneys of the sulphur chambers that were once used for drying hops. The facades of the historic industrial buildings are rather unassuming, as they had to comply with restrictive local building codes. Their interiors, however, feature outstanding architectural and technological evidence of hop production, including typical ancillary wooden structures. The Prague Suburb also features the old Public Hops Certification Centre and the administration building of the new Certification Centre. Moreover, a Hop Museum hosts an extensive collection of machines and tools used at different historic stages for the production and trade of hops, including a large hop picking machine.

Both the nominated property and its buffer zone feature contextual buildings that include modern hop-related facilities and various historic buildings associated with hop and beer production. Beyond the urban expansions around Žatec, the buffer zone includes additional hop fields and historic villages with farmsteads.

The area of the two components totals 593.97 ha, with a single buffer zone of 3,330.94 ha. The boundary of component part 01 conforms to a designated Landscape Protection Zone. The boundary of component part 02 conforms to the protected Urban Heritage Reserve of the medieval town centre and the Urban Heritage Zone of the Prague Suburb. The shared buffer zone lies within the areas of the land-use plans of Žatec, Zálůžice, Staříkovice, Holedeč, Postoloprty, Liběšice, Lipno and Lišany. Its boundary follows topographic, administrative and functional features of the Žatec Basin.

In terms of this cultural landscape’s history, cultivation of hops here dates back to the 11th century, and was commercialised for international trade by the 14th century. This makes the area one of the oldest, if not the oldest, remaining regions of commercial hop cultivation in Europe. With the industrialisation of beer and hop production in the 19th century, Saaz hops gained fame on all continents. Saaz hops became a certified brand in the 19th century and has had “Designation of Origin” protection by European Union law since 2007. Hop production was again significantly modernised in the second half of the 20th century, which has resulted in the abandonment of many of the 19th century structures.

Apart from technological innovations in hop production, the landscape around Žatec and the town itself have been subjected to significant historical and socio-economic developments over the centuries. These include tremendous changes in population and ownership from medieval times. In the 1930s the Jewish population, which included many hop traders, was forced out, as was the predominantly German-speaking population after the Second World War, replaced by Czech, Sinti and Roma inhabitants.

Despite the demographic changes to which the nominated property testifies, hop production and trade continues to the present. Hence, associated agricultural and industrial traditions, research and educational practices as well as cultural traditions such as festivities persist. The nominated property therefore presents both tangible and intangible evidence of the development of hop production and trade from the Late Middle Ages to the present in both rural and urban contexts. The State Party provided additional information in November 2021 on how skills, knowledge and traditions have been passed on from generation to generation despite the significant demographic changes throughout the area’s history.

State of conservation
The nominated hop fields continue to be cultivated and are in an excellent state of conservation despite several modernisations in cultivation and harvesting techniques. However, many of the historic hop production buildings dating from before the mid-20th century, along with their related infrastructure and technological apparatus, are no longer used for their original purposes. The abandonment of some of the nominated or contextual buildings poses a threat to their preservation. Nevertheless, a number of the nominated buildings have been re-used and subjected to conservation works under the supervision of the state heritage authorities, particularly since the 1990s, and the process is ongoing. This includes the provision of interpretation and presentation facilities within several buildings and in the urban realm.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are development and environmental pressures. In general, development pressures are effectively checked by the legislative and administrative setup. A key challenge is the appropriate adaptive re-use of abandoned hop-processing buildings.

ICOMOS notes that the current Zálůžice Land Use Plan includes development rights that allow new residential buildings to be built along the entrance road to Stekník. A development of this type could be detrimental for the historic rural landscape and village.
According to the information provided, protection of the historic buildings from fire hazards is generally appropriate. ICOMOS however points out the particular vulnerability of wooden structures (as is the case with many of the buildings within the nominated property), particularly the abandoned ones.

In terms of environmental pressures, the risk of inundation in the parts of component part 01 that are located within the flood plain of the river Ohře has largely been remedied with the construction of a dam. However, ICOMOS considers that a response scheme should be developed in the case of a dam failure, unlikely as that may be.

Expected impacts of climate change on the hop fields are described by the State Party as minor, due to the area’s natural conditions. These potential impacts are also being addressed by the continuous research that is integrated into the local hop cultivation processes.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory and that factors affecting the nominated property are under control.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops bears an exceptional testimony of a strong, centuries-long living cultural tradition of hop growing and processing in Europe, concentrated on a relatively small area.
- Its traditional hop fields and buildings used for drying, packing, certifying and storing hops, as well as the related administrative, cultural and religious buildings, collectively, and parts of the historic transportation network of roads and railway, the river Ohře and other water streams represent an outstanding example of a unique type of a monoculture landscape associated with hop growing and processing in both rural and urban environments.
- It is an outstanding example of a continuous, never interrupted and, to date, traditionally used agricultural landscape with traditional human settlements (villages and a town) focused on a crop requiring rather specific climatic, growing and processing conditions.

Based on the nomination dossier the key attributes of the nominated property are: landscape features including the productive traditional hop fields with associated natural and topographic characteristics; urban, architectural and technological features of hop related settlement areas and buildings; parts of the historic hop related transportation network of roads, railway and water streams. Traditional knowledge of hop growing and processing developed over the centuries can be considered an intangible attribute.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed on the ground of the characteristics of landscapes that have been shaped by hop production or other food-related monocultures. It has examined twenty-four historical and contemporary hop-growing locations in Czechia, in neighbouring European countries and throughout the world, including Hallertau in Germany; Poperinge in Belgium; Kent in the United Kingdom; and George in South Africa, none of which is currently on the World Heritage List or on the Tentative Lists of States Parties.

The analysis also examines thirty-four single-crop agricultural landscapes on the World Heritage List and/or Tentative Lists, including numerous vineyards such as The Climats, terroirs of Burgundy (France, 2015, criteria (iii) and (vi)), coffee plantations such as Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia (Colombia, 2011, criteria (v) and (vi)), as well as rice terraces, tobacco plantations, tea plantations, olive groves, sugar cane plantations, and date palm plantations. The comparisons are made on the basis of adequate chronological, thematic and typological parameters.

Despite an overemphasis of rural landscapes over urban environments in the comparative analysis, ICOMOS considers that the analysis demonstrates the unparalleled quality and quantity of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in both rural and urban environments within the nominated property that are associated with the cultivation, processing and trade of hops. The nomination dossier also presents convincing evidence that the selected component parts of the living cultural landscape are the best representatives here of this tradition. It demonstrates that the serial property includes the longest farmed productive hop fields in the Saaz region and the best preserved and most outstanding architectural and technological testimony of the different historical phases of Saaz hop production.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (v).

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property provides a unique testimony to an uninterrupted centuries-long tradition of breeding, growing, processing and trading Saaz hops, globally the most sought-after hop variety. The way in which German, Jewish and Czech communities interacted in the past shaped the nominated property’s extraordinary rural and urban features and led to Žatec becoming a globally recognised centre of hops in the 19th century. The State Party stresses that the living tradition is an integral part of the local identity. This tradition is reflected in cultural and
scientific events linked to hops and in this region’s reputation within Czechia and abroad.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iii).

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property contains well-preserved historic architectural and technological testimony and a productive monoculture landscape associated with the growing, processing and trading of hops, which in its combination of rural and urban environments is globally unparalleled.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iv) and that the stages of human history illustrated by the property range from the Late Medieval to the present, with the strongest testimony residing in the 19th century industrialisation of hop production and the globalisation of its trade.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property represents an outstanding example of a traditional and still evolving hop landscape. Its symbiotically linked rural and urban environments have been visibly shaped since medieval times by the European cultural tradition of producing and trading hops, which relies on specific climatic and natural conditions. The State Party moreover stresses the local development of technical knowhow and skills related to hop production and their dissemination to other hop growing areas in the world.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (v), although there seems to be no conclusive evidence that the specific design of hop wire trellises currently used in the Saaz hop growing area and elsewhere originated in the Žatec region, as is claimed in the nomination dossier and supplemented in the additional information sent in February 2022. ICOMOS points out that the nominated property should not be considered as an evolving cultural landscape but as an evolved and continuing cultural landscape.

**Integrity and Authenticity**

**Integrity**

The integrity of the nominated property is based on how the cycle of growing, processing and trading hops for centuries has shaped these rural and urban environments. The nominated property is of an appropriate size to include all relevant attributes, most of which are in satisfactory state of conservation. These range from traditional hop fields and buildings used for drying, sulphuring, packing, certifying and storing hops, to parts of the historic transportation network of roads, railway, the river Ohře and other water streams. Only the extensive Ore mountain range, which contributes to the specific climatic conditions that favour hop cultivation, lies outside the nominated property or its buffer zone. Further tangible and intangible elements illustrate the socio-cultural context when Czech, German and Jewish communities interacted within the agro-industrial system up to the 1930s and 1940s. These include administrative, cultural and religious buildings as well as cultural practices.

The boundaries of the nominated property have been drawn to encompass the elements that best contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The selection of serial component parts is thus justified. The boundaries of the buffer zone are adequate to support the legislative and administrative setup which effectively protects the nominated property from adverse impacts.

Adverse effects of development and/or neglect can be found in limited and specific cases. Some developments since the mid-20th century, including urbanisation in the buffer zone, construction of modern facilities for hop production and modernisations of the agro-industrial system, have somewhat disrupted the scale and traditional structure of parts of the wider landscape and parts of the nominated villages, thereby contributing to a negative visual impact. In such cases, ICOMOS encourages the use of land-use planning tools which the State Party highlighted as means to restore characteristic landscape features. While most historic hop fields in the immediate vicinity of Žatec have fallen victim to urbanisation, many other developments within the nominated property are expressions of the continuity in hop production to the present day, and can be valued as such.

While recognising the existence of specific adverse effects, ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series of the nominated property as well as of each of the component parts is satisfactory.

**Authenticity**

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of the series as a whole to truthfully and credibly express its cultural values through its attributes. Within the context of the agro-industrial system of hop production and trade and its development throughout history, Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops can be said to be authentic in terms of its locations and setting, its forms and designs, its materials and substances, and, to a degree, its uses and
functions. The nominated property contains well-preserved attributes that truthfully illustrate how the cultural tradition had an impact on the historic parts of the town of Žatec as well as the rural landscape, including the two historic villages. There is also authentic evidence of the past involvement of German, Jewish and Czech communities in the hop production system.

While the spatial and architectural authenticity of the village centre of Trmovany is poor, it is high in Stekník despite the construction of modern hop facilities in its northern part. The layout and skyline of the rural landscape have kept their distinct seasonally changing character, despite the use of newer technology in the way hops are cultivated and harvested. Both the historic town centre of Žatec and its 19th-20th century industrial extension exhibit a high level of urban and architectural authenticity. In particular, some of the most recently abandoned historic hop-processing buildings, with their preserved technological apparatus, exhibit a high level of authenticity. Other historic buildings in the nominated property, however, have suffered from inappropriate modifications or neglect.

Authenticity extends to the continuity of location as well as use and function, which is given in the case of the nominated hop fields and the town of Žatec, although many of the historic buildings are no longer used for hop production. Žatec remains the seat of scientific institutions having global influence in the research and trade of hops. The Saaz hop growing region remains one of the world’s most productive areas for hops, which are globally exported. There is also continuity in expressions of intangible heritage ranging from farming techniques to cultural practices. Moreover, the strong association of the region and town with Saaz hops and the significant contribution of the heritage to the local cultural identity are factors of authenticity.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated property is generally high.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

**Boundaries**

There are 1,769 inhabitants within the boundaries of the nominated property (55 within component part 01; 1,714 within component part 02), 18,106 in the buffer zone, and 19,875 in total.

There is a logical basis for the selection of the nominated area in terms of encompassing the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and this underlying rationale been applied appropriately and consistently. The boundaries of the nominated property and the shared buffer zone are adequate and follow topographic, administrative or functional features of the rural and urban environments. The buffer zone provides an added layer of protection to the nominated property.

Due to the region’s topography, a visual connection between the two component parts is possible only from a few elevated positions such as the tower of the so-called Hop Lighthouse in Žatec. Both component parts can be seen together from elevated points located outside the nominated property in the wider landscape.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis adequately justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. ICOMOS also considers that the proposed justification for inscription under criteria (iii), (iv) and (v) is appropriate. The serial approach is justified, and the selection of component parts is appropriate. ICOMOS further considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

Records of the nominated property are kept in national and regional archives, various governmental agencies, educational institutions including libraries and museums and the local Hop Research Institute. A register of municipal hop-processing buildings in Žatec was prepared from 2007 to 2010 and is continuously updated. The most recent inventories and documentation projects for the nominated property and the hop-related heritage of the wider area which serve as baseline data include the nationwide “Documentation of the Historical Buildings for Hops Processing” (2016-2020), with results published online; a project for the documentation of the hop lofts in Žatec (2018-2022); and a project for the documentation of the warehouse chimneys at Žatec (2020-2022). ICOMOS commends the past and ongoing documentation of hop-related heritage within and beyond the nominated property.

ICOMOS strongly encourages expanding the existing inventories to encompass all historic buildings within the nominated property as a basis for monitoring and decision-making. ICOMOS also encourages the analysis and documentation of landscape features in component part 01 as a basis for future conservation activities.

**Conservation measures**

Ongoing and planned conservation measures for the nominated property and its spectrum of tangible and intangible attributes are based on a “SWOT” (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis presented in the management plan. These are geared to conserving the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Most of the future activities are oriented to the mid-term and long-term, as they require pre-investment preparations including securing funds. Day-to-day monitoring and maintenance are carried out by the predominantly private but also public owners and custodians throughout the nominated property.
Conservation measures that are ongoing or planned include restoration works at the Neo-Gothic kiln at Trnovany, at the Steknik Chateau, at the mayor’s house at Steknik and at the Capuchin Monastery at Žatec; conversion of a hop warehouse into a storage and trading centre in Žatec; planning for the revitalisation of the railway station at Trnovany for touristic purposes; urban planning for the village square at Steknik; restoration and conversion of the Baroque granary at Steknik into a tourism centre; provision of parking places outside the historic centre of Žatec; and initiation of projects on contextual elements located in the buffer zone. As mentioned in the Interim Report, ICOMOS encourages the development of a framework that will guide conservation activities and ensure their coherence throughout the nominated property. ICOMOS commands the ongoing and planned steps towards this aim described in the additional information.

One of the key challenges is the preservation and re-use of abandoned hop and beer production buildings within the nominated property (and beyond). An initiative that addresses this specific issue is a cooperative effort between the town management and the Department of Architectural Conservation in the Faculty of Architecture at the Czech Technical University in Prague (2018-2021). ICOMOS appreciates the development of guidelines for the conservation and adaptation of former hop-processing buildings, particularly in the Prague Suburb.

Responsibility for preserving the landscape character of the hop fields rests mainly with the local Hop Growers Union, which is also responsible for the Hop Museum, the Hop Research Institute at Žatec and the Hop Research Farm at Steknik. ICOMOS strongly encourages the involvement of a landscape professional competent in historic landscapes for future planning within component part 01. In addition, ICOMOS recommends the preparation of an analytical study of the characteristic features of the rural landscape as a basis for defining limits of change in future decision-making processes.

Monitoring
In Czechia, there is a uniform national methodological system for annual monitoring of the state of conservation of World Heritage properties. It is carried out by the National Heritage Institute with authorisation from the Ministry of Culture. For the nominated property, annual reporting will be performed by the Regional Department of the National Heritage Institute in Ústí nad Labem, which has already been involved in the nomination process. The nomination dossier provides a generic list of monitoring indicators that relate to the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. More detailed baseline data for future monitoring activities and improved key indicators would be advantageous. ICOMOS stresses the importance of having complete inventories as a basis for monitoring.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures and monitoring mechanisms respond to the vulnerability of the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, but can be further enhanced by expanding inventories and developing conservation guidance as initiated by the State Party. ICOMOS also considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
The two component parts are protected under different legal instruments, each of which is based on the Act of the Czech National Council on Monument Care No.20/1987 Coll. As mentioned in the additional information of November 2021, Component part 01 was designated as the Saaz Hop Landscape Heritage Zone during the nomination process (August 2021). It includes the Steknik Rural Heritage Zone of 1995. In component part 02, the historic town centre of Žatec, with 140 individually protected buildings, was designated an Urban Heritage Reserve in 1961. The Prague Suburb has been a designated Urban Heritage Zone since 2003. Maintenance and modifications to buildings and public spaces in all protected areas is subject to detailed review and official case-by-case approval.

Additional protection is given by the land use plans, especially those of Žatec and Zálůzice. These and further statutory regulations also encompass the buffer zone. The land use plans prevent major future changes in the protected areas, preserve the visual qualities and protect continuous hop growing. The hop fields are also protected by Act no. 97/1996 Sb. on Protection of Hops and by a Protected Designation of Origin appellation, both of which regulate the quality and processing of the hops. Compliance with the regulations is checked by the authorities at three levels: the municipalities of Žatec and Louny at the local level; the Regional Office of the Ústecký Region; and the Ministry of Culture and the National Heritage Institute at the national level.

As mentioned in the Interim Report, ICOMOS encourages the development of a coherent conservation framework to guide the heritage authorities’ case-by-case decisions on interventions within the nominated historic settlements and on the conservation and re-use of historic hop-processing buildings in the future. ICOMOS appreciates the steps the State Party has initiated in this regard according to the additional information.

ICOMOS likewise appreciates the statement No NPU-351/3413/2022 by the National Heritage Institute as it reinforces the height restrictions for constructions in the nominated property. ICOMOS stresses the importance of preventing future projects of comparable visual impact and height to that of the Hop Lighthouse within the property or in its vicinity.
ICOMOS moreover considers that potential future residential buildings along the entrance road to Steknik, for which the current Zalužice Land Use Plan provides development rights, could negatively impact the rural landscape and the village. ICOMOS encourages the State Party to further explore ways to modify the current legal status in light of the outstanding significance of the concerned landscape and to shift the focus on providing residential functions within the existing buildings of the historic village while maintaining the agricultural use of the concerned plots. Should development plans nevertheless arise for any of the eight plots in the future, ICOMOS strongly recommends Heritage Impact Assessments to be carried out.

Management system
In 2018 the National Heritage Institute published a management structure for World Heritage properties in Czechia. The management system of the nominated property corresponds with this structure. On the national, regional and local levels it involves the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry for Regional Development and Ministry of Agriculture, the Regional Office of the Ústecký Region and the Municipalities of Žatec and Louny. Responsible for management is the site manager – the deputy mayor of Žatec – who is supported by a steering group. The legal mandate for management is with the Municipal Office of Žatec, which is responsible for the state administration in heritage care and spatial planning for the entire nominated property.

The Žatec town council appoints a World Heritage coordinator and a town architect to support the site manager. These three persons are in charge of managing the nominated property. The supporting steering group includes all relevant stakeholders ranging from authorities and organisations involved in hop production to private and public owners of relevant real estate. In addition, the establishment of working groups in the areas of education, promotion and presentation and heritage conservation is planned. For the property’s nomination and its future management, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed by the relevant stakeholders.

ICOMOS considers it necessary to engage a landscape professional competent in historic landscapes to oversee the future conservation of landscape features in component part 01.

A management plan has been approved and sets out goals and measures for the effective protection of the property’s tangible and intangible heritage for the period 2020-2030.

According to the information provided in the nomination dossier and in additional information provided by the State Party, financial resources for the documentation, conservation and presentation of the property come from various private and public owners, including hop growers, as well as from international, national, regional and municipal budgets, endowment funds, sponsorships and crowdfunding campaigns. As requested in the Interim Report, the State Party presented information that these will also sustain the mid- and long-term conservation of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the management system is generally appropriate and effective, and is based on adequate human and financial resources. However, response schemes to flood risk in the case of component part 01 could be improved. ICOMOS moreover stresses the importance of carrying out Heritage Impact Assessments for development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the property, as required in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, paragraphs 110 and 118bis.

Visitor management
In the urban component, a wealth of commendable visitor and interpretation facilities, including the Hop Museum in Žatec, are already operational, and further projects and activities are planned. A tourism strategy in line with national tourism planning is under development. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, some touristic and educational activities have been realised since the submission of the nomination dossier, including the production of promotional and informational material and a website in Czech and English. Most interpretation vehicles and on-site visitor facilities for the rural component part, with the exception of the Steknik Chateau, are still in the planning phase.

Community involvement
The nomination dossier describes the involvement of various stakeholders in the nomination process and in the management of the nominated property. According to the information provided, the public was well informed of the property’s nomination and is generally supportive. ICOMOS notes that there have been no concentrated attempts to involve organisations representing groups of people who left the region in the 1930s (Jews) or after the Second World War (Germans). ICOMOS recalls the importance to include stakeholders that may have an interest in, and connection with the nominated property, and that are not involved yet in the protection and management of the property, in line with paragraphs 40 and 117 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection and management system are adequate.
6 Conclusion

Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops testifies to the entire cycle of cultivating, processing and trading the world’s most renowned hop variety and illustrates how this living tradition has shaped both rural and urban environments for centuries.

ICOMOS considers that the applicability of criteria (iii), (iv) and (v) has been demonstrated, and that the serial composition as well as the boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone are adequate.

ICOMOS considers that, overall, the legal protection, management system and available resources are adequate to preserve the nominated property. A number of recommendations to improve the mid- and long-term conservation of both component parts of the nominated property are presented below.

Overall, ICOMOS commends the manner in which this nomination has been revised as a consequence of the ICOMOS advisory process in 2019.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops, Czechia, be inscribed, as a cultural landscape, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv) and (v).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis
Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is situated in the north-western part of Czechia in a location that provides ideal conditions for growing hops, a central aromatic ingredient in beer production. It consists of two component parts that together illustrate the entire cycle of cultivating, processing and trading the world’s most renowned variety of hops. Component part 01 – Saaz Hop Landscape – consists of rural hop fields and the small villages of Stekník and Trnovany, and component part 02 – Žatec – consists of the historic urban centre of the town of Žatec (Saaz in German) along with its 19th century industrial suburb. Both component parts are geographically close, linked by the river Ohře.

This evolved and continuing cultural landscape and its built heritage associated with hop growing and processing is testimony to a tradition that has been practiced here for more than 700 years and still continues to this day, despite tremendous demographic changes at various points in its history. The features of this striking landscape range from traditional hop fields, to buildings used for drying, packing, certifying and storing hops, to parts of the historic transportation network of roads, railway, the river Ohře and other watercourses. These also include supporting administrative, cultural and religious buildings, as well as cultural practices. This landscape, with specific buildings and structures linked to hop production, demonstrates close interactions between the rural hop growing landscape and its urban base.

Criterion (iii): Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops bears exceptional testimony to a strong centuries-long cultural tradition of growing and processing the world’s most renown hops variety. Evidence of this testimony is found in the spatial configurations, urban patterns and buildings of this evolved and continuing cultural landscape. The town of Žatec became a globally recognised centre of hops in the 19th century as a result of innovations in hop production and flourishing global trade undertaken by local Czech, German and Jewish communities. This renown continues to the present day. The exceptional testimony of this cultural landscape is expressed in its traditional hop fields and buildings used for drying, packing, certifying and storing hops, as well as the related administrative, cultural and religious buildings.

Criterion (iv): Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is an outstanding example of a monoculture landscape. Associated with hop growing and processing in both rural and urban environments over a period of more than 700 years, the property includes outstanding examples of agricultural landscapes, buildings, architectural and technological ensembles. These examples illustrate various methods of hop breeding, drying, preservation, packaging and quality certification that were developed here since the Late Middle Ages and climaxed in the 19th and early 20th century.

The rural landscape is particularly defined by hop fields, with their typical trellises of poles and wires. It also includes rural settlements with preserved farm buildings and barns where hops were dried and stored, and the former residence of the local landlord, the Stekník Chateau, which is a dominant landmark in the landscape as it rises above the still-used historic hop fields. The urban centre of this hop-growing landscape is the town of Žatec, with its municipal warehouses, hop drying kilns, sulphuring chambers, and hop packaging and certification facilities. The town’s exceptional skyline is accentuated by the vertical dominants of the hop-drying kilns and the tall chimneys of the sulphuring chambers.

Criterion (v): Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is an outstanding example of a traditional agricultural landscape and traditional human settlements related to growing a crop with very special requirements for climate, cultivation and processing. It illustrates continual interactions between people and their environment over a very long period of time in a well-preserved example of the cultural tradition of hop breeding, cultivation and processing in Europe.

The technical knowhow and skills developed and refined here are well demonstrated by the hop fields with their characteristic trellises, drying kilns and other hop-related facilities that were built in the rural area. The processing of the hops grown here had a defining influence on the town
of Žatec and its Prague Suburb, where very specific typologies of industrial facilities were created by communities associated with the hop processing business, as well as the residential buildings, educational and religious institutions and amenity centres needed to support this agro-industrial system.

Integrity
The serial property includes all the elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value. Its boundaries adequately ensure the complete representation of the entire cycle of growing, processing and distributing hops.

The two component parts contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the site as a whole. Among the most distinctive attributes of component part 01 are the hop fields around the small villages of Steknik and Trmovany. These illustrate the growing and initial processing of hops. The village of Steknik features well-preserved typical brick buildings surrounding a central village square, and an eponymous chateau. A transportation network based on historic roads, railways and water streams enabled access to the hop fields and facilitated the export of hops. This landscape has changed little over the centuries and its current use reflects its historical use.

Component part 02, the historic centre of the town of Žatec and its industrial Prague Suburb, illustrates the further processing, certification and distribution of hops. This urban environment includes all the elements needed to illustrate the last stages of the industrialised “hop cycle,” as well as the administrative and socio-cultural infrastructure that testifies to the specific societal contexts of hop production in Žatec. Traditional knowledge of hop growing and processing developed over the centuries can be considered an intangible attribute. The property does not suffer unduly from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

Authenticity
Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops is authentic in terms of its locations and setting, its forms and designs, its materials and substances, and, to a degree, its uses and functions. The locations, setting and function of the hop-growing rural landscape in component part 01 have been fully preserved. The locations of hop fields have not changed, nor has the presence of watercourses and historic communication networks. Rural settlements that served as bases for the farmed fields have largely preserved their forms. The built environment has a high degree of authenticity, including individual buildings, farmsteads, the former estate of the local landlord (Steknik Chateau) and the large Baroque granary at Steknik, which was later converted into a hop drying kiln.

The buildings in the historic centre of Žatec (component part 02) display authentic signs of an older traditional method of drying hops in lofts. The authentic forms of the buildings are closely monitored during all refurbishment and restoration projects. Even more recent hop-related buildings with unique functions concentrated in a small area of the Prague Suburb have mostly been preserved. Some of them no longer serve their original function but remain in a relatively stable condition, authentic in form and materials and with many specific details preserved. They are expected to undergo sympathetic conversion.

Management and protection requirements
Both component parts of the property are protected under the National Act no. 20/1987 Coll. on the National Heritage Protection, as amended, in combination with other protective regimes stemming from this Act. At present, the cultural values are administratively protected by Land Use Plans of the village of Zálůžice and the town of Žatec. For the hop fields of component part 01, a Landscape Heritage Zone has been outlined for designation and declared by the Measure of General Nature N. 1/2021 in August 2021. The cultural values of Žatec in component part 02 are fully protected by two decrees of the Ministry of Culture which, in several steps, delineate joint heritage areas.

The hop fields located in the property and its buffer zone are also protected under Act no. 97/1996 Sb. on Protection of Hops and safeguarded under a Designation of Origin appellation, both of which regulate the quality and processing of the hops.

Management is the responsibility of the Municipal Office of Žatec through a steering group, the core team of which was established at the municipal level in 2013. The steering group includes the key stakeholders active in the property, and is assisted by working groups focused on specific areas of the management plan. A management plan sets out goals and measures for the effective protection of the property’s tangible and intangible heritage for the period 2020-2030. No major changes are envisaged for component part 01 or the urban structure of component part 02. A key issue that will require long-term attention is finding appropriate uses for historic hop processing buildings that have been left vacant or underutilised in the wake of evolving processes.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Expanding the existing inventories to encompass all historic buildings within the property as a basis for monitoring and decision-making,

b) Developing a coherent conservation framework for the urban component part and for hop-processing buildings throughout the property, including guidelines for the conservation and reuse of empty hop warehouses in the Prague Suburb,

c) Involving a landscape professional competent in historic landscapes for future planning within component part 01,
d) Preparing an analytical study of the characteristic landscape features of component part 01 as a basis for defining limits of change for future conservation and development,

e) Preventing future projects of comparable visual impact and height to that of the Hop Lighthouse within the property or in its vicinity,

f) Reconsidering the residential development rights along the entrance road north of Stekník, as is currently granted by the Zálužice Land Use Plan and carrying out Heritage Impact Assessments should specific development plans arise for any of the eight concerned plots in the future,

g) Adhering to the principles of good governance by fostering the inclusion of stakeholders not yet participating in the protection and management of the property, in line with paragraphs 40 and 117 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,

h) Developing and implementing risk preparedness plans for the property, such as fire protection for historic buildings and other attributes, and flood protection in the event of a dam failure;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
Talayotic Menorca
(Spain)
No 1528rev

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Talayotic Menorca - A cyclopean island odyssey

Location
Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands
Island of Menorca
Spain

Brief description
The nominated serial property is located on Menorca, the
eastern-most island in the Balearic archipelago in the
western Mediterranean Sea. Nine component parts
encompass a high density of archaeological sites situated
in agropastoral landscapes in the Migjorn and Tramuntana
regions of the island. A testimony to the occupation of
the island by prehistoric communities, these sites display a
diversity of prehistoric settlements and burial places. The
materials, forms and locations of structures dating from the
Bronze Age (1600 BCE) to the Late Iron Age (123 BCE)
show the evolution of a “cyclopean” architecture built with
very large blocks of stone, and of a spatial organisation that
suggests the emergence of a hierarchical society. Distinct
astronomical orientations and visual interconnections
between prehistoric structures indicate the existence of
networks with possible cosmological meanings. Together,
these archaeological sites and their associated landscapes
provide a window into this region’s prehistoric island
cultures.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I
of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial
nomination of nine sites.

Included in the Tentative List
29 January 2013 as “Talayotic Culture of Minorca”

Background
The World Heritage Committee examined the nomination
of Talayotic Minorca, Spain, at its 41st session (Krakow,
2017):

Decision: 41 COM 8B.27

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/17/41.COM/8B and
   WHC/17/41.COM/INF.BB1;
2. Defer the examination of the nomination of Talayotic
   Minorca, Spain, on the World Heritage List in order to allow
   the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World
   Heritage Centre, if requested, to:

   a) Clarify the definition of ‘Talayotic’ and its reference to a
      ‘culture’ or a ‘period.’ In addition to the focus on monuments
      and architecture, a wider range of archaeological
      evidence, including stone and metal tools, ceramic
      vessels and other equipment, as well as faunal data and
      paleoenvironmental indications should be brought into
      consideration,
   b) Reformulate the nomination to consider either larger
      components with multiple archaeological sites and
      landscape elements or a series of the most
      representative Talayotic sites drawn from Minorca and
      Majorca. In either case, the time frame of the series
      should be restricted,
   c) Undertake a refocused comparative analysis based on
      the revised arguments for Outstanding Universal Value.
      It should be structured to look first if necessary at an
      internal analysis that considers sites in Majorca, then at
      near Mediterranean islands as far as Malta, and finally at
      near Mediterranean coastlines, followed by eastern
      Mediterranean islands and coasts, the rest of Europe and
      other sites around the world. As well as an emphasis on
      architecture, it should include reference to other types of
      material culture such as pottery and metallurgy, and
      these should be used to place the Talayotic sites in a
      continent-wide context,
   d) Create a common management structure which will be
      responsible for coordination and effective implementation
      of the management system for the nominated property as
      a whole,
   e) Create a Management Plan for the site, which would be
      distinct from the Island Historic Heritage Management
      Plan. The Management Plan should include a detailed
      Conservation Policy to guide conservation interventions,
      ongoing maintenance work and archaeological research.
      A section on visitor management should address visitor
      experience, controlling visitation at some components
      and the promotion of responsible tourism,
   f) Establish a Landowners Forum or equivalent that would
      meet at least twice a year to provide feedback and
      information to landowners about the management of the
      site,
   g) Create a regular reporting structure for the monitoring
      program in order to gather the results of the different
      monitoring activities on a periodic basis and assemble
      them into a common location;

3. Considers that any revised nomination would need to be
   considered by an expert mission to the site.

Based on the World Heritage Committee’s decision, the
State Party requested advisory assistance from ICOMOS.
A meeting between representatives of ICOMOS and
parties responsible for preparing the nomination dossier
was held on the Island of Menorca in November 2017.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS
International Scientific Committees, members and
independent experts.

Comments on the natural attributes of this nominated
property, their conservation and their management were
received from IUCN on 4 March 2022.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the
nominated property from 4 to 10 October 2021.
2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

The nominated serial property consists of nine component parts located on the Island of Menorca, one of the Balearic Islands in the western Mediterranean Sea. The component parts feature a high density of 280 archaeological sites, twenty-three of which have been identified as being “key” attributes. These sites showcase a diversity of cyclopean architecture – structures built of very large blocks of stone without mortar – in a wide range of typologies that illustrate the evolution of the island’s dry stone building practices for approximately 1,500 years, from the Bronze Age (1600 BCE) to the Late Iron Age (123 BCE).

These characteristic cyclopean structures include hypogea (artificial caves), talayots (large cone-shaped structures, generally truncated), taules (T-shaped constructions formed by a large rectangular supporting stone slab and an inverted and truncated pyramidal capital), taula enclosures (religious structures comprised of an apsidal ground plan and concave facade), navetas (which display an inverted ship shape, and in some cases rounded ground plans), circular houses, and hypostyles (roofs supported by pillars). Orientations and interconnections suggest possible cosmological meanings.

Prehistoric settlements, water management systems, and natural and artificial caves used as burial and sacred sites illustrate the interaction between prehistoric communities that inhabited Menorca and their natural environment, characterised by insularity and two distinct geomorphological regions: the topographically uneven Tramuntana in the north of the island, formed in the Palaeozoic and Mesozoic eras; and the relatively flat Migjorn in the south, carved by ravines and formed in the Miocene epoch. These distinct geomorphologies have influenced the patterns of habitation on the island, as shown by a higher density of prehistoric remains in the Migjorn region: eight of the nine component parts (C1-C8) are located here, versus one component part (C9) in the Tramuntana region.

In eight of the nine component parts (C1-C7 and C9), the settings of the archaeological sites are included within their boundaries. These cover diverse landscapes of farming and grazing land, wild olive tree forests and other characteristic vegetation (holm oaks, pines) that relate to the traditional activities of the communities on the island in the past and today. Dry stone walls dividing llocs or traditional farms testify to the continuous evolution of this building technique on the island.

Plains of Ciutadella (Component C1)

The settlements of Torretrencada and Torrellafuda in Component C1 exhibit diverse periods in the use of cyclopean building techniques, including four talayots that were later connected to circular houses and taula enclosures. The Es Tudons naveta, located in the northeast portion of this component part, is an icon of the island’s identity, having stood here since the Bronze Age.

Southwest area (Component C2)

The settlement of Son Catlar contains the largest taula enclosure excavated so far, with circular houses and material evidence of the life of prehistoric communities having been discovered. A quarry and eight talayots are located in this component part, as well as primitive settlements and funeral sites in caves. The settlements of Son Saura and La Cova are located toward the Es Prat de Son Saura wetland. This component connects the plains landscape to the sea.

Western Migjorn area (Component C3)

The village of dwelling navetas Son Mercer de Baix (1400 BCE) is conserved between the ravines of Trebalúger and Son Fideu. It marks the shift to cyclopean architecture on Menorca, and contains the only dwelling naveta with a stone roof, Cova des Moro. Cova des Pas provides evidence of collective funeral practices developed in burial caves on the cliff between 1200 BCE and 800 BCE.

Central-south area of ravines (Component C4)

Between the ravines of Torrevalle and Son Boter, the villages of Sant Agusti, Torrenova d’en Jordi Marc, Santa Clara and Biniocrell de Baix exhibit remains of taules and circular houses. A hypostyle hall is found in Galliner de Madona, and among twelve talayots, Ses Bigues de Mata stands out due to its large interior chamber. Among the
artificial caves or hypogea encountered in this component part, la Cova des Coloms has provided material evidence of Early Iron Age usage. The wetland Prat de Son Bou connects the pastures to the sea.

Area between the ravines of Torrevella and Cala en Porter (Component C5)
Torre d’en Galmés presents circular houses, a developed water system and silos for food storage, as well as funerary uses within the settlement. It also illustrates the relationship between the landscape and the skyscape where archaeo-astronomical studies have suggested the visual interrelationships between talaiots hold symbolic meanings. The unexcavated Na Comerma de Sa Garita is thought to be a religious building. Cala en Porter, a ravine in the coast, showcases a large necropolis made of artificial caves. Also located in this component part is a well-preserved megalithic dolmen that predates the island’s cyclopean architecture.

South-east area – Alaior (Component C6)
The settlement Torralba d’en Salort preserves a taula enclosure, while So na Caçana is the only excavated settlement presenting two taula enclosures, that could have a religious function. As well, water engineering systems such as the well of Na Patarrà illustrate the complexity of the settlements’ organisation. Rafal Rubí is the only place where two burial navetas are located. The Calescoves necropolis exhibits artificial caves used as funeral places from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age.

South-east area – Maó (Component C7)
The villages of Talatí de Dalt, Torelló and Cornia Nou exhibit talayots, in some cases taula enclosures, circular houses and water works, preserving urban traits in their fabric.

Prehistoric village (Component C8)
Trepucó is one of the largest prehistoric villages on Menorca and was the first one to be excavated. It contains a taula enclosure, circular houses and two talayots. It is the only component part that does not include an associated landscape.

North-west area of Tramuntana (Component C9)
This component part has a different geological substrate than the other component parts. It forms part of the core zone of the Menorca Biosphere Reserve, and contains S’Albufera des Grau, a wetland habitat of diverse species of fauna and flora, as well as Sa Mitja Lluna in l’illa d’en Colom, a prehistoric copper mine. The settlement Sa Torreta preserves a taula enclosure and a talayot.

In this revised serial nomination, the State Party has developed a substantially different rationale for the nominated serial property by reducing the number of component parts and by including the landscape settings of the archaeological sites proposed for inclusion. The area of the nine component parts totals 3,527 ha, with the two buffer zones totalling 19,014 ha.

The primary focus of the nominated serial property is the evolution of the island’s built environment from the emergence of cyclopean architecture in the Bronze Age to its development into a diversity of typologies throughout the Iron Age, until the Roman occupation of the island. Prehistoric settlements showcase the different stages of development in the cyclopean architecture and changes in spatial organisation that have been studied based on material evidence, including pottery, fabric, food, domestic tools and human remains.

According to research, Menorca was the last of the Balearic Islands to be settled. Evidence found in caves and megalithic architecture such as dolmens provide proof of a stable population by 3000 BCE. The island’s Naviform period (1600 BCE to 1200 BCE) marks the appearance of cyclopean structures, notably navetas. They were used by people to organise themselves into stone-built settlements located in prominent areas, both in the interior of the island and on the coasts. During this period, ceramic and bronze techniques were developed and distinctive funeral practices emerged, as shown by the construction of burial navetas and sanctuary caves.

The occupation of the island spread to the northwest and south, with a clear preference for the Migjorn region. Collective burial sites and architecture show no sign of a hierarchical society. Around 1200 BCE, talayots appeared and were subsequently constructed all over the territory; 393 of these still survive. They suggest that a hierarchical organisation had emerged, articulating the landscape of the island.

The concentration of the population around talayots is one of the most significant traits of this period, when the coastal settlements of the Naviform period were progressively abandoned. In this new period, known as Talayotic (1200 BCE to 500 BCE), the settlements were built in high places and the funeral areas in depressions, denoting a duality in spatial organisation. Groups of people from this time practised a mixed farming-grazing economy with an increasing importance of livestock and products derived from them, to the detriment of growing cereal crops. Food production and storage started to be based on a centralised system.

Increasing external relations are documented, such as the development of sailing routes connecting the Balearic Islands to the Iberian Peninsula. The period known as Late Talayotic (500 BCE to 123 BCE) began with the transformation of the habitat into a more complex and standardised uniform space. Taulas, a typology specific to Menorca, were built in this period. They were surrounded by taula enclosures. These were connected to circular houses, all of which developed into larger villages, many of them walled. Protective wall systems seem to be associated with the occupation of the island by pirates, the opening of the island to external influences, and the larger context of the Punic Wars (264 BCE to 146 BCE).
**State of conservation**  
The current state of conservation of the archaeological sites and associated landscapes varies, as they have not been maintained following the same conservation measures. Materials, in the case of the prehistoric structures, and land use and land cover, in the case of associated landscapes, have undergone independent maintenance according to ownership. In general, the state of conservation of the prehistoric structures is good, depending on the building techniques and the type of stone used in relation to the location and exposure to weathering agents such as wind, water and sand, and plant colonisation. Aerial photographs comparing the component parts’ landscapes from 1956 to 2015 show that the land patterns, especially the land divisions, have been maintained throughout these years, while the cover of wild olive trees has increased due to a reduction in livestock and pastoral activities.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good.

**Factors affecting the nominated property**  
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are environmental pressures related to vegetation growth, rainfall, and water and wind erosion. These are linked to the island’s environmental conditions and exposure to the sea. Urban development connected with tourism could potentially emerge as a detrimental factor in the future. Socio-economic changes and rural population decline are also potential factors that could affect the nominated property’s landscape setting.

Wild olive tree colonisation of the landscape is noticeable in several of the component parts. Vegetation growth has an impact on views and increases the risk of forest fires in the dry season. The agroecosystem has been affected by agro-industrial intensification (Components C1 and C2) and agricultural abandonment (Components C3-C7).

Soil erosion increases in the wake of agricultural abandonment, as does a lack of maintenance of dry stone walls and hedges. The impact of visitor flow on the paths can increase erosion and flooding risks. These factors could eventually affect the stability of the archaeological structures in the nominated property.

Wind and sea spray in the northern Tramuntana region have an impact on the vegetation and stones of archaeological sites that are exposed to the prevailing wind, forming grooves, small alveoli, and the possibility of peeling and flaking of the stone surface.

There are currently no significant impacts on the nominated property that can be attributed to climate change, according to the State Party. However, some of the above-mentioned environmental factors are projected to increase their impacts on the nominated property in the future as a result of climate change.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested the State Party to clarify whether specific plans for risk management and climate change adaptation were planned to be developed, based on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property and the potential impacts of climate change. In February 2022 the State Party replied that aspects associated with risk management and climate change are part of the management strategy for the nominated property, and that, in the event of an inscription, a dedicated World Heritage property risk assessment and management plan would be prepared. ICOMOS considers that an in-depth study of the potential impacts of climate change on the nominated property would support the development of adaptation and mitigation measures specific to the component parts. Developing climate scenarios is therefore suggested.

There is a potential for adverse impacts from urban development in traditional towns and tourist areas, especially for Components C7 and C8, which are located near urbanised areas. The surroundings of Component C7 are affected by the Menorca airport’s service roads. However, there are no plans to expand the airport. In Component C6, uncompleted roadworks are affecting the Rafal Rubí burial navetas landscape views. The State Party indicates that mitigation actions are envisioned.

The State Party’s one-hundred percent renewable energy objective for Menorca by 2050 means that wind and solar farms will be built. According to the State Party, none of these will be constructed within the nominated serial property or its visible surroundings, with the exception of small self-consumption solar facilities with little or no visual impact.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good and that factors affecting the nominated serial property are largely environmental, some of which might worsen in the future due to climate change. Risk management strategies and climate change adaptation plans that are specific to the nominated property need to be developed.
3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated serial property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- It illustrates a unique cultural process that diverged from the path taken by other cultures in the Balearic Islands and the Mediterranean Sea.
- The component parts contain the finest works of an island culture characterised by original cyclopean architecture that evolved in relative isolation. The high concentration of prehistoric archaeological sites in the nominated serial property and the continuity of the stone-working tradition exhibited in the vernacular dry stone walls represent the continuous interaction of Menorcan communities with their traditional agropastoral landscape.
- The nominated serial property possesses a remarkable and representative collection of prehistoric cyclopean monuments and sites, including settlements, burial sites, sanctuaries and sacred places that have survived in a good state of conservation. Some of these structures – taulas, circular houses and navetas – are unique to Menorca and illustrate the relationship of these prehistoric communities with the cosmos, as reflected in unique orientation patterns and alignments with the sky.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated serial property can be grouped as follows: cyclopean monuments, sites, and associated landscapes. In some component parts, intangible attributes are also described.

The subtitle of the nominated property, “A cyclopean island odyssey,” implies the concept of a journey, which contradicts the notions of a millennium-long insularity and isolation that are said to characterise this place. ICOMOS considers that a more accurate name for the nominated property could be “Prehistoric Sites of Talayotic Menorca”.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed around qualitative assessments of four main parameters: a geological/cultural context (island/insularity); a typology (cyclopean architecture); the theme of cultural astronomy; and the theme of cyclopean island odyssey. Chronological and geographical frameworks have not been restricted: properties throughout the world inscribed on the World Heritage List, sites included in the Tentative Lists of States Parties, and sites not on the World Heritage List or the Tentative Lists are compared to the nominated property.

The State Party indicates that the appropriate geo-cultural region is the Mediterranean in general, and the islands of the Mediterranean in particular, and that as an island territory the nominated property also has a global aspect. While the settlements of the western Mediterranean’s Balearic Islands initially had traits in common, Menorca witnessed a substantial break from neighbouring Mallorca in terms of settlement layout and construction of dwellings. The islands of Ibiza and Formentera (Spain) also developed their own distinctive traits, and few parallels with Menorca can be drawn after about 1200 BCE. Elsewhere in the western Mediterranean, comparable cyclopean sites and structures can be found on the islands of Sardinia (Su Nuraxi di Barumini (Italy, 1997, criteria (i)(iii)(iv)), Malta (The Megalithic Temples of Malta (Malta, 1980, criterion (iv)) and Corsica (France). In these cases, there are more differences than similarities with the nominated property, in terms of key attributes. The same can be said for the eastern Mediterranean, regarding sites such as Crete and the Ionian and Cycladic islands (Greece).

ICOMOS considers that the parameters established by the State Party are too wide to frame a well-focused comparative analysis. Included are sites that belong to different periods and/or inappropriate regional frameworks, such as the Hawaiian marine protected area Papahānaumokuākea (United States of America, 2010, criteria (iii), (vi), (viii), (ix) and (x)). The State Party used the ICOMOS thematic studies on Cultural Landscapes of the Pacific Islands (2007) and The Cultural Heritages of Water in the Middle East and Maghreb (2017), both of which relate to different geo-cultural contexts, even if they deal with some of the attributes proposed in the nomination. Furthermore, the analysis includes a comparison of vernacular dry stone walls, which are not the focus of the nomination.

The rationale for choosing the component parts, in terms of comparing them with other similar components and justifying the choices made, was not included in the comparative analysis. The State Party explained in additional information sent in November 2021 that the selected component parts contain the best representations of unique and exclusive cyclopean structures that do not exist anywhere else but Menorca, namely, burial navetas, taula sanctuaries and circular houses. Density and diversity of archaeological sites, an adequate representation of talayots, water culture and prehistoric mining were also considered. The series excludes areas subject to more intensive use, and buildings of recent construction. ICOMOS requested further information to clarify the rationale for selecting Component C8, which contains the prehistoric settlement of Trepucó alone, without any associated landscape. The State Party clarified that an exception was made in this case, due to the persistence of this archaeological site over time and its emblematic nature related to the history of the island.

ICOMOS considers that a comparative analysis that is based on the specific criteria and attributes proposed by the State Party, combined with the insularity that underpins the nominated property and a specific time period (Bronze Age to Late Iron Age), could have supported a better focused analysis. Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that the existing comparison with sites located in the Mediterranean region is adequate for
the purpose of demonstrating the exceptionality of the nominated property within its geo-cultural region, based on the potential Outstanding Universal Value and the related features and attributes being compared.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

**Criteria under which inscription is proposed**

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (iv).

**Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;**

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated serial property exhibits a unique testimony to a cultural tradition of dry stone building that goes back to prehistoric times. Prehistoric archaeological sites, high in density and variety, located in the nine nominated component parts illustrate the evolution of the use of the dry stone building technique with limestone – characteristic of the island’s geology – for the construction of settlements as well as sacred sites and funeral spaces.

ICOMOS considers that the high level of preservation and the density of prehistoric sites in the nominated property’s nine component parts present a remarkable illustration of the evolution of cyclopean dry stone building techniques associated with the organisation and occupation of the landscape and with particular funerary practices by prehistoric communities in a challenging environment. Some of the prehistoric structures are unique to this island, such as the burial navetas, circular houses and taulas. These types together with talayots represent an exceptional testimony to a tradition of cyclopean architecture in this particular island context for approximately 1,500 years. ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

**Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history:**

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the component parts of the nominated property contain an exceptional array of works that illustrate the different stages of the island’s prehistory and display the full diversity of building typologies. Furthermore, the State Party affirms that the nominated serial property contains the most representative sample of the many talayots scattered across the island, and unique structures such as burial navetas and taula enclosures, demonstrating specific environmental knowledge, especially in relation to the skyscape.

ICOMOS considers that the group of structures represents an outstanding ensemble of prehistoric cyclopean architecture. Navetas, talayots, taulas and circular houses within the nominated property illustrate an important stage in the evolution of the occupation of the island and represent an important source of knowledge about the organisation and practices of human communities from the Bronze Age through to the Late Iron Age. The distribution of the prehistoric sites in the landscape of Menorca illustrates a spatial organisation that, due to the preservation of large amounts of evidence, is still readable to a large extent, showing visual interconnections between cyclopean structures as well as potential sacred, symbolic and political connotations. ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

**Integrity and authenticity**

**Integrity**

The integrity of the nominated serial property is based on the inclusion of all the key archaeological structures associated with the prehistoric cyclopean settlements that are necessary to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. These attributes include the landscapes that allow visual interconnections between settlements and therefore an understanding of the spatial organisation of the prehistoric societies of Menorca. A number of archaeological sites included in the buffer zones also support an understanding of the prehistoric spatial organisation of the nominated serial property within the island as a whole.

The boundaries of the nominated property have been drawn to encompass the elements that best contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The selection of the serial component parts is thus justified. The component parts are of adequate size and present a diversity of environments in which the prehistoric settlements are located.

The series takes in the two Menorcan geological regions that influenced the prehistoric occupation of the island. Ravines, coastal caves and coves that prehistoric communities used as burial sites form part of each of the component parts, as do the settlements that illustrate the spatial organisation developed by the prehistoric societies. Relatively undisturbed landscape areas between the different archaeological sites allow an understanding of the relationships between the settlements and burial places within each of the component parts. The few visual disturbances, such as electrical poles and lines, are planned to be removed by the State Party in the medium term. The two buffer zones enable the visual connectivity between the different component parts to be maintained, and provide protection against urban development that could have an adverse impact on the views between prehistoric structures and on ecological processes.

Adverse effects of development are limited and controlled and do not affect the component parts except in Component C6, where partially completed road works
have a negative impact on the landscape views. These works are planned to be removed.

While recognising the existence of some specific adverse effects, ICOMOS considers the integrity of the whole series as well as each of its component parts to be satisfactory.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of the series as a whole to truthfully and credibly express its cultural values through its attributes. This includes the prehistoric cyclopean structures that illustrate the evolution of dry stone buildings on the island from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age.

The locations, forms, designs and materials have high degrees of authenticity. The locations of the prehistoric settlements are authentic. Their settings, represented by the agropastoral landscapes included within the boundaries of the nominated property, have evolved but are believed to evoke earlier epochs. The sources of information about the sites and excavations are credible. Continued research on the functions of these prehistoric structures, their cultural meanings and their astronomical alignments, ideally in the context of a comprehensive research strategy/framework, is strongly recommended.

ICOMOS notes that some component parts have had their authenticity compromised by interventions such as the insertion of a concrete block (Component C8), insertion of a steel support (Component C4) and reconstruction using anastylosis (Component C1). These issues need to be addressed in the conservation plan for each of these component parts. ICOMOS nevertheless considers that the authenticity of the component parts and of the series as a whole is adequate.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

Boundaries

It is estimated that 140 inhabitants reside in the nominated property, and that 4,430 inhabitants reside in the two buffer zones.

The boundaries of the component parts have been defined based on archaeological evidence, visibility analyses, topography and ecological environments, as well as a delimitation of plots with dry stone walls. In five component parts (C2, C4, C5, C6 and C9) the coastline defines sections of the boundaries. In December 2021, ICOMOS requested maps of the twenty-three archaeological sites presented as key attributes by the State Party, in order to clarify that these were entirely within the nominated property’s boundaries. The State Party submitted maps in February 2022 that confirm these twenty-three sites are included within the boundaries of the respective component parts. However, ICOMOS notes that the Biniedris burial site in Component C6 is not in the same location as shown in the nomination dossier. ICOMOS recommends clarifying the mapping of the nine component parts, and thereon indicating the three types of archaeological sites: the 23 “key” archaeological sites; the 211 important archaeological sites protected under a Heritage of Cultural Interest designation (Bien de Interés Cultural, BIC); and the 46 archaeological sites protected under the Law 12/1998 on the Historical Heritage of the Balearic Islands.

Two buffer zones totalling 19,014 ha are proposed to reinforce protection of the nominated property’s landscape: one buffer zone encompasses component parts C1 to C8, and a second buffer zone surrounds Component C9. Both include coastal marine areas.

In additional information provided in November 2021, the State Party clarified that the boundaries of the component parts have been defined based on a study of visibility between the archaeological sites, especially those between talayots, navetas and taules. Based on intervisibility studies, Areas of Landscape Interest have been designated for the component parts of the nominated property. Demarcation of boundaries has been done using topography and the delimitation of plots having dry stone walls. In those areas where dry stone walls are not present, such as burial sites, cliffs, and coastal and ravine slopes, geographical, ecosystem and scenic criteria were used to define boundaries. Adequate buffer zones support protection, connecting the wider setting of the archaeological sites.

ICOMOS considers that the rationale for the boundaries has been applied appropriately and consistently except for Component C8, Trepuçó, one of the largest prehistoric settlements on Menorca and the first one excavated. Its boundaries are limited to those of the archaeological site. In additional information provided in November 2021, the State Party clarified that this choice was made in respect of the particular values of this prehistoric settlement, which is significant for understanding the series as a whole due to the importance of the structures within the settlement.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis could have been better focused, but that it is adequate regarding the Mediterranean geo-cultural region and thus justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv). The serial approach is justified, and the selection of component parts is appropriate. ICOMOS further considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.
4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
The prehistoric structures on Menorca are well studied and documented. Several archaeological sites included in the nominated property are the subjects of ongoing research projects. There are fifteen ongoing archaeological excavations, all of which are being recorded with the use of photogrammetry, thereby providing useful baseline data for future decision-making. All artefacts recovered are considered to be in the public domain, and once properly studied are deposited in the Menorca Museum.

The Island Council of Menorca is responsible for gathering and safeguarding all information, and the Council’s Historical Heritage Services Department is the coordinating unit for documentary materials. A centralised geographic information system (GIS) database is managed by the Island Council of Menorca.

An ecological land unit analysis developed for a revision of the 2020 Menorca Island Land-Use Plan will permit a better understanding of current landscape conditions and function as a baseline for monitoring and conservation activities.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS suggested the State Party consider developing a research strategy/framework to guide future archaeological policy in alignment with the conservation strategy of the nominated property. In additional information provided in February 2022, the State Party described how the lines of research established in the management plan’s research programme relate to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. ICOMOS strongly recommends developing a research strategy/framework that is aligned with a conservation strategy to be included in an updated management plan.

Conservation measures
In the 1990s, the Island Council of Menorca established an archaeological sites conservation programme that involves clearing intrusive vegetation, particularly wild olive trees, a protected species that needs careful decision-making regarding removal. The management plan establishes a written protocol for vegetation control.

There is currently an individual, site-specific approach to the conservation of the 280 archaeological sites and their associated landscapes. A new management system proposes an integrated approach for all the component parts. A specific programme of preservation, conservation, maintenance and restoration has been developed in the management plan to address the conservation of the twenty-three sites considered to be key attributes of the nominated serial property. This includes partial reconstruction and/or reinforcement of structures in cases where the potential collapse of one element is likely to affect the stability of the remaining structure. There is a system in place to monitor the stability of the structures that still conserve their original roofing.

The Island Council of Menorca has a team of technicians who do terrain reconnaissance and help with maintenance and conservation activities. A tradition of volunteering supports maintenance campaigns that are coordinated and supervised by archaeologists. Such campaigns have taken place at Son Catlar in Component C2 and Torre d’en Galmés in Component C5.

Monitoring
The baseline for the monitoring system proposed by the State Party is the present state of conservation of the nominated property, which was determined in the process of preparing the World Heritage nomination and was last updated in 2020. The monitoring system proposes four groups of indicators: archaeological monuments, sites and settings; environmental, landscape and territorial factors; transmission of Outstanding Universal Value; and management issues. These indicators encompass the key attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. The monitoring system acknowledges the main threats to conservation, which relate to environmental pressures and socio-economic factors.

The Island Council of Menorca is in charge of gathering and safeguarding all information regarding monitoring. The specific indicators will be followed up by the Talayotic Menorca Agency, which is the main entity in charge of the nominated property’s management. Regarding environmental indicators, different entities are in charge of surveying those related to the larger context such as the sky quality, which is under the Menorca Biosphere Reserve. The management plan has proposed a protocol and support system for routine on-site monitoring of the state of conservation, including integration of visitors’ observations.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures and monitoring system proposed in the management plan are adequate. ICOMOS recommends developing a research strategy/framework that is aligned with the conservation strategy. ICOMOS also considers it advisable to adapt the monitoring system to allow easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
The nominated serial property is protected by an integrated system of environmental, cultural, landscape and territorial protection regimes overseen by the Island Council of Menorca. Two hundred and thirty-one of the 280 prehistoric archaeological sites within the component parts, including burial and dwelling navetas, talayots, taulas, circular houses, hypogea and caves, are protected under a Heritage of Cultural Interest designation (Bien de Interés Cultural, BIC), which is the highest level of protection for cultural assets under Spanish legislation, regulated by Law 16/1985 on Spanish Historical Heritage.

In the additional information provided in February 2022,
the State Party clarified that, of the forty-nine other archaeological sites, the three most important will be designated in the near future, while the remaining forty-six are protected under the Law 12/1998 on the Historical Heritage of the Balearic Islands. Designations are enforced by the Island Council of Menorca.

At the local level, all of the island's town councils use a Catalogue for Historical Heritage Protection, in which all 280 archaeological sites within the nominated property are included.

The archaeological sites included in the nominated serial property and surrounding land are on private property with the exception of Son Catlar (Component C2) and Trepcó (Component C8), both owned by the Island Council of Menorca, Torre d’en Galmés (Component C5), owned by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, and Torralba d’en Salort (Component C6), owned by the Balearic Islands Foundation, all of which are in public ownership.

Component C9 is located in S’Albufera des Grau Natural Park, which was established by Decree 50/1995 (extended by Decree 51/2003) in accordance with Spanish Law 4/1989 on Conservation of Natural Areas and Wild Flora and Fauna, enforced by the Balearic Government, and which is the core zone of the Menorca Biosphere Reserve (1993). Part of the buffer zone surrounding Component C9 is designated Nature Area of Special Interest (Law 1/1991 on Natural Spaces and Urban Regulation for Areas of Special Protection of the Balearic Islands), coinciding partially with the boundaries of the natural park. Other Nature Areas of Special Interest protect the natural values within the nominated serial property and the other buffer zone.

As stated in the Menorca Island Land-Use Plan (revised in 2020), established by Law 14/2000 on Land-Use Planning of the Balearic Islands, all nine component parts of the nominated serial property are protected as Areas of Landscape Interest. This designation involves the continuation of the land use and the preservation of dry stone walls as part of the vernacular landscape surrounding the archaeological sites. It prevents any development that may have an impact on the landscape views. In addition, the agropastoral landscapes within the nominated property, one of the buffer zones and the wider setting are protected under the Menorca Island Land-Use Plan as Areas of Agrarian Interest. Other parts of the buffer zone that surrounds Components C1 to C8 are protected as Nature Areas of Territorial Interest.

A special protection is granted to the night sky under the Regulations for the Protection of the Night Sky in the Island of Menorca (2018), which further develop Law 3/2005 on the protection of the night-time environment in the Balearic Islands, and aims to regulate outdoor lighting and prevent light pollution.

Management system

The Island Council of Menorca is responsible for managing the nominated serial property, enforcing all laws for the protection of heritage and implementing planning instruments. It has created the Talayotic Menorca Agency, a specific entity dedicated to coordinating and implementing the programmes established in the management plan, including monitoring the nominated serial property. Its creation was approved in July 2021, according to additional information provided by the State Party in November 2021. It is composed of a Presidency, a Governing Council, a Social Council, a Scientific Council and an Executive Committee. It is intended to be participatory and inclusive.

In the additional information provided in February 2022, the State Party indicated that final approval of the Talayotic Menorca Agency was granted on 20 December 2021. Its role, functions, governance and decision-making processes are described in an English translation of the original Catalan document.

The Agency is set to coordinate with an Owners and Managers Forum, which will assemble authorities, land owners within the nominated property and the organisations that manage archaeological sites and land within the component parts. The Forum, the creation of which was recommended by the World Heritage Committee in 2017, will be represented in the Talayotic Menorca Agency’s Social Council. The State Party provided ICOMOS with the Forum’s certificate of incorporation and registration as an association in November 2021. Its translation from Catalan has not been included in the additional information sent by the State Party.

A Heritage Stewardship and Enhancement Contract regulates the effective participation of the owners and managers of the nominated property in its conservation and public use, in accordance with the Balearic Islands Historical Heritage Law and the Menorca Island Land-Use Plan (2020). As requested by ICOMOS in its Interim Report, the State Party submitted a sample of the contract translated into English. The instrument sets out the obligations and rights of site owners regarding the protection, conservation and promotion of the nominated property, as well as the responsibility and support of the Talayotic Menorca Agency. According to the State Party, owners and managers of some of the key archaeological sites are already part of the Forum and have signed the contract.

The management plan was approved in July 2021, according to additional information provided by the State Party in November 2021, and is to be implemented by the Talayotic Menorca Agency. Other instruments in place to support management of the nominated property include master plans for selected archaeological sites, performance contracts with the private owners who have their own management system, and legal instruments associated with the protection of the property (national laws and the Land-Use Plan).
The personnel responsible for the nominated serial property’s protection and management are provided by the Island Council of Menorca’s Historical Heritage Services Department, including a specialist archaeologist in charge of the nomination, all of whom receive specialised training. The IDE Menorca (Infraestructures de dades espacials de Menorca) geographic information system (GIS) supports this work with cartographic services, as does the Tourism Development Foundation of Menorca. The Menorcan Institute of Studies provides technical and scientific capacities. The museums of Menorca also contribute to the management of the nominated property by means of their specialised staff.

The overall management plan has a ten-year horizon for implementation, with a financial plan covering this period. It proposes programmes for conservation, restoration, monitoring, visitor management, communication and research, with a number of projects. The management plan for the nominated serial property envisages a considerable investment in research, conservation and dissemination.

Master plans will be prepared for six of the individual archaeological sites that have been categorised as being the most significant and most visited. Two of these already have master plans, Torre d’en Galmés in Component C5 and Son Catlar in Component C2. In the additional information provided in February 2022, the State Party confirmed that the remaining four master plans will be completed by 2024.

Environmental impact assessments are mentioned in relation to Heritage of Cultural Interest designations (Bien de Interés Cultural, BIC), but are not mentioned in relation to the Menorca Island Land-Use Plan. The State Party explained in February 2022 that Heritage Impact Assessments are included in the spatial planning system of Menorca as an integral part of Landscape Impact and Integration Studies, which are mandatory for any action planned in the area and surroundings of the nominated property. ICOMOS considers that Heritage Impact Assessment processes are of critical importance in the context of the State Party’s one-hundred percent renewable energy objective for the island, as well as the potential for urban development.

The nominated serial property’s management plan refers to the Special Plan for Emergencies of Risk of Forest Fires in the Balearic Islands (Balearic Islands Government, Ministry of the Interior, 2018), and the Climate Change Mitigation Plan for the Balearic Islands (Balearic Islands Government, 2013-2020) in relation to risk management and climate change adaptation and mitigation. ICOMOS considers that a risk management strategy and climate change adaptation and mitigation plan that address the specific situation of the nominated serial property and the attributes that support its proposed Outstanding Universal Value are necessary. The State Party has indicated in the additional information provided in February 2022 that a property-specific risk assessment and risk management plan will be developed in the event of an inscription on the World Heritage List.

Visitor management
Almost all of the archaeological sites in the nominated serial property are signposted and have information panels, and those that are open to the public have presentation and interpretation information, both of the site itself and general information about the nominated serial property. The Tourism development plan of Menorca (2018-2025) outlines a tourism strategy for the island, but it does not have a specific tourism strategy for the nominated serial property. In February 2022, the State Party clarified that a Talayotic Menorca Sustainable Tourism Plan would be developed in the event of an inscription. Several archaeological sites have interpretation centres, some of which are planned to be renovated. Interpretation is intended to be further developed to integrate all archaeological sites open to the public in order to present a unified interpretation of the nominated serial property.

Due to the diverse ownership and management of the archaeological sites and the diversity and extent of the landscapes, ICOMOS considers that the interpretation of the nominated serial property requires a harmonisation strategy in order to deliver a common understanding of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Besides interpretation of individual archaeological sites, an interpretation plan for each component part and for the nominated serial property as a whole is recommended.

Community involvement
ICOMOS notes that several local associations (cultural and ecological) as well as other community representatives (school teachers, owners) were involved in the preparation of the nomination dossier as members of a nomination advisory committee. They were involved in discussions regarding the nomination and informed about all decisions concerning the nomination. Their involvement is planned to be continued in the Owners and Managers Forum and through their representatives in the Social Council of the Talayotic Menorca Agency.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated serial property is adequate. The proposed management system seems well conceived, however its effectiveness needs to be evaluated as further experience is gathered, and be adapted as required. The recently approved management plan needs to include specific objectives for each of the component parts, and to integrate a risk management strategy and a climate change adaptation and mitigation plan specific to the nominated property. A harmonised strategy for the interpretation of each of the archaeological sites, component parts and nominated serial property as a whole is recommended.
6 Conclusion

The nominated serial property comprises a remarkable collection of prehistoric archaeological sites within a well-preserved agropastoral landscape on the Island of Menorca. It displays a wide array of cyclopean structures built of very large blocks of stone by prehistoric communities over a period of about 1,500 years, from the Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age, covering the Naviform, Talayotic and Late Talayotic periods of the island. Burial and dwelling navetas, talayots, circular houses and taula enclosures demonstrate the continuous evolution of dry stone building techniques.

ICOMOS appreciates the substantial work done by the State Party to reformulate the previously submitted nomination, as requested by the World Heritage Committee in 2017. ICOMOS also appreciates the informative additional information provided by the State Party.

The research and documentation in support of the nomination is thorough, including the rationale for selecting the serial component parts, the delineation of the nominated property's boundaries and the creation of extensive buffer zones, all of which were key concerns of the World Heritage Committee in 2017.

The comparative analysis is extensive, though it would have benefitted from a better focus on the specific criteria and attributes proposed by the State Party. ICOMOS nevertheless considers that the comparative analysis is adequate regarding the Mediterranean geo-cultural region and thus justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv), and that the serial approach has been justified. ICOMOS also considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

There is an evident commitment to the conservation of this property by the State Party and the local community. The state of conservation of the nominated serial property is good, while regular maintenance is required, especially in terms of clearing intrusive vegetation and monitoring the stability of the structures.

The legal protection based on heritage designations, natural protected areas and spatial planning system is adequate. The management system based on the creation of a participatory and inclusive coordinating entity, the Talayotic Menorca Agency, and the recently approved management plan for the nominated serial property provide a basis for the appropriate management of the nominated property.

In addition to creating a master plan for each key archaeological site, specific management objectives need to be set for each of the component parts. Furthermore, a research strategy/framework, a risk management strategy and a climate change adaptation and mitigation plan specific to the nominated serial property and its proposed Outstanding Universal Value are strongly recommended. A harmonised interpretation strategy for each key archaeological site, component part and nominated serial property as a whole is suggested. ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party give consideration to changing the name of the property to become: “Prehistoric Sites of Talayotic Menorca”.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that Talayotic Menorca - A cyclopean island odyssey, Spain, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Located on the Island of Menorca, the second largest of the Balearic Islands in the western Mediterranean Sea, a series of nine component parts in the Migjorn and Tramuntana regions of Menorca encompasses a dense assemblage of archaeological sites that feature cyclopean structures dating from the Bronze Age (1600 BCE) to the Late Iron Age (123 BCE). Agropastoral landscapes recall the occupation of the island by prehistoric communities in diverse settlements and burial sites scattered across the dry tableland in the south and in the rugged hills rising in the north.

Cyclopean architecture – which consists of structures built of very large blocks of stone without mortar – in a wide range of typologies illustrate the evolution of the island’s dry stone building practices. The characteristic structures include hypogea (artificial caves), talayots (large cone-shaped structures, generally truncated), taulas (T-shaped constructions formed by a large rectangular supporting stone slab and an inverted and truncated pyramidal capital), taula enclosures (religious structures comprised of an apsidal ground plan and concave facade), navetas (which display an inverted ship shape, and in some cases rounded ground plans), circular houses, and hypostyles (roofs supported by pillars).

The evolution on the spatial organisation of these prehistoric structures suggests the emergence of a hierarchical society. Distinct visual interconnections between archaeological sites indicate the existence of social networks, and astronomical orientations imply possible cosmological meanings. Together, this series of ancient stone-built settlements and their landscapes provide a window into this region’s prehistoric island cultures.

Criterion (iii): The high density of prehistoric sites on Menorca and their unusual level of preservation represent an outstanding demonstration of prehistoric dry stone
building techniques. The structures unique to this island such as the burial navetas, circular houses and taulas, together with talayots and other dry stone structures associated with the spatial organisation and occupation of the landscape by prehistoric communities in a challenging island environment, are an exceptional testimony to a tradition of cyclopean architecture and its evolution over a period of approximately 1,500 years.

**Criterion (iv):** Talayotic Menorca represents an outstanding ensemble of prehistoric cyclopean architecture that demonstrates the organisation and practices of communities from the Bronze Age through to the Late Iron Age. Navetas, talayots, taulas and circular houses within the serial property’s nine component parts illustrate the evolution of the occupation of the island and represent an important source of knowledge about life during this period. The distribution of the prehistoric sites in the agropastoral landscape of Menorca illustrates a spatial organisation that, due to the preservation of large amounts of evidence, is still readable to a large extent, showing visual interconnections between cyclopean structures as well as potential sacred, symbolic and political connotations.

**Integrity**

Within the boundaries of the serial property are located all the elements necessary to express the Outstanding Universal Value of Talayotic Menorca, including prehistoric cyclopean architecture in a wide range of typologies that illustrate the evolution of the island’s cyclopean building practices for approximately 1,500 years from the Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age. Its boundaries adequately ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that convey the property’s significance. The property does not suffer unduly from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

**Authenticity**

The serial property meets the conditions of authenticity. Its cultural values are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes, including the locations and settings, forms and designs, and materials and substance of the archaeological remains, most of which have high degrees of authenticity. The locations of the prehistoric cyclopean structures and settlements are authentic, while their settings, represented by the agropastoral landscapes included within the boundaries of the property as well as the buffer zones, have evolved but are believed to evoke earlier epochs. The archaeological sites have been well documented, and the sources of information about the sites and excavations are credible.

**Management and protection requirements**

The serial property is protected by an integrated system of environmental, cultural, landscape and territorial protection regimes overseen by the Island Council of Menorca. All prehistoric archaeological structures are protected under the Law 12/1998 on the Historical Heritage of the Balearic Islands, with a majority also designated as Heritage of Cultural Interest (Bien de Interés Cultural, BIC), which is the highest level of protection for cultural assets under Spanish legislation, regulated by Law 16/1985 on Spanish Historical Heritage. The Menorca Island Land-Use Plan (2020) further protects all nine component parts of the serial property as Areas of Landscape Interest. A special protection is also granted to the night sky.

The Island Council of Menorca is responsible for managing the serial property, enforcing all laws for the protection of heritage and implementing planning instruments. It has created the Talayotic Menorca Agency to coordinate and implement the programmes established in the management plan, which include conservation, restoration, monitoring, visitor management, communication and research. Master plans will be prepared for individual key archaeological sites that are considered the most significant and most visited. Sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the property over time would benefit from each key archaeological site having a master plan, and setting specific management objectives for each of the component parts in relation to the conservation of the attributes that support the Outstanding Universal Value.

**Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Completing the master plans for four key archaeological sites: Naveta des Tudons, Trepucó, Talatí de Dalt, and Torralba d’en Salort,

b) Preparing master plans for the remaining seventeen key archaeological sites within the serial property, and setting out specific management objectives for each of the component parts in relation to the conservation of the attributes that support the Outstanding Universal Value,

c) Developing a research strategy/framework for the property as a whole that is linked to the above-mentioned detailed conservation plan and aligned with the Outstanding Universal Value of the property,

d) Developing a risk management strategy and a climate change adaptation and mitigation plan that specifically address the property and the attributes that support its Outstanding Universal Value,

e) Developing a tourism strategy specifically for the property that complements the Tourism Development Plan of Menorca (2018),

f) Creating a harmonised interpretation strategy for the serial property as a whole, including each
archaeological site and each component part, in order to deliver a common understanding of the property’s Outstanding Universal Value,

g) Updating the management plan by integrating the above-recommended instruments (conservation plan, research strategy/framework, risk management strategy, climate change adaptation and mitigation plan, sustainable tourism plan and interpretation strategy).

h) Developing definitive best-practice solutions for the stainless-steel beam supporting the pillar in the hypostyle hall at Torre d’en Galmés (Component C5), and the concrete block used in the taula enclosure at Trepucó (Component C8),

i) Removing at the earliest opportunity the partially completed road works in Component C6 and the electrical poles and lines in the landscape areas between different archaeological sites that have a negative influence on the landscape views,

j) Undertaking additional research to better understand the function of talayots, and the relationship of the inter-visibility networks with the social organisation and astronomical connections of the structures,

k) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS by 1 December 2024 a report on the implementation of the recommendations set out above;

ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party give consideration to changing the name of the property to become: “Prehistoric Sites of Talayotic Menorca”.

Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
III Cultural properties

A Africa
New nomination
Extension

B Asia – Pacific
New nominations
Nomination referred back by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

C Europe – North America
New nominations
Nominations deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

D Latin America and the Caribbean
New nomination
**Tak’alik Ab’aj**
(Guatemala)
No 1663

### 1 Basic information

**Official name as proposed by the State Party**
National Archaeological Park Tak’alik Ab’aj

**Location**
Municipality of El Asintal
Department of Retalhuleu
Guatemala

**Brief description**
Tak’alik Ab’aj is an archaeological site located at the piedmont of the Pacific Coast of Guatemala. Its 1,700-year history spans the years from 800 BCE to 900 CE, a period that saw the transition from the Olmec civilisation to the emergence of Early Mayan culture. Tak’alik Ab’aj functioned as a primary player and catalyst in this transition, in part because of the vital role it played in the long-distance trade route that connected the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in today’s Mexico to present-day El Salvador. Ideas and customs were shared extensively along this route, as indicated by the diversity of sculptural styles that are found at Tak’alik Ab’aj as at no other site in Mesoamerica, as well as by artefacts analogous to sites located hundreds of kilometres distant. Sacred spaces and sacred buildings were laid out here according to cosmological principles, and innovative water management systems, ceramics, lapidary art and lithic tools are found within this site, a central portion of which comprises the nominated property. Today, Indigenous groups of different affiliations still consider the site a sacred place and visit it to perform rituals.

**Category of property**
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

**Included in the Tentative List**
27 April 2012 as “Tak’alik Ab’aj National Park”

**Background**
This is a new nomination.

**Consultations and technical evaluation mission**
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 8 to 15 August 2021.

### Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 27 September 2021 requesting further information about the area of the nominated property and the proposed buffer zone, the Tak’alik Ab’aj “El Caracol del Tiempo” site museum, the participation of local communities and the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous communities.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 11 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.
Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: integrity, research activities, the site museum, and risk management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

**Date of ICOMOS approval of this report**
9 March 2022

### 2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

**Description and history**
National Archaeological Park Tak’alik Ab’aj is located in a subtropical humid forest 600 metres above sea level in the piedmont area of the Sierra Madre volcanic chain that runs along the Pacific Coast of Guatemala.

For the construction of the city, which existed from 800 BCE to 900 CE, the slopes descending from the volcanic piedmont to the coastal plains were modified into a series of ten successive terraces covering about 6.5 square kilometres (650 hectares). There are four principal architectural groups, each named according to its location within the archaeological site: Central, North, West and South. The Central Group includes Terraces 1, 2 and 3. The nominated property, which encompasses sixty percent of the Central Group, contains 22 structures, 252 sculptures, 22 canals and 154 elements of lapidary art.

Its location put Tak’alik Ab’aj in a position to function as a critical link within the predominant long-distance commercial network of this region. This allowed the site to evolve into one of the main Mesoamerican economic and cultural centres. Among the most important material remains found at the nominated property today are monuments sculpted in stone, sacred spaces and sacred buildings constructed of clay and faced with cobbles,
water management systems, ceramics, lapidary art and lithic tools. The city’s layout follows cosmological precepts.

Tak’alik Ab’aj is noted for the diversity of styles of sculptures from different cultures that congregated there, a diversity not believed to exist elsewhere in Mesoamerica. The sculptures were produced by artisans in six different styles, which might represent different cultural traditions, some developing in parallel during the same cultural epoch: Olmec, Maya, Potbelly, Zoomorph, Coastal and Local, as well as a number of undefined styles. Furthermore, artefacts analogous to distant cities and sites in present-day Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica have been recovered. In this historical process, Tak’alik Ab’aj functioned as a primary player and catalyst in the transition from the Olmec world system to that of the Maya.

The integration of sculpture into the design of sacred places created the scenarios for public displays of power. The public architecture programme of Tak’alik Ab’aj included a clay ball court from the Middle Preclassic period, one of the earliest known in Mesoamerica. Ceremonial spaces functioned as places where public acts were performed by rulers. The techniques and materials used for construction and the buildings’ forms changed through time, but the objective of combining sacred spaces with sculpture was maintained.

It appears that Olmec monuments from the Middle Preclassic period were extracted from their original placements and reinstated on new structures in the Late Preclassic period. The west facade of Structure 12 in the Central Group represents an example of this technique to create what may be an “open-air museum”.

Creative water management was also a feature of Tak’alik Ab’aj from the beginning of its long history. Systems for draining rainwater from the plazas were engineered, and in the residential areas a system was devised to supply drinking water by means of aqueducts.

The ceramic tradition at Tak’alik Ab’aj, called the Ocosito Tradition, was present throughout the history of this ancient city, which indicates that the same peoples continued living there for centuries. Obsidian artefacts are found profusely in archaeological excavations, indicating that they were used often and were important in both every day and ceremonial life.

The design and placement of the largest monumental building on the site – Structure 5, on Terrace 3, measuring 113 by 120 metres at its base and 16 metres high – is based on a “cosmogram,” a geometric figure depicting the universe wherein the arrangement of the buildings follows a main east-west alignment, the intersection of which with a north-south axis is the “Ombiligo-Mux” (“navel,” “mux” in the indigenous Mam language) as a central point or axis mundi for the city.

The study of these objects and public works makes it possible to follow the changes in styles and technology utilised, reflecting some of the wealth of ideas that existed in the minds of the ancient artisans and architects during the 1,700-year history of the nominated property, from 800 BCE to 900 CE.

The nominated property has an area of 14.88 ha, and an originally proposed buffer zone (“Preliminary Protection Strip”) of 0.50 ha. The total area of 15.38 ha represents only a small portion of the entire 650-ha archaeological site, which has been declared National Cultural Heritage. Most of the site is in private ownership and for many decades has been used for single-crop agriculture (coffee, rubber and sugar cane).

Important events in the history of Mesoamerica are reflected in the nominated property, where the dominance of the ancient Olmec civilisation during the Middle Preclassic period (800 to 350 BCE) was followed after a period of transition by the emergence of the Early Mayan culture during the Late Preclassic period (100 BCE to 150 CE). A commercial long-distance trade route played an important role in its economic and cultural development. Contact among different peoples and cultures facilitated the flow of ideas, which were assimilated here and creatively re-invented. It appears that this situation was appropriate for the emergence of a chieftdom at this place.

During the Middle Preclassic period, Tak’alik Ab’aj shared the cultural traits of the dominant Olmec civilisation and became a contributing city in its long-distance trade route. Tak’alik Ab’aj entered a transitional period from 350 BCE to 100 BCE, during which time the political power of this first Mesoamerican civilisation faded. The archaeological record of the city’s architecture, sculpture, ritual activity and water management indicates the change in concept, design and aesthetic idioms happened in a gradual and uninterrupted manner.

Early Mayan culture emerged here at the beginning of Late Preclassic period (100 BCE to 50 CE) and reached its mature expression with the second generation (50 to 150 CE), marked by the development of the Mayan Long Count astronomical calendar. The beginnings of Maya writing are evident on the sculpted monuments at Tak’alik Ab’aj in the form of brief glyphic texts and Long Count dates.

During the Early Classic period (150 to 500 CE), western highland people fighting for control of this commercial domain caused the end of the long-distance trade route. This also ended the Preclassic period’s early Mayan cultural manifestations, including the end of almost a millennium of sculpture tradition that had been expressed in the locally re-created Olmec and Mayan artistic idioms.

Studies indicate that this period came to an abrupt end at the beginning of Late Classic period (500 to 900 CE), and Tak’alik Ab’aj resumed its contacts and interactions along the Pacific corridor. Around 900 CE the western highland people had split into different language groups and occupied different highland regions. The ancient people of Tak’alik Ab’aj were confronted by the challenge of the K’iche’ people’s expansion, but, on this occasion, they
apparently capitulated and the city’s lengthy history ended with its abandonment.

In modern times, the archaeological site began to be noticed and explored in 1888, with formal investigations starting in 1976. The nominated property, including the 0.50-hectare “Preliminary Protection Strip”, were donated in two phases by the Finca Santa Margarita owners to create a National Archaeological Park. The first donation of 7.69 hectares was initiated in 1987 and completed in 1998, after the construction of a paved road from the Municipality of El Asintal, the condition for the donation, was completed. The second donation of 7.69 hectares began in 2007 and was completed in 2013, even though the condition for this second donation – the construction of a site museum – remains unfinished. The donated land includes Terraces 1, 2 and 3, where the Central Group of Tak’alik Ab’aj is located.

Indigenous groups of different ethnic affiliations consider the site to be a sacred place and visit it to perform rituals. In order to protect the original monuments, an “alternative altars” programme and corresponding regulations were implemented in 1995, in concordance with the idea of a living heritage site. In 2002, the whole extent of the 650-hectare archaeological site (most of which is still in private ownership) was declared National Cultural Heritage.

State of conservation
The State Party highlights that the long- and mid-term planning for park development has always aimed at striking a balance between educational, aesthetic, practical and conservation considerations when deciding how to treat the architectonic ensembles. As a result, some structures are completely or partially exposed, with their stone coverings restored and the remaining earthen surfaces covered with grass. Others are kept under their accumulated soil and vegetation cover. To date, eleven buildings, three canals and two causeways in the nominated property have been partially exposed, restored and covered with grass, or completely restored. Of the monuments inside the nominated property, seventy-three are covered with a roof in situ or are stored, and the rest are exposed.

All cultural and natural components (artefacts as well as constructions and buildings) have been inventoried and are subjected to a preventative conservation programme.

The National Archaeological Park Tak’alik Ab’aj administration has been working since its establishment to gradually re-create the original biodiversity by collecting native species from the small patches of the forest that have survived in the deep ravines of the rivers and propagating the plants in nurseries for re-introduction in the nominated property, turning it into an ecological island within the surrounding coffee, rubber and sugar cane plantations.

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the measures taken by the State Party have resulted in a good state of conservation of the archaeological objects, sculptures and buildings.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation overall is very good.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are environmental and development pressures. These include heavy rains linked to the subtropical climate as well as to the effects of climate change; and a lack of water drainage at the site. The Santa María volcano’s Santiaguito lava domes could affect the nominated property with ash and gas transported by wind.

Development pressures potentially include fragmentation of the five privately-owned farms surrounding the nominated property and changes to their land use, and an increase in tourism together with the construction of tourism-related infrastructure. Damage caused by vandalism, looting or illegal access is considered minimal.

The project’s archive and laboratories are housed in wooden buildings and there are concerns about the potential damage that fire could cause. In more general terms, and not seen as an immediate threat, development pressure from the surrounding population and the local community of El Asintal is mentioned.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is very good and that factors affecting the nominated property are generally well identified and at present under control. A solution should be sought to protect the archive and laboratories against the threat of fire.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

• Tak’alik Ab’aj distinguishes itself from other pre-Columbian Mesoamerican cities by its extraordinary quantity and diversity of Preclassic period stone sculpture styles and sophisticated jadeite artefacts for early powerful rulers. These were realised during a gradual and continuous transition from Olmec towards Maya cultural expressions.

• The ancient architects slightly modified the terraced landscape in order to create a sophisticated urban layout based on cosmological precepts and astronomical orientations. This architectonic layout par excellence, integrated with a conspicuous sculptural programme, created ritual scenarios for the
The ancient astronomers there performed important observations of the nocturnal sky and the sun, leaving an amazing record in the alignments of sculptures.

The Central Group of Tak’alik Ab’aj displays multiple sculptural styles developed over a span of almost a millennium. Olmec style monuments were re-used and re-assembled to form part of an “open air museum” in the Late Preclassic period, indicating the intention to evoke the past and create a historic discourse, particularly in times of crisis.

In the imaginary of the Indigenous people, Tak’alik Ab’aj has been recognised and identified as a sacred place with areas that are designated today as locations for ritual performance.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are the archaeological remains, such as the urban layout, buildings, features, sculptures and artefacts, as well as the modern use and reinterpretation of this setting by Indigenous communities.

**Comparative analysis**

The comparative analysis has been developed around parameters that reflect key aspects of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, such as cities involved in long-distance trade; millenary cities; cities with similarities in urban layout; cities with scenarios for public display; cities with Olmec and Mayan cultural expressions; and archaeological sites in a good state of conservation and with integrity. The State Party has examined archaeological properties from the same region inscribed on the World Heritage List, sites included in the Tentative Lists of States Parties, and other properties.

No geo-cultural area has been defined, but it can be surmised to be Mesoamerica: the geographical scope of the comparative analysis covers an area from La Venta in Tabasco, Mexico, to Chalchuapa in El Salvador. Several of the properties mentioned are inscribed on the World Heritage List, among them the Ancient Maya City and Protected Tropical Forests of Calakmul, Campeche (Mexico, 2002, 2014, criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (ix) and (x)), the Historic Centre of Oaxaca and Archaeological Site of Monte Albán (Mexico, 1987, criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)), and the Maya Site of Copan (Honduras, 1980, criteria (iv) and (vi)).

Other sites mentioned for comparison include Chalchuapa (El Salvador, Tentative List); Tres Zapotes, La Venta, Chiapa de Corzo, Seibal and Izapa in Mexico; Santa Leticia in El Salvador; and Kaminaljuyú in Guatemala. Some of these comparators have been quickly dismissed by the State Party for being set in vastly different landscapes and/or having different building programmes. In other cases, it is recognised that comparable aspects exist, but the conclusion reached is that expressions found in the nominated property are “superlative and unique”.

ICOMOS notes that no reference is made to the two ICOMOS-IAU Thematic Studies on Heritage Sites of Astronomy and Archaeoastronomy in the context of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (2010, 2017), nor the modern use of the nominated property for ritual activity by Indigenous communities. These reflect directly on two of the justifications in support of the proposed criteria, but are not considered in a comparative context.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis should have addressed these aspects and been better structured and strengthened by including more detailed information. However, ICOMOS also considers that the comparative analysis in its current form convincingly demonstrates that the nominated property stands apart from comparable sites in its geo-cultural region in terms of its combination of cultural context, early date, inclusion in long-distance trade networks, longevity and very good state of conservation.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

**Criteria under which inscription is proposed**

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi).

**Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;**

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Tak’alik Ab’aj distinguishes itself from other pre-Columbian cities in Mesoamerica for its extraordinary quantity and diversity of Preclassic stone sculpture styles and sophisticated jadeite artefacts for early powerful rulers. There was a continuum reflecting the transition from Olmec towards Maya cultural expressions, providing a unique opportunity to observe the “gradual change of thought behind the artisans’ chisel”. Tak’alik Ab’aj is said by the State Party to be like a laboratory where these changes of thought can be studied, and as such is exceptional in Mesoamerican history.

ICOMOS considers that the long history of the nominated property and the accumulation of a large number of sculptures of different styles is an expression of a very interesting and possibly unique evolutionary development, but has not been demonstrated to be a masterpiece of human creative genius per se. Uniqueness is not, on its own, sufficient to justify inscription. The nominated property must be considered in a broad cultural-historical context, and its possible creative excellence assessed in relation to that context.

**Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;**

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the long-distance trade route running along the Pacific littoral and Tehuantepec Isthmus led to the sharing...
of cultural traits with places as far away as the Olmec lowlands in present-day Mexico on one end and today’s El Salvador on the other, starting in the Middle Preclassic period and lasting for several centuries. This interchange is manifested in the monumental ceremonial architecture used as ritual scenarios for the public performance of the Preclassic period incipient chiefdoms, the sculptural programme, the urban design based on ancestral cosmological precepts, and water management, which all attest to a high level of urban planning. Furthermore, the quantity and diversity of Preclassic period stone sculptures reflect the shifting influences that resulted from the transition of Olmec towards Maya cultural expressions. In combination with the evidence of advances in early writing, mathematics and calendrical systems found there, the nominated property is considered by the State Party to be the best representative in this extraordinary cultural region.

ICOMOS considers that Tak’alik Ab’aj played a critical role in an important ancient long-distance trade route. Through the interchange of ideas and materials, it received and disseminated many of the most advanced ideas on town planning, styles of monumental arts and technological advances, all expressed in the layout, architecture and sculptural programme of the nominated property.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the archaeological evidence situates the nominated property among the first ancient sites located on the long-distance trade route along the Pacific littoral and Isthmus of Tehuantepec to display the symbolic expressions of astronomical observations (sculpture alignments, offering placements, the orientation of the urban plan with an axis mundi centre point), together with evidence of the Long Count calendar system and the development of hieroglyphic writing represented by and sculpted into stone monuments.

Furthermore, the re-use, re-assemblage and re-combination of sculptures of different styles and previous epochs for public display in architectonic scenarios is particularly conspicuous at Tak’alik Ab’aj and appears to be a central element in its 1,700-year-long occupation.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is an exceptional example of the early development and use of a large number of important cultural traditions, some of which are now considered to be representative of Mesoamerica, including astronomical observations and their expression in urban planning and design, calendrical systems and hieroglyphic writing. Furthermore, the re-use and re-combination of sculptures of different styles and previous epochs including, for example, sculptures of Olmec and Maya cultures, is an outstanding example of the creation of public displays or architectonic scenarios.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the act of re-using and re-assembling sculptures of different styles and previous epochs for public display in architectonic scenarios, whereby monuments from the Middle Preclassic period Olmec culture were extracted from their original placements to form part of a historic “open air museum” in the Late Preclassic period, indicate the intention to evoke the past and create a historic discourse, particularly in times of crisis.

ICOMOS recognises the potential for Outstanding Universal Value in the phenomenon described by the State Party. However, it is better justified as a cultural tradition under criterion (iii).

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the National Archaeological Park Tak’alik Ab’aj is an important sacred ancestral place for present-day Indigenous peoples, where they perform ceremonial rites and perpetuate their ancestral spirituality. The predominant cultural/linguistic groups are K’iche’, Mam, Kaqchikel and Tz’utujil.

ICOMOS recognises the importance the nominated property holds for different Indigenous communities. However, ICOMOS considers that the continuity and direct association between the archaeological features of the nominated property and the current practices by Indigenous peoples have not yet been sufficiently documented. In addition, the persistence and resilience of beliefs can be observed at many sites in the geo-cultural region and around the world. In the framework of this nomination, it has not yet been well demonstrated through the comparative analysis that the nominated property can be considered outstanding under this criterion.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iii), but that criteria (i), (iv) and (vi) have not been demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the archaeological evidence being whole and intact regarding the transition from Olmec to Maya cultural expressions, the urban layout based on cosmological precepts and astronomical orientations, and the structures and sacred spaces for ritual performances.
The archaeological deposits are intact, and are not subject to major pressures. After its abandonment around 900 CE, the nominated property was reclaimed by dense vegetation. In more recent times, coffee, rubber and sugar cane plantations were created, which, according to the State Party, do not reach the archaeological levels in the ground. The location on privately-owned land with restricted access added to the protection of the larger archaeological site. Excavations have discovered largely undisturbed contexts, and the documentation and inventoring of the finds have created a very complete archaeological record.

The boundaries have been drawn to encompass elements located in the Central Group of the larger archaeological site that contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS noted that the nominated property represents less than three percent of the entire 650-ha archaeological site. Very little information has been provided about what is – or what is expected to be – located in the vast archaeological areas outside the nominated property. It is known, however, that the urban elements of Tak'alik Ab'aj are not restricted to the nominated property, but continue beyond its boundaries. Even though the nominated property is said by the State Party to represent in an adequate manner the whole of the larger site, it is difficult to confirm this statement on the basis of the information provided. The lack of contextualisation of the Central Group, and the fact that the rationale for the delimitation of the nominated property is not explained in the nomination dossier beyond that it comprises the area donated by the land owners, raises questions about integrity. An example of the seemingly arbitrary definition of the nominated property’s boundaries is that the drinking water supply system at El Escondite, which is described in detail in the nomination dossier, is located outside the nominated property.

The condition of integrity of the nominated property, therefore, cannot refer to the completeness of the site as one human settlement with all its functional elements; rather, it refers to the integrity of the elements that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value within the nominated area.

The State Party is planning to continue construction of the partially built “El Caracol del Tiempo” site museum inside the nominated property, which was initially seen as a potential threat to its integrity. However, additional information provided by the State Party in November 2021 presented evidence of an archaeological survey that had been conducted in 2005, two years before construction of the museum was initiated. Further information sent by the State Party in February 2022 indicated that the building site was strategically selected in an area with little archaeological evidence, based on survey excavations. The museum building is one storey high and will be screened from the rest of the site by trees. The State Party also explained that fifty percent of the building has already been constructed. Structural studies carried out in 2020 determined that about twenty percent of the existing building is unsound and will have to be demolished for safety reasons. The new construction will start in May 2022 and is scheduled to be completed in 2023. The State Party also clarified that the current visitor and research infrastructure at the site will not be removed.

ICOMOS notes that, according to researchers, the distribution of sculpture in the city itself was not haphazard. Most monuments were placed in the Central Group on Terraces 2 and 3. The clustered distribution of monuments in the Central Group draws attention to this sector as the ceremonial heart of Tak'alik Ab'aj, and also to the likelihood that the display of stone monuments there related to this critical function.

While it is known that elements that support the potential Outstanding Universal Value exist outside the limits of the nominated property (such as the drinking water supply system at El Escondite), ICOMOS considers that the known and well-preserved elements within the boundaries of the nominated property, the area called “the ceremonial heart of Tak'alik Ab'aj” by the investigators, are sufficient to support the potential Outstanding Universal Value and meet the condition of integrity. Furthermore, ICOMOS recognises that the entire 650-hectare archaeological site is protected as National Cultural Heritage, and recommends that the State Party pay specific attention to maintaining the integrity of this entire area.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on its ability to truthfully and credibly express its cultural values through its attributes. It can be said to be authentic in its location and setting, forms and designs, and materials and substances, as demonstrated by the archaeological evidence, as well as in its intangible heritage, including spirit and, to a degree, its continued uses.

The archaeological remains that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value (buildings, sculptures and objects) display a high degree of authenticity due to the fact they had not been disturbed prior to excavation. The State Party highlights the carefully conducted excavations, the painstaking documentation of the archaeological evidence, and the respectful stabilisation and conservation of the remains, using materials directly from the area. The restored drainage canals still prevent the accumulation of surface water at the archaeological site. Another important aspect in the discussion of the nominated property’s authenticity is its continued use as a pilgrimage site for Indigenous spiritual guides (Ajq’ijab’).

At the nominated property an ecological restoration is being conducted, but changes can be detected in the wider setting due to the modern agricultural use of the area (coffee, rubber and sugar cane plantations). Also, some of the ancient sculptures have been removed to a shelter (since the planned museum is not operational),
where they are displayed to the public. Copies are exhibited in their place.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of authenticity have been met.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

**Boundaries**

The 14.88-hectare nominated property contains sixty percent of the Central Group of the 650-hectare archaeological site of Tak’alik Ab’aj. The nominated property is demarcated on the ground by a metal fence or vegetation barrier. The extent of the nominated property, plus its 0.50-hectare buffer zone, corresponds with the 15.38-hectare area donated to the state of Guatemala.

Currently, about one hundred people work at the Tak’alik Ab’aj National Park and they are considered by the State Party to be the nominated property’s population. No-one actually lives in the nominated property.

Very little information is given by the State Party concerning the archaeological remains located outside the nominated property. More information on this subject was requested by ICOMOS in order to improve its understanding of the relationship of the nominated part of the Central Group with the rest of the 650-hectare archaeological site, and the rationale for the nominated property’s delimitation. The State Party responded in February 2022 that the nominated area was defined based on three factors: (a) the strategic selection of the concentration of the greatest intensity and diversity of archaeological remains; (b) the existence of intensive research; and (c) the delimitation and legal certainty of the nominated property.

As a buffer zone, the State Party proposed a three-metre-wide band around the nominated property that it calls a “Preliminary Protection Strip.” In addition, information provided in November 2021, the State Party instead proposed a 43.8-hectare “initial protection zone” surrounding the nominated property. It contains an agroforestry zone of the Finca Santa Margarita, with rubber, coffee, cacao, sugar cane and three species of timber trees being the main crops. The State Party also proposed ten “protection islands” to be located throughout the 650-hectare archaeological site. No information on the exact extent of the “protection islands” or their selection was given.

The newly proposed “initial protection zone” has been defined using the northern limit of the Finca Santa Margarita, which surrounds the nominated area, as well as the natural environment with the geographical location between two rivers and the presence of streams and water sources as references. According to the State Party, the relevant owners have agreed to the proposal since national legislation protects the areas around water courses and thus limits the possible uses of the area. However, the State Party indicates that it might reduce the proposed area in the future, depending on the outcome of negotiations with the new administration of the Finca Santa Margarita.

No additional information has been provided about the extent or delimitation of the “protection islands.” It was indicated, however, that a distinction has to be made between “potential protection islands” (6) and “current protection islands” (3), the total number of proposed “islands” thus being reduced from ten to nine. Both the “protection islands” and the “initial protection zone” are still under discussion within the State Party and have no legal basis yet. The State Party mentions that the discussions will probably take at least two more years.

It should be noted that ICOMOS does not consider creating “Protection Islands” to be an appropriate way of adding more elements to the nominated property. If there is a desire to reinforce the protection of these elements without including them in the arguments supporting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, they could be included in an appropriate buffer zone.

In its “Work Plan for Delimiting the Buffer Zone”, the State Party indicates that the ultimate goal is to declare the remainder of the entire 650-hectare archaeological site outside the nominated property as a buffer zone.

In view of the potential for fragmentation of ownership of the land around the nominated property, it is especially important to define a functioning buffer zone that will provide an additional layer of protection for the nominated property and help avoid possible future land uses that are incompatible with the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS therefore considers that a buffer zone with complementary legal restrictions placed on its use and development should be put in place before a possible inscription of the nominated property on the World Heritage List, as outlined in paragraphs 103-107 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

Depending on the details concerning its establishment, the concept proposed as “initial protection zone” could function as buffer zone for the nominated property. However, ICOMOS recommends to pursue the goal of declaring the entire site outside the nominated area as buffer zone.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that, despite weaknesses, the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. Criteria (ii) and (iii) are justified, but criteria (i), (iv) and (vi) have not been demonstrated. On the basis of the identified criteria, the conditions of authenticity and integrity for the nominated property have been met. The lack of a functional buffer zone is an issue that need to be addressed by the State Party.
4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
The archaeological site of Tak'alik Ab'aj has been known for over a hundred years, and has been intensely studied in the framework of the ongoing “National Project Abaj Takalik” (the site was originally called Abaj Takalik instead of Tak'alik Ab'aj), initiated in 1987 with a multidisciplinary team that now has about one hundred participants and is fully funded by the Ministry of Culture and Sports. The project maintains an on-site archive that contains the reports, maps, inventories and other documentation of the archaeological interventions. Furthermore, an effort has been made to gather in the archive all documentation generated previous to the beginning of the project. The flora and fauna existing at the archaeological site are inventoried by the Ecology Unit and the edible and medicinal plants are presented in an Archaeobotanical Garden.

This information provides the management team with excellent baseline data for all aspects of management, including monitoring and conservation as well as disaster prevention and recuperation.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested additional information on future research activities, and the existence of a research plan or strategy. The State Party responded in February 2022 that a research plan exists. It highlights the importance of the connection between research and conservation, and names several research objectives linked to the justification for inscription of the nominated property. It remains unclear to what degree the research themes involve excavation in the nominated property or in the larger archaeological site.

Conservation measures
The nominated property’s generally good state of conservation is due, at least in part, to the fact that investigation and conservation activities are planned and executed together by a multidisciplinary management team. Furthermore, the project has on-site laboratories and storage facilities. A preventative conservation programme and constant monitoring of the nominated property seem to have avoided serious problems.

The basic principle of the consolidation works is to restore the stability of a building or architectonic feature without changing its original design or condition. Reconstruction is applied only if necessary, and every restoration measure has to be reversible (the same principles are applied in the laboratory with the archaeological artefacts and materials). The materials employed are as close as possible to the original. The State Party indicates that five-percent cement is used to enhance the durability of the clay against weathering, but that the material has a texture and consistency very similar to the one used by the ancient builders. Before being applied to the archaeological remains, the materials are tested experimentally. Some of the monuments considered to be very fragile due to the clay building material (the ancient ball court, for example) have been excavated, documented and reinterted.

Some of the monuments included in the nominated property are covered with a roof in situ, or have been stored. In 2002, a selective replication programme for the sculptures was initiated. The original objects are presented in a more protected place or stored, while the replicas can be viewed on-site and used, for example, in modern ritual activities.

In the additional information submitted in February 2022, the State Party presented a Strategic Plan for the Conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj. The plan details the general concepts of conservation at the archaeological site and mentions some of the measures taken for the conservation of monuments, structures, stelae, altars and canals. These include adding protective roofs, undertaking maintenance and establishing monitoring frequencies.

ICOMOS notes that no information has been provided on the status of the strategic conservation plan (such as its date of approval), and considers that it will be necessary to develop a more detailed and specific conservation plan that can be used as a guide for future work on the monuments. Furthermore, ICOMOS suggests that the possibility of improving the materials used in the protective outdoor roofs (recycled material or imitation palm leaves) should be explored by the State Party.

Monitoring
The State Party presents a list of more than twenty indicators and the periodicity of their inspection. The constant monitoring is described by the State Party as an essential part of the maintenance and continuous conservation programme, which provides the information (reports) for actions to be scheduled. The results of these proceedings are reflected in annual institutional reports. Also, on an annual basis, the National Archaeological Park staff asks for permission to review the known archaeological remains located on the privately-owned lands surrounding the nominated property.

The site’s documentation centre is mentioned as the depository for collected information, but it is unclear how the data is collected and stored (such as in databases).

ICOMOS considers that the good state of conservation of the nominated property indicates a seamless functioning of the feedback processes between monitoring and maintenance/conservation. The abundant experience of the on-site site staff is also an important asset. However, several of the described indicators are, in fact, maintenance or administrative activities. While the periodicity and the findings reported during these activities can serve as indicators, it would be helpful to know what quantitative indicators are used to monitor in a comparable way the state of conservation of the buildings and carved stone monuments, for example, or the amount of annual earth movements in the reburied structures.
ICOMOS recommends creating more explicit links between the indicators, the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and the known and potential threats to the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable to further develop the conservation plan and the monitoring system to include quantitative data that helps define the state of conservation of all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, as well as the factors affecting the nominated property, and to adapt the monitoring system for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
In 1989, the National Council for Protected Areas declared Tak'alik Ab'aj an Area of Special Protection (Law Decree 4-89). In 2002, the entire 650-hectare archaeological site was declared National Cultural Heritage under the category of National Archaeological Park by the Ministry of Culture and Sports, due to its important archaeological, historical, artistic and cultural values (Ministerial Decree 528-2002).

ICOMOS notes that the use of the same name, "National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj", for both the entire archaeological site and for the nominated property has the potential to cause confusion and recommends revising the name.

Cultural heritage protected under the 2002 Decree may not be altered unless duly authorised by the General Directorate of Cultural and Natural Heritage. Furthermore, authorisation by the municipality is also necessary. The Decree also implies an obligation by the owner to protect and conserve the nominated property, and that any act that impairs the values of the property or affects their appreciation is prohibited.

The Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, which establishes that archaeological monuments and relics are state property (Article 121), also supports conservation of the archaeological site and its surroundings. Due to the geographical location of the nominated property between two nearby rivers (Ixchíyá and Nimá), there is also a layer of environmental legal protection that focuses on forests and vegetation on the banks of rivers and lakes and near water sources (Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, Article 126, and the Law for the Protection and Improvement of the Environment of Guatemala, Decree No. 68-86). Watersheds are also protected (Forestry Law and its regulations, Decree No. 101-96), and it is strictly prohibited to cut trees up to twenty-five metres from the banks of rivers, streams, lakes, lagoons and water sources (Decree No. 90-97, Health Code).

Two of the five privately-owned farms surrounding the nominated property, Finca Santa Margarita and Finca Buenos Aires, are declared Private Natural Reserves. The Private Natural Reserves have their own conservation plans for their natural and cultural heritage, which contribute to the conservation and protection of the nominated property as well as the formation of natural corridors surrounding it. The remaining privately-owned properties are engaged in the process of being declared Private Natural Reserves.

An "alternative altars" programme and corresponding regulations were implemented in 1995 in order to provide Indigenous groups with adequate places for ceremonial rituals, as well as guidelines for cooperation concerning the site’s conservation principles.

Further information was requested in December 2021 regarding the legal status of the “initial protection zone” and “protection islands” proposed by the State Party in November 2021. As mentioned above, the State Party responded that both concepts are still under discussion and as yet have no legal basis.

While it is indicated that the nominated property as well as the entire archaeological site are protected at the highest possible level, ICOMOS considers that further details are needed about the zoning that regulates present and future land uses in the archaeological site surrounding the nominated property. In additional information provided in November 2021, the State Party indicates that, while the relevant laws exist, the regulations that would allow their application are not in place.

Management system
Since its beginning in 1987, the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj has been funded and managed by the Ministry of Culture and Sports through the Vice-Ministry and Head Office of Cultural and Natural Heritage/Institute of Anthropology and History. The local management structure of the National Archaeological Park is organised in two sections: the Technical Scientific Coordination, and the Technical Administrative Coordination. Together, these two sections have five technicians, two professionals and ninety local members on the operative staff.

Since 2011, the National Archaeological Park has developed and implemented five-year management plans to ensure long-term investigation, conservation, protection, outreach, operation and integrated management. The plans are framed in policies and in the context of broader plans such as the National Development Plan: K’atun, Nuestra Guatemala 2032, the Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism in Guatemala 2015-2025, and the Municipal Development and Territorial Management Plan 2019-2032.

The Municipal Development and Territorial Management Plan 2019-2032 stipulates that archaeological sites in the municipality are in the “protection and special use of the land” category, which allows investigation, conservation, and restoration of historical assets. It contemplates the conditional use of parks and ecological trails, low
environmental-impact tourism, recreational, cultural and sports activities according to the local cultural characteristics, small-scale commerce, and handicrafts. In this category of protected use, residential, industrial, educational and health facilities as well as liquid and solid waste treatment facilities are prohibited.

The current management plan (Management Plan for 2021-2025) details the management philosophy, strategic objectives and actions to be taken to maintain and improve management efficiency and achieve the established goals. These goals, along with actions, were developed by representatives of different management, operative, and technical units of the National Archaeological Park, with the guidance of an external consultant to foresee current and future needs.

The current management plan also includes a description of the regional context and the characteristics of the proposed area of the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj, its zoning, carrying capacity, social inclusion and emerging projects, as well as information on the funding mechanisms. A meeting with key participants of the El Asintal municipality was held to validate the plan. ICOMOS considers the plan to be largely adequate, and highlights the very extensive experience of the managing staff. However, while the plan mentions the nominated property's proposed Outstanding Universal Value, the connection between it and the management goals is not very clear.

No direct references are made in the management plan to the use of Heritage Impact Assessment processes. ICOMOS notes that Heritage Impact Assessments are a pre-requisite for any development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the nominated property, as is required under paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested additional information on a risk management plan, which the State Party had announced for early 2022. In the additional information submitted in February 2022 the State Party included the Integrated Risk Management Plan for the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj. The plan specifies objectives and a methodology, and details a long list of actions. The list is divided in three priority levels and addresses seventeen different threats. While the plan covers a wide range of risks, ICOMOS considers that the document needs to be more practical in order to be a useful tool. The State Party did not indicate whether the plan was in preparation, or approved.

The State Party proposes the creation of a non-governmental organisation as a cultural association or foundation to strengthen the involvement of the population in support of the National Archaeological Park.

Today, the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj is an operative programme of the Guatemalan Government, and as such is granted an annual budget not less than the last assigned budget investment. In addition, the future investment planned for completion of the site museum is about US$1.925 million. The State Party indicates it is considering creating an independent accounting competency to minimise exposure to budget fragility and limited capacity for implementation.

ICOMOS considers that the management system and plan are generally adequate. The requirement for Heritage Impact Assessments should be made more explicit, and more information is needed on the risk management plan and the proposed non-governmental organisation to strengthen the involvement of the population.

**Visitor management**

The nomination dossier discusses visitor management in some detail, including visitor facilities and infrastructure policies and programmes related to the presentation and promotion of the nominated property.

Visits to the nominated property are highly controlled. Visitors are not allowed to tour it without being accompanied by officially recognised guides, and they are prohibited from climbing elevated structures or entering areas where restoration or excavation work is ongoing. ICOMOS notes the need to improve the security measures around open excavations.

In charge of visitor-related activities at the nominated property are the Infrastructure Unit (six collaborators) and the Guardians, Guides and Entrance Fee Collection Unit (eighteen collaborators). The archaeological park offers visitor facilities such as restrooms, cafeteria and a handicraft shop, and there is a continual training programme for guards and guides in order to ensure that the visitors receive the best possible information during their visits. The Regulation of behaviour for visitors to archaeological sites and national parks under the administration of the Ministry of Culture and Sports was approved in 2012 (Ministerial Decree No. 1171-2012), and offers a basis to control visitors to the site.

Visitors to the National Archaeological Park can find twenty-four strategically located interpretive maps and two scale models of the entire archaeological site. Additionally, visitors have access to a temporary archaeological exhibition on-site and are offered printed information and booklets. The Tak'alik Ab'aj “El Caracol del Tiempo” (“The Snail of Time”) José Luis Ralda González site museum has been under construction since 2007. The State Party provided additional information in February 2022 on the time-frame of the museum construction, its design and layout, and the selection of the building site. The museum once completed will include four exhibition halls, a sculpture room, a souvenir shop, a cafeteria, a conference room, two study halls, storage areas, and a conservation area, among others. No documentation centre or laboratories are included. For that reason, the existing installations will continue in use. ICOMOS recommends that visitor management tools
Indigenous communities represent an important group of visitors, the predominant cultural and linguistic groups being K’iche’, Mam, Kaqchikel and Tz’utujil, who perform rituals at the Archaeological National Park. An average of 250 ceremonies are held annually, with the participation of more than 1,760 people.

The National Archaeological Park Tak’alik Ab’aj received the highest category of Sello Q Verde (Green Q Seal) certification in 2017 under the Tourism Quality and Sustainability certifications programme of the Guatemalan Institute of Tourism. It has since served as an example for other parks and natural areas.

**Community involvement**

The State Party does not address community involvement in detail, but does mention that representatives of the National Archaeological Park held a meeting with key participants of the El Asintal municipality to validate the management plan. There is also mention of community workshops held with Indigenous participation, focused on the World Heritage nomination. There may be a further need for communication and the possibility of more active community participation.

The ritual activities of the Indigenous community at the site are protected by Ministerial Decrees 981-2011 and 1171-2012, issued by the Ministry of Culture and Sports. The Decrees grant the right to spiritual guides (Ajq’iab’) to access the archaeological site, individually or accompanied by a group of people who practice ancestral spirituality, recognising it as a Sacred Place of the local Indigenous communities, thus providing traditional protection of the site. The Decrees also guarantee the respectful behaviour of visitors to the site in relation to the activities carried out by Indigenous communities. These Decrees make some degree of community involvement or consultation probable, and ICOMOS is not aware of any conflicts with the traditional communities.

Concerning the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous communities, as is prescribed in paragraph 123 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, additional information provided by the State Party in November 2021 advises that two phases of socialisation activities have been held, in 2014 and 2020. In the framework of these activities, workshops were held and opinion polls for visitors were carried out. As a result, there are signed letters of free, prior and informed consent by representatives of local communities, representatives of the central and municipal government, and members of civil society. A 2021 survey carried out for the Mayan Spiritual Guides indicates a general feeling of acceptance towards the possible inscription of the nominated property on the World Heritage List.

The private owners of the lands surrounding the nominated property also appear to be generally supportive, having granted access to their lands for monitoring activities. However, they have not expressed an interest in having their lands included within a buffer zone that has land use restrictions. The discussions with the owners are described as complicated and ongoing.

**Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property**

In summary, ICOMOS recognises that the nominated property is protected at the highest level of national legislation but considers that further details are needed about the regulation of present and future land uses, especially in the area around the nominated property, and that the regulations that will allow application of the relevant laws need to be created. ICOMOS considers that the system and management plan are adequate. However, more information is needed on the newly proposed non-governmental organisation to strengthen the involvement of the population and the independent accounting agency. Risk management and conservation need to be addressed in a more specific and practical manner than in the very general plans presented in the February 2022 additional information. Finally, mechanisms for Heritage Impact Assessments need to be included in the management system.

**6 Conclusion**

ICOMOS considers that the most remarkable aspect of Tak’alik Ab’aj is the variety of sculpture styles that document in great detail the transition from the Olmec civilisation to the emergence of Early Mayan culture. Also of interest is the nominated property’s participation in a wide-ranging trade network through which many of the materials and ideas that now define Mesoamerican culture travelled. The nominated property also shows manifestations of urban planning that include water management, cosmological precepts and astronomical orientations.

The continuous investigation and documentation of the archaeological record at the site for more than three decades has provided a solid basis for conserving and managing the nominated property. The good state of conservation is a result of this commendable work.

ICOMOS acknowledges that National Archaeological Park Tak’alik Ab’aj has the potential to justify Outstanding Universal Value on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iii).

ICOMOS nevertheless considers that additional work is required to address a number of significant concerns.

The lack of an effective buffer zone with clear and effective land-use zoning around the nominated property is the main concern, as well as the missing regulations that make application of existing legislation to protect the archaeological site surrounding the nominated property difficult. While management of the site seems generally adequate, several of the management tools (visitor and conservation plans and a risk management plan, for
example) in their present state do not seem to reflect the experience accumulated at the nominated property, nor offer sufficient guidance for future action at the nominated property. Furthermore, quantifiable monitoring indicators need to be adopted, all of which need to be related to the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj, Guatemala, be referred back to the State Party to allow it to:

- Analyse the limitations of the legal protection of the nominated property and the surrounding archaeological site caused by the lack of regulations that allow the application of the relevant laws, and put in place these regulations;

- Establish a buffer zone that effectively reduces the threat of land-use in the areas surrounding the nominated property that could affect the property’s proposed Outstanding Universal Value in a negative manner and meets the requirements outlined in paragraphs 103-107 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention;

- Define the exact location and extension of the “protection islands”, as well as the permitted land-uses and their legal status, and consider their inclusion within the boundaries of the buffer zone;

- Update the management plan to include a practical risk management plan, a visitor management plan and a detailed conservation plan aligned with the research framework, all aimed at sustaining the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, and make more explicit the connection between the management goals and the proposed Outstanding Universal Value;

- Ensure Heritage Impact Assessments are included in the management processes and are undertaken as a pre-requisite for any development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the nominated property, as is required under paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention;

- Further include local and Indigenous communities in decision-making processes for the nominated property.

ICOMOS further recommends that the name of the nominated property be changed in order to facilitate the differentiation between the nominated property and the entire archaeological site.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Developing quantifiable monitoring indicators that measure the state of conservation of all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and that take into account the factors affecting the nominated property,

b) Addressing the potential fire hazard at the current storage and archive installations,

c) Establishing an independent accounting competency to minimise exposure to budget fragility and limited capacity for implementation,

d) Further exploring the creation of a non-governmental organisation to strengthen the involvement of the population,

e) Revising the roofing solutions for the protected elements on-site in order to evaluate their effectiveness and visual impact,

f) Improving security measures around open excavations;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
IV Cultural properties

A Arab States
Minor modifications to the boundaries

B Europe – North America
Minor modifications to the boundaries

C Latin America and the Caribbean
Minor modifications to the boundaries
Abu Mena
(Egypt)
No 90bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Egypt

Name of property
Abu Mena

Location
District of Burg al-Arab
Gouvernate of Al Iskandariyah (Alexandria)

Inscription
1979

Brief description
Located south of Alexandria, Abu Mena represents the development of an early Christian pilgrimage centre from the 5th to the 7th centuries CE. Growing up around the tomb of Saint Menas, the ancient pilgrimage centre developed into an unparalleled complex of early Christian monastic architecture. The archaeological site shows the remains of a large ecclesiastical built complex, comprising several churches, public buildings serving as pilgrims' rest houses, two public baths, workshops and cisterns as well as the remains of the civil settlement around the ecclesiastical buildings. The site was important in attracting Christian pilgrims during Antiquity and represents a mixture of religious, funerary and living architecture.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Issues raised

Background
At the time of the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List in 1979, the boundaries were not accurately defined. The inscribed area coincided with the registered archaeological site as per Decision n.698/1956 of the then Egyptian Minister of Education. At the time, the protected area comprised 600 acres, to which additional 300 acres were added in 1986. In 2008, the State Party provided a map of the property and its dimension, amounting to 182.72 ha. No buffer zone was defined either at the time of the inscription.

Modification
The proposal for a minor boundary modification of the property's delimitations and for establishing a buffer zone responds to a World Heritage Committee's decision adopted at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, Cambodia 2013), which requested a revision of the boundaries based on the archaeological survey carried out by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the creation of a buffer zone.

The minor boundary modification implies the addition of land plots adjoining the designated archaeological site and delimited by the drainage ditch created in 1968 to separate the archaeological area from the agricultural land and the exclusion of some plots of land that are located outside the drainage ditch which has been selected as the boundary of the proposed buffer zone.

The new proposed boundary for the property would correctly reflect the location and boundaries of the archaeological site at the time of inscription.

The land plots to be added to the property are not included within the archaeological site but are comprised within the delineation of the drainage ditch.

Two land plots are proposed for exclusion (0.689 ha and 0.424 ha respectively): they fall under the jurisdiction of the General Authority for Reconstruction and Agricultural Development in Dokki. These lands were handed over to young graduates for cultivation, with the approval of the Standing Committee of Islamic and Coptic Antiquities, issued in 1986. No archaeological evidence was found in these areas since 1987, when they were included in an agricultural scheme to produce sugar beet. In 2014 the Standing Committee of Islamic and Coptic Antiquities approved the exclusion of these areas from the designated archaeological site.

The proposed buffer zone covers the area delimited by a drainage ditch created to drain the excess of water coming from the agricultural land surrounding the property. The ditch is managed by the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation.

The area of the enlarged property will become 414.62 ha, the area of the property with its buffer zone will become 448.35 ha, hence the buffer zone will cover 33.73 ha. The boundaries of the archaeological site, the enlarged property, and the buffer zone are precisely defined by points identified by geographical coordinates.

The State Party considers that this modification will strengthen the protection and preservation of the property and enhance its integrity and authenticity because the structures located in the added areas are architecturally and structurally linked with those within the archaeological site. The buffer zone will contribute to protecting the property as it assists, along with 170 water pumping stations, in reducing the rise of the groundwater level in the archaeological area. A project to lower the groundwater level in the archaeological area began in
2006 but it was interrupted in 2011 and, only since 2016, the Ministry of Antiquities has started a plan for a maintenance system capable to lower the groundwater level.

A wall has been built around the archaeological area, to prevent encroachment.

The enlarged property and the buffer zone will be protected under the provisions of the Antiquities Protection Law n. 91/2018, its executive regulations, the Agricultural Law, and the Irrigation Law. No construction is allowed within the property without prior approval by the Supreme Council of Antiquities as per the provisions of the law.

The enlarged property is owned by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities which is responsible for the protection and management of the property in coordination with the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation. A Steering Committee was established in 2018 as per Presidential Decree n. 555 to coordinate management at all World Heritage properties in Egypt. This Steering Committee forms the nucleus of the management also for Abu Mena. There is a plan to issue another Presidential Decree to form a Supreme Committee for World Heritage properties, with a mandate to establish subcommittees and a technical secretariat, that will ensure effective participation of and coordination among all concerned parties in the protection and management of the property.

ICOMOS notes that the newly added land plots are not included within the boundaries of the archaeological site, which only covers 246.26 ha and not the entirety of the enlarged property, therefore it is not clear what protection designation applies to the part of the property that is not included within the designated archaeological site.

ICOMOS also notes that the buffer zone is very limited and, whilst it provides protection against direct physical encroachment and contributes to reducing the rise of the groundwater level, it does not suffice to ensure protection from possible developments that may occur outside the boundary of the buffer zone. No information has been provided about the management regime applicable to the wider setting and how the rural environment outside the boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone, which contributes to the enjoyment of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, will be maintained over time.

ICOMOS further observes that no specific management structure for the property is yet in place and that the operationalisation of the management plan (2022-2025) mentioned in the minor boundary modification request is still uncertain. It would be very important that an ad-hoc management body for the property be established as early as possible, involving all relevant actors, to guarantee the effective protection and management of Abu Mena. It would be equally important that mechanisms be established to guarantee Abu Mena’s immediate and wider settings are managed in a way that supports the property’s Outstanding Universal Value.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the proposed minor modification to the boundary of Abu Mena, Egypt, be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Clarify the protection regime that will apply to the enlarged property which is not included within the designated archaeological site;
- Establish an appropriate protective designation for the areas added to the property, in order to ensure that it is covered in its entirety by explicit legal protection designations;
- Establish an ad-hoc management body for the property.

ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the proposed buffer zone for Abu Mena, Egypt, be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Consider enlarging the buffer zone or, at least, establish mechanisms that guarantee the effective management of the immediate and wider settings of Abu Mena in a way that is supportive of the property’s Outstanding Universal Value and the maintenance of the rural character of the property’s surroundings.
Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the proposed buffer zone (February 2022)
Historic Cairo
(Egypt)
No 89bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Egypt

Name of property
Historic Cairo

Location
Governorate of al-Qahirah (Cairo)

Inscription
1979

Brief description
Founded after the Muslim conquests in 641 CE on the Eastern bank of the river Nile, Cairo was enlarged by subsequent ruling dynasties until it became the new centre of the Islamic world, reaching its golden age in the 14th century. Its overall urban landscape still reflects its complex medieval layout which was respected and enhanced in later eras. Historic Cairo is an extraordinary survivor not just for the corpus of its architectural masterpieces but because whole neighbourhoods have survived, each with an exceptional richness of urban fabric and historic monuments. These include an unparalleled number of Sabil-s (public fountains), many still with their underground water tanks, Masjid-s (mosques), Madrasas and Kuttab-s (schools), palaces and Bimaristan-s (Muslim charities), all of which are still integrated into the urban areas which they served.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Issues raised

Background
As inscribed in 1979, Historic Cairo covered 32 sq. km (3,200 ha). Its boundaries encompassed a series of neighbourhoods where the urban fabric was still intact. The following focal points were identified in the nomination dossier – from north to south:

- The Citadel area, with accumulative surroundings of Mamluk palaces, the mosque of Sultan Hasan (1356-1359), Al-Darb al-Ahmar with the thoroughfares Suq as-Silah and Khatt al-Tabbana, lined with Mamluk and Ottoman monuments.
- The Fatimid nucleus of Cairo, from Bab Zuwailla to the North Wall with the city gates Bab al-Futuh and Bab an-Nasr, and with the concentration of major Ayyubid and Mamluk monuments on the main street, Shari al-A’zam.
- The necropolis from Al-Fustat to the northern limits of Fatimid Cairo, including a large number of mausoleums and funerary complexes of successive periods.

Attached to the nomination dossier was a map which was said to ‘roughly’ show these areas. It was based on a detailed survey of the main monuments undertaken in 1948, which in turn was based on detailed topographical surveys of 1911 and 1936.

In decision 28 COM 15B.47 of 2004, the Committee expressed its concern about the lack of clear details of the boundaries and requested the State Party to identify the exact boundaries of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone on a detailed topographic map and to submit it by 1 February 2005, for consideration of the Committee at its 29th session (Durban, South Africa) in 2005. It reiterated its request in 2005 (29 COM 7B.42) when an ICOMOS advisory mission also reiterated the need to designate “Historic Cairo within clearly defined borders including an appropriate buffer zone as one planning district”, and again in 2006 (30 COM 7B.50).

In 2006 a small scale ‘preliminary’ A4 generic black and white map was submitted by the State Party that showed parts of five zones, without description or identification of these. The Committee expressed concern in decision 30 COM 7B.50 that the exact boundaries of the inscribed property and its buffer zone had not been supplied.

In 2007, the State Party submitted four separate maps of five zones including the Fatimid city, parts of the northern and southern necropolises, and the al-Fustat area to clarify the boundaries part of the Retrospective Inventory. These showed the area of the property was 523.66 ha and the area of the buffer zone 247.5711 ha. The Committee, in decision 31COM 7B.56, noted that some clarifications of the precise boundaries are still expected, before they can be presented to the Committee for approval. These were provided and the maps were accepted by the Committee as a boundary clarification in 2008 (32 COM 8D).

As noted in the documentation submitted with the current minor boundary modification request, these 2007 maps were considered by the State Party to be inadequate as they did not reflect/adhere to all the elements included in the nomination file, and nor did the maps coincide with either protection measures or official decrees.
In 2009, the Committee in its decision 33 COM 7B.55 noted the agreement by the State Party to create a Unit supported by the local UNESCO office to coordinate work on the management plan and to “also address the absence of legal, institutional and planning frameworks and identify the delimitation (limits and buffer zone) of the Historic Cairo property with clear complementary maps.”

In 2010, the UNESCO project Urban Regeneration for Historic Cairo (URHC) was launched and it subsequently undertook a detailed study of the boundaries based on surveys, detailed maps and analysis of the urban fabric. The project then proposed boundaries that encompassed areas that showed a high degree of integrity of pre-modern street patterns, and where most of the city’s historical components and structures were visible and recognisable.

The proposed boundaries encompassed areas where:

- Monuments are “focal points” in the urban fabric, preserving their visual and spatial relationship with the surrounding context.
- The morphology of historical settlements indicated in the nomination is preserved.
- The street network reflects traditional threads and relationships between districts and neighbourhoods and important structural elements (such as mosques, suqs and khans).
- The relationship between built-up structures and open spaces reflects traditional spatial hierarchies designed for pedestrian mobility.
- The texture of the built-up fabric, characterised by the mix of various building typologies, guarantees the compactness of the historical urban fabric.

The detailed maps reflected these parameters and included areas excluded from earlier maps such as the pre-modern urban fabric that developed west of the former al-Khalij canal; the historical urban area that developed north of the city walls in the Ottoman period; the pre-modern settlements of Bulaq and al-Fustat on the Nile banks:

Overall, the boundaries included a large central area, two smaller zones and one very small zone, all surrounded by a single buffer zone. These delineations were based on a draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value produced by the URHC.

In 2012, the World Heritage Committee in its decision 36 COM 7B.51, requested the State Party to further clarify the boundaries of the property, as well as to submit a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, while in 2013 (37 COM 7B.49) it specifically requested the State Party to consider the boundaries of the property as proposed by URHC team, and to submit revised boundaries to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2015.

The State Party responded to this request in 2015 when, in its state of conservation report it confirmed that the boundaries of the property and buffer zone, as proposed by the URHC team had been approved by Ministerial Committee on 13 January 2015. The Committee in its decision 39 COM 7B.50 commended the State Party for adopting these boundaries and buffer zone.

In its 2020 state of conservation report, the State Party submitted a further revised map for the property boundaries in Arabic language, together with a justification including the names of the roads in English, but this was not submitted formally in line with paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The Committee, in decision 44 COM 7B.13, requested the State Party to establish one map for the boundaries and buffer zone of the property, and to submit this formally for review by the Advisory Bodies.

In 2022, maps were submitted with a formal request for a minor boundary modification as Annex 2 of the State Party’s state of conservation report.

**Modification**

The proposed boundaries of the property have been considerably reduced in comparison with the adopted 2008 maps and very much reduced in comparison with the URHC boundaries approved by the State Party in 2015.

The property area consists in eight zones. The parts of the property that have been removed have been added to the buffer zone which thus shows an increase in area. But the buffer zone only relates to some parts of the boundaries. The proposed reductions in relation to the 2008 maps relate to the following: three areas of the Necropolis of Qaitbay (18.98 ha); one area of the Necropolis of Al-Sayyeda Nafissa (11.36 ha); one area of the Necropolis of Al-Imam Al-Shafie (4.25 ha);. This is an area that was partially demolished through the building of a road/highway constructed during late 2019 and early 2021.

The documentation provided states that the Supreme Council for Planning and Urban Development, in accordance with the Unified Building Law No. 119 FY 2008 and its Executive Regulations, approved the boundaries and regulations of Historic Cairo in 2011. Which boundaries this approval relates to is unclear or how it relates to the approval in 2015 of the URHC boundaries.

The justification for these amended boundaries is said to be based on the National Organization for Urban Harmony (NOUH) in cooperation with Cairo Governorate which, between 2006-2007, adjusted the building lines to better define and protect valuable urban fabric and sites (Law No. 144 of 2006); on The Urban Guide for Heritage Buildings and Areas of Distinctive Value which aims to unify, expand and impose specific preservation regulations for buildings and areas in Historic Cairo as
well as in other Egyptian cities; on standards and conditions issued by NOUH that govern levels of interventions in the urban fabric of Historic Cairo. These are based on the Unified Building Law No. 119 FY issued in 2008 and its Executive Regulations issued in 2011 which redefine the protection areas inside the historic city. Three protection Zones, A, B and C were defined in 2009, with Zone A relating to the inscribed area of 2007.

Further justification proposed for the revision is that the boundaries are based upon lines where the urban fabric of the city is estimated to be continuous and coherent. They also include all registered archaeological and “valuable buildings”, that fall under the protection of the respective laws that prohibit their demolition or modification. They exclude areas where intrusions in the form of unplanned, and illegal extensions have emerged that threaten the ancient city. And they are mostly concerned with protecting and preserving the historical hubs of the city and excluding illegally erected outposts that do not belong to the historic city's heritage and urban fabric.

It is also stated that the “proposed buffer zone of the property extends the World Heritage site’s protection to include dilapidated and fragile residential clusters that were established around and on some part of the necropolises of the Mamluks, Al-Sayyeda Nafissa and Al-Imam Al-Shafei. The decision to remove them from core to buffer, was motivated by the distinction in the characteristics of their urban fabrics.”

It is clear from the World Heritage Committee decisions dating back over many sessions that the lack of clarity of the boundaries of this property has been an on-going cause of concern and one that was not fully resolved by the 2008 maps. Although in 2015 the State Party approved the URHC boundaries, these were not submitted as a minor boundary modification request for the World Heritage Committee approval. Although the URHC map is included in the documentation provided with the current request, it is not referred to and no explanation has been offered as to why the approval of the URHC boundaries in 2015 by the Ministerial Committee has been set aside.

As the World Heritage Committee decisions have also shown, there has been a long-standing concern over the lack of conservation of the urban fabric, as well as degradation and adverse new developments that have impacted on integrity.

Thus, there is an issue with evaluating this request for a minor boundary modification in relation to what might be seen as the status quo of the boundaries and the intactness of the property. IC0MOS notes that a further issue is the lack of documentation that has been presented to justify the proposed boundary delineation, in terms of specific details of urban fabric and related aspects of integrity and authenticity.

The proposed revision was submitted at the same time as a draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. This was reviewed by IC0MOS who made recommendations as to how the text might be strengthened and made more specific. The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value has thus not yet been approved by the World Heritage Committee. This means that the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value still remain to be approved and translated into detailed lists that can overarch protection and management arrangements. Thus, the proposed current revised boundaries cannot be said to be based on an approved Statement of Outstanding Universal Value or well-defined attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

Nonetheless the justification for the criteria at the time of inscription makes it clear that Historic Cairo was inscribed not just for its extraordinary corpus of monuments (with some 622 registered monuments being mentioned from 9th to 19th centuries), but also for the intact historic urban fabric of the city that reflects medieval planning. Thus, any delineation of the boundaries needs to reflect these two strands. IC0MOS considers that it is unclear how the current proposals can be seen to have taken these key parameters into account. First, in terms of the registered monuments, map 8 of the submitted documentation shows a large number of registered monuments within the proposed buffer zone. Second, in terms of intact neighbourhoods, no documentation has been provided to define or delineate the urban fabric or to explain how it might have changed and evolved since inscription and thus what might justify a contraction of the boundaries, and particularly a contraction that fragments the overall coherence and integrity of the property.

IC0MOS appreciates that some adjustments need to be made as a result of illegal construction and lack of conservation. But it considers that such adjustments need to be defined on the basis of an approved Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, detailed attributes, documentation on the urban structures of neighbourhoods and their registered monuments, and detailed surveys. It also considers that the defined World Heritage property’s boundary should be protected on all sides by a buffer zone which has a specific purpose. Thus, both the areas inside the boundaries and those within the buffer zone would need to be supported by defined protection and management systems.

Any proposals for the boundaries need to be supported by detailed documentation of the characteristics of neighbourhoods and their related monuments. This type of analysis was carried out by the URHC project and their maps were based on specific parameters. In IC0MOS’ view a similar approach is needed to justify any boundary proposals.

What is also unclear is how the minor boundary modification request relates to protection and management systems. The 2009 protective Zone A, that
is seen as one of the drivers for the proposed changes, covers a larger area that is currently proposed for the property and is more coherent than the proposed fragmented boundaries for a major part of the property. Zone C also covers a much larger area than is proposed for the buffer zone and encloses Zone A, as well as the small Zone B while the proposed buffer zone is only buffering part of the proposed property boundaries.

ICOMOS appreciates the scale and complexity of this very large urban property. It considers that the establishment of robust and coherent boundaries are clearly needed but these must be linked to a robust strategy for their delineation underpinned by an approved Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, documentation on neighbourhoods and how they have evolved since inscription, and to protection and management measure – not just for the monuments but also for the overall urban form. The boundaries also need to respect the integrity of the property, and have a rationale that is clear on the ground and well understood. What has currently been proposed has not provided adequate justification or, given the fragmentation of the boundaries, provided a robust basis for protection and management.

ICOMOS also considers that given the scale and complexity of the issue raised by the boundaries, the proposal needs to be considered together with its enhanced justification and documentation by an on-site advisory mission to the property, which should take place before a further revised minor boundary modification request is submitted.

ICOMOS would be ready and willing to offer advice on the scope of necessary documentation and analysis.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the proposed minor modification to the boundary and buffer zone of Historic Cairo, Egypt, be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

• Prepare further documentation and undertake analysis in order to:
  - Delineate in detail the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, based on an approved Statement of Outstanding Universal Value;
  - Prepare detailed maps that define the discrete urban neighbourhoods of the property and their relationship to registered monuments and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value;
  - Demonstrate changes that have taken place to the integrity of the property since inscription;

• Invite an advisory mission to the property to consider proposals for modifications to the boundaries and buffer zone in relation to the enhanced documentation and analysis and to protection and management requirements;

• On the basis of advice from the advisory mission, submit a revised minor boundary modification request.
Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone (February 2022)
Old Town of Ghadamès
(Libya)
No 362bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Libya

Name of property
Old Town of Ghadamès

Location
Tripolitania Region
Nalut District

Inscription
1986

Brief description
Located in the pre-Sahara between the Great Erg sand sea and the Al Hamada El-Hamra stone plateau, Ghadamès is constructed around the Ain al-Faras spring (locally called ghusuf), within an oasis. The old town’s circular shape, the layout of its built fabric, and the design of its buildings have been influenced by climatic conditions and water management arrangements. The settlement is integral to the surrounding palm groves. Ghadamès’ domestic architecture features a vertical division of functions, where the ground floor is used to store supplies, the first floor is for the family, and, at the top, open-air terraces are reserved for the women. The overhanging upper floors and terraces create a sort of underground network of passageways.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Issues raised

Background
No map of the property was provided when the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List but, in 2018, within the process of boundary clarification, the State Party provided a map for the property which was limited to the built-up area of Ghadamès (38.40 ha) and did not include the oasis. No buffer zone was established at the time of the property’s inscription.

Modification
The proposed modification to the boundaries of the property is the outcome of a reflection process undertaken by the State Party in dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, the attributes conveying it, and the conditions of integrity and authenticity. This process also led to the development of a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value that recognises the Old Town of Ghadamès and its surrounding oasis as one integral entity, as the oasis has been crucial for the establishment and flourishing of the settlement. Hence, there is now the need to ensure that the boundaries of the property properly reflect the 2021 approved retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

The delineation of the newly proposed and enlarged boundaries of the property has been determined based on subsequent generations of urban studies and plans, which have consistently identified Ghadamès with its oasis as one single entity worth being preserved. The boundaries of the proposed enlarged property coincide with the ring road running around the oasis and, as such, cannot be changed or modified.

The delineation of the buffer zone has also considered previous plans and protection projects. In particular, the proposed delineation of the boundaries of the buffer zone is based on the proposal for protection zones that was prepared by the Engineering Consulting Office for Utilities (ECOU) and the French CRAterre Institute for Brick Buildings under a contract with the Ghadames City Promotion and Development Authority (GCPDA) in 2009. The proposal identified four zones and seven subzones, each with regulations developed to protect the specificities of each zone.

The delineation of the proposed boundaries of the buffer zone takes into account the protection zones put forth in 2009 but relies on physical and/or real estate boundaries when the limits of the 2009 protection zones did not consider tangible or juridical boundaries.

The property is covered by the General People’s Committee Decision n. 290/1985 concerning the approval of the Urban Master Plan 2000 and by the provisions of the Law regarding the protection of museums, antiquities, old cities, and historic buildings n. 3/1994 and its executive regulations adopted by the General People’s Committee Decision n. 152/1995.

The State Party also indicates that there are plans to amend the Law n. 3/1994 and the Law on Urban Planning to establish special regulations and procedures concerning the property and its buffer zone for effective protection.

The owners of properties and land plots located within the boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone have all been informed about the status of the area and the provisions of law that apply to their assets.

The management is guaranteed by the management body – the GCPDA, which was established by the General People’s Committee Decision n. (401) of 1375 P.B. (2007) – through the aforementioned Law and its executive regulations, the Regulation for the land use
within the boundaries of the Old Town of Ghadamès, “The Property and its buffer zone” attached to the Decree establishing the GCPDA, issued by the GCPDA Chairman Decree n. 62/2019.

Collaboration among all relevant public, state and local, as well as private actors is mentioned by the State Party as a factor for effective protection. A ten-year management plan guiding the activity of the GCPDA complements the management system and addresses key issues such as safeguarding traditional construction techniques, impacts of climate change, planned maintenance of the historic water management system and risks caused by natural and human-driven affecting factors.

ICOMOS notes that the Decree n. (62) adopted in 2019 refers to delimitations of the property and of the buffer zone which are outdated. Therefore, the decision should be modified to reflect the revised delineation of the boundaries as presented in the minor boundary modification request submitted in 2022.

ICOMOS further notes that the State Party has not clarified how the inter-institutional collaboration is guaranteed and regulated, and recommends that an agreement among all relevant actors be adopted to ensure their participation in key decisions concerning the safeguard and the future of the property.

3 Recommendations

**Recommendation with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the Old Town of Ghadamès, Libya, be approved.

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Old Town of Ghadamès, Libya, be approved.

**Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Amending the Regulation for the land use within the boundaries of the Old Town of Ghadamès, “The Property and its buffer zone” to integrate the modified boundaries of the property and its buffer zone,

b) Developing the announced special regulations for the property and its buffer zone based on the Law n.3/1994 and the Law on Urban Planning as a matter of urgency,

c) Developing and adopting an agreement among all relevant institutional actors involved at different levels in the protection and management of the property to guarantee their participation in decision-making and to ensure clarity of mandates and tasks in implementing the management of the property;
Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the proposed buffer zone (February 2022)
IV Cultural properties

A Arab States
Minor modifications to the boundaries

B Europe – North America
Minor modifications to the boundaries

C Latin America and the Caribbean
Minor modifications to the boundaries
Pompeii and Herculaneum (Italy)
No 829bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Italy

Name of property
Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata

Location
Campania Region
Province of Naples

Inscription
1997

Brief description
When Vesuvius erupted on 24 August 79 AD, it engulfed the two flourishing Roman towns of Pompei and Herculaneum, as well as the many wealthy villas in the area. These have been progressively excavated and made accessible to the public since the mid-18th century. The vast expanse of the commercial town of Pompei contrasts with the smaller but better-preserved remains of the holiday resort of Herculaneum, while the superb wall paintings of the Villa Oplontis at Torre Annunziata give a vivid impression of the opulent lifestyle enjoyed by the wealthier citizens of the Early Roman Empire.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Issues raised

Background
The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1997 on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv) and (v). It comprises seven component parts.

In 2009, in response to the Retrospective Inventory, the State Party confirmed the extent of the property at 98.05 ha and of the buffer zone at 24.35 ha (Decision 33 COM 8D). The latter, fragmented and very limited in scope, was intended to ensure the protection of detected but buried archaeological remains. The buffer zone connects the archaeological site of Pompei to the Villa of the Mysteries (west of the town), the property area of the Herculaneum component part to the Villa of the Papyri (west of Herculaneum), including the immediate surroundings of both, and Villa A to Villa B at Torre Annunziata.

The archaeological areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata (Villa Oplontis) are protected as cultural assets through the provisions of Art. 10 Paragraph 1 of the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape (Legislative Decree 42/2004). The component parts of the property, together with the immediate surroundings, are managed by the Archaeological Park of Pompei and the Archaeological Park of Herculaneum – two autonomous institutions established through Ministerial Decree 44/2016. A Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2020 between them established a coordinated management of the activities related to the property. The existing fragmented buffer zone lies within the jurisdiction of the two Parks, except for a small section northeast of the Herculaneum component part. Controls are in place over the excavations of the ancient towns as well as the development of the present-day Pompei and Ercolano. The Territorial Landscape Plan of the Vesuvian Municipalities, introduced through Legislative Decree in 2002, stipulates further restrictions and regulates the use of land within the boundaries of the property and its buffer zones.

In 2011, the joint WHC-ICOMOS advisory mission visited the property and recommended the State Party to draw an extended buffer zone that would safeguard the visual link of the property with Mount Vesuvius.

In 2013, a joint WHC-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission recommended that “a minor boundary modification to the property [be proposed] at Herculaneum to include the area excavated in the 1990s between the main site and the Villa of Papiri and to ensure that the mapped property does actually include the known remains of the Villa and of the Theatre”. The same year, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to submit a formal proposal for a new buffer zone (Decision 37 COM 7B.77).

In 2014, the State Party proposed a minor boundary modification of the property to include an area of still-unexcavated archaeological remains of the ancient town of Herculaneum and its immediate surroundings; three villas at Stabiae; and Villa Regina in Boscoreale. The proposed additions were said to bear unparalleled evidence to the daily life and the settlement pattern of the wider landscape surrounding Pompei and Herculaneum in Roman times, enriching the representation of Roman ways of life conveyed by the inscribed property.

Simultaneously, a minor boundary modification of the buffer zone was proposed. A very large buffer zone of 7683.85 ha, which delimitations were based on the “sphere of influence” of the inscribed property from historical and contemporary perspectives, has been proposed. A Great Pompei Unit, established in 2013 as a decision-making entity, was mandated to pursue socio-economic revitalisation and urban-environmental redevelopment of municipalities, the territories of which were to be affected by the proposed buffer zone.

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The World Heritage Committee referred back the two proposed modifications (Decision 38 COM 8B.51). The first one was considered to go beyond the recommendation made by the joint WHC-ICOMOS mission; the Committee stated that the inclusion of the villas in Boscoreale and at Stabiae in the inscribed property would need to be regarded as a significant boundary modification, as it would modify substantially the scope of the original inscription. With regard to the minor modification to the boundary of the buffer zone, the State Party was requested to explain the rationale for the delineation of the perimeter, provide information on the practical side of the existing protection levels, and clarify the management arrangements.

In 2015, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to resubmit the proposal for the buffer zone modification taking into account Decision 38 COM 8B.51 (Decision 39 COM 7B.80).

In 2019, the State Party was invited to resubmit the proposal for the new buffer zone, following Decision 38 COM 8B.51, as a matter of urgency (Decision 43 COM 7B.85).

The same year, a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was adopted for the Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata (Decision 43 COM 8E).

In 2020, the State Party submitted a new proposal for a minor boundary modification of the buffer zone, based on a different approach. It proposed a smaller buffer zone, shifting its focus from the broader relationship between the inscribed property and the values associated with the Vesuvius landscape, to the historic urban landscape of the ancient towns of Pompei and Herculaneum. The proposed minor boundary modification replaced the existing fragmented buffer zone with two separate buffer zones – one for the inscribed zone of Pompeii, Villa of the Mysteries, and Villa A and Villa B of Torre Annunziata (726.06 ha); and another for Herculaneum, Villa of the Papyri and the Theatre (221.3 ha). The Villa in Boscoreale was included within this new buffer zones. The villas at Stabiae were not.

The proposed buffer zones were to reinforce the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the inscribed property and foster sustainable development in the surrounding areas. The State Party proposed a historic urban landscape approach as a framework for defining the new buffer zones, in view of safeguarding the property within a broader historical and socio-economic context. In defining the perimeter, the State Party also considered the legal protection and the feasibility of effective use of control measures, as well as the management in the proposed buffer zones. In addition, the existing land use management tools and the vision for the development of the area, together with capacity for the participatory management of the proposed buffer zones were considered.

Five criteria were used to delimit the buffer zones: 1) the relationship to the historical urban landscape; 2) the archaeological continuity; 3) the visual relationships and the protection of the views across the Vesuvius and the sea; 4) the improvement of site accessibility; and 5) the integration between protection and the management plan.

The legal protection within the proposed buffer zones has been based mainly on the legislation relating to the protection of landscape assets, with additional decrees pertaining to cultural heritage. Landscape values have been recognised for the entire Vesuvian area and land use is regulated in this territory (including a prohibition on actions that impede the enjoyment of panoramic views) by the Territorial Landscape Plan of the Vesuvian Municipalities of 2002. Only part of the land in the proposed buffer zones is owned by the State Party. In the areas recognised as landscape assets, private owners, possessors, or holders in any capacity, of properties and areas of scenic interest shall not destroy them or introduce modifications detrimental to the value of the landscape subject to protection; work without authorisation is also prohibited.

The World Heritage Committee referred back the proposed minor boundary modification of the buffer zone (Decision 44 COM 8B.64), with the following recommendation:

1. Refer the proposed buffer zones for Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata, Italy, back to the State Party in order to allow it to:
   a) Explain the methodology used to delineate the boundaries of the proposed buffer zones, and clarify how the areas of cultural interest, historical spaces of significance, and other elements of the historic urban landscape included in the proposed buffer zones are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection, to be able to establish whether their inclusion/exclusion of the proposed buffer zones may affect the integrity of the historic urban landscape of the property,
   b) Clarify the reasons why some of the fragments of the original buffer zones were left outside the proposed revised buffer zones,
   c) Provide further information on legal protection in place within the areas of the buffer zones that neither are considered landscape assets nor are protected as cultural heritage, and the existing agreements between private owners of the land,
   d) Describe in detail the management arrangements with timelines for the proposed buffer zones, especially with regard to urban development and socio-economic revitalisation in the area, in relation to the existing agreements, and clarify how the management of the buffer zones as historic urban landscapes, and within the premise of sustainable development, will be aligned with and complement the existing management plan of the inscribed property,
   e) Submit revised maps of an appropriate scale in line with the Operational Guidelines (Annex 5 and 11), showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zones, and with clearly marked elements of the historic urban landscape of which the submitted proposal speaks, in order to demonstrate their relationship to the inscribed property and allow
proposed a revised boundary of the buffer zones, which is said to be better aligned to the criteria used to delimit the perimeter. As compared with the buffer zones presented in 2020, the area of the newly proposed buffer zone for Pompei, Villa of the Mysteries, and Villa A and Villa B of Torre Annunziata component parts was expanded to 1469.01 ha, and the buffer zone for Herculaneum, Villa of the Papyri and the Theatre to 257.08 ha; the two parts totalling 1726.09 ha. It is of note that the Villa in Boscoreale has now been excluded from the newly proposed buffer zones.

The revised buffer zones are under the jurisdiction of ten municipalities: Portici, Ercolano, Torre del Greco, Torre Annunziata, Trecase, Boscotrecase, Boscoreale, Pompei, Castellammare di Stabia and Scafati.

In response to World Heritage Committee’s Decision 44 COM 8B.64, and to explain the delineation process of the buffer zones, the State Party provided a description of urban areas of different nature and purpose (including landscape protection areas, archaeological and architectural heritage zones, historical conservation areas, as well as zones dedicated for commercial development and residential areas) that constitute the proposed buffer zones. An explanation of their relationship to the inscribed property through physical, functional or symbolic aspects has also been included. The main landscape features that have been considered when establishing the important views that need to be protected by the proposed expanded buffer zones include Mount Vesuvius, the Mediterranean Sea, the Sorrentine Coast and the Sarno River.

The State Party clarified the error that resulted in excluding parts of the original fragmented buffer zones from the buffer zones proposed in 2020. All elements have now been incorporated into the revised buffer zones currently proposed.

Assurance has been given that all of the areas within the proposed revised buffer zones are protected under Legislative Decree 42/2004 as Landscape Assets (landscape heritage) or cultural heritage. The historic urban fabric within the proposed buffer zones is additionally subject to safeguarding which prevents any non-conservation interventions. A general agreement with the local communities affected by the proposed buffer zones is in place since 2018 and constitutes the basis for participatory development in the area.

The Strategic Plan for the Area of Interest of Site 829, approved in 2018, stipulates a vision for the sustainable development of the area in relation to its landscape values. Its implementation is being coordinated by the Great Pompei Unit, through a Management Committee established by an agreement signed in 2018 between the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, the Ministry of Territorial Cohesion, the Campanian Regional authorities and the municipalities falling within the proposed buffer zones. The plan is divided into short, medium and long-term goals, spread over five, ten and twenty years, and includes investments in infrastructure, urban redevelopment and cultural engagements with local communities. A number of memoranda of understanding have been signed with local authorities, and partnerships created with public and private institutions, aimed at creating a participatory system of governance of the buffer zones geared towards socio-economic development of the areas falling within them. The Strategic Plan is already being implemented, while the management plan for the inscribed property is being updated. The timeframe for the finalisation and implementation of the management plan has not been provided.

The State Party submitted detailed maps with clear description of the perimeter of the buffer zones and information on the relationship between the cultural heritage monuments included within the proposed boundaries and the inscribed property.

ICOMOS considers that the information provided by the State Party responds to the requests made by the World Heritage Committee.

The proposed minor boundary modification will contribute to the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and strengthen its integrity and management.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zones of the Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata, Italy, be approved.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Considering submitting in the future a minor boundary modification with a view to extending the buffer zone to include the Villa in Boscoreale that was initially included in the 2020 proposal,

b) Providing a timeframe for the finalisation and implementation of the management plan;
Map showing the revised boundaries of the buffer zone (February 2022)
Historic Centre of Florence
(Italy)
No 174quater

1 Basic information

State Party
Italy

Name of property
Historic Centre of Florence

Location
City and Province of Florence
Tuscany Region

Inscription
1982

Brief description
Built on the site of an Etruscan settlement, Florence, the symbol of the Renaissance, rose to economic and cultural pre-eminence under the Medici in the 15th and 16th centuries. Its 600 years of extraordinary artistic activity can be seen above all in the 14th-century cathedral (Santa Maria del Fiore), the Church of Santa Croce, the Uffizi and the Palazzo Pitti, the work of great masters such as Giotto, Brunelleschi, Botticelli and Michelangelo.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Issues raised

Background
The Historic Centre of Florence has been inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1982 on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi), without a buffer zone.

A Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value has been adopted in 2014 (Decision 38 COM.8E).

An extensive buffer zone has been added to the property and approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2015 (Decision 39 COM 8B.44).

In 2021, a minor boundary modification of the property was approved by the World Heritage Committee (Decision 44 COM 8B.56), in which an existing formal error in the delimitation of the property was corrected by incorporating within the boundary of the inscribed zone the San Miniato al Monte – a religious complex which represents an important attribute, explicitly mentioned in the Statement of the Outstanding Universal Value and contributing to the integrity of the property.

The Historic Centre of Florence encompasses, within its area of 532 ha, the core of the historic city and the settled area on the opposite side of the Arno River enclosed by the 14th-century city walls. The buffer zone extends over an area of 10,453 ha. The property is framed by the hills that border Florence to the north (the Hills of Careggi, Fiesole and Settignano) and to the south (the Hills of Bellosguardo, Arcetri, Poggio Imperiale and San Miniato).

Modification
The delineation of the minor boundary modification approved in 2021 (Decision 44 COM 8B.56) was guided by the route of the ancient city wall (still partially existing), and followed the adjacent roads, stretching from the San Miniato gate, through the Viale dei Colli up to the Abbey of San Miniato al Monte, with its cemetery and the Parco della Rimembranza (Veteran’s Memorial Park), further towards Piazzale Michelangelo, ending at the San Niccolò tower.

The current request for a minor boundary modification has been submitted by the State Party to rectify three graphic discrepancies in the 2021 perimeter’s demarcation line, which have been identified during the process of cartography validation, following the request of the World Heritage Centre to submit more detailed maps of the minor boundary modification approved in 2021. The graphic modification consists in correcting identification on the map of Passo all’Erta, adjacent to Viale Galileo and Via di Giramonte; correcting the graphic representation of Via del Monte alle Croce; and properly identifying on the map the corner of Via di San Miniato al Monte and Viale Michelangelo.

The proposed modification will correct the cartographic representation of the property to reflect fully the reality on the ground. Due to its graphic nature, the proposed modification will not affect the actual area of the property or of the buffer zone.

The proposed minor boundary modification will enhance the protection of the property, by enabling the Municipality of Florence, within the administrative territory of which the property is located, to apply the relevant management measures and protection mechanisms to the entire actual area of the property, based on the appropriate, and legally binding maps used by the Department of Municipal Urban Planning.

The proposed minor boundary modification does not affect the legal protection of the property, to which a number of legal acts apply at the national, regional and municipal levels. At the highest level, the area of the proposed graphic modification is protected as a Landscape Asset (Beni Paesaggistici) (Art. 143 of the Legislative Decree 42/2004). At the regional level, it is regulated by the PIT (Piano di Indirizzo Territoriale) which, from a legal point of view, has the same value as
the Landscape Plan (Regional Law 65/2014, Art. 21). At the municipal level, the territory is regulated by the Structural Plan (Regional Law 65/2014, Art. 30 et seq.), approved in 2015 and updated in 2019; the Town Planning Regulations, approved in 2015 and updated in 2019; and the Building Regulations of the Municipality of Florence, approved in 2019 (Resolution no. 2019/C/00014). These tools are currently being updated.

Given that the proposed modification is of a graphic nature only and noting that the correction will improve the protection of the property by providing legal clarity on the application of appropriate management measures to the entire extent of the property based on the updated cartography, ICOMOS considers that the proposed minor boundary modification is appropriate.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed minor boundary modification will contribute to the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and strengthen its integrity and management.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundaries of the Historic Centre of Florence, Italy, be approved.
Map showing the revised boundaries of the property (February 2022)
Ljubljana (Slovenia) No 1643bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Slovenia

Name of property
The works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana – Human Centred Urban Design

Location
City of Ljubljana

Inscription
2021

Brief description
The works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana are an example of a human-centred urban design that successively changed the identity of the pre-existing city. Following the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ljubljana changed from a provincial city into a symbolic national capital for the Slovenian people. The architect Jože Plečnik contributed to this transformation with his personal, profoundly human vision for the city. The property consists of a series of public spaces (squares, parks, streets, promenades, bridges) and public institutions (national library, churches, markets, funerary complex) that Plečnik designed throughout the city in the period between the two World Wars. The selected works are sensitively integrated into the pre-existing urban, natural and cultural context and contributed to the city’s new identity. This highly contextual and human-scale urbanistic approach, as well as Plečnik’s distinctive architectural language, are seen to stand apart from the other predominant modernist principles of his time.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Issues raised

Background
The interventions designed by the architect Jože Plečnik throughout the city of Ljubljana in the short period between the two World Wars were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2021 on the basis of criterion (iv) as an outstanding example of successive human-centred urban renewal for the purpose of nation building after the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The interventions are based on a harmonic relationship between the context of the space and its natural possibilities. The city was not built anew but improved with small- or large-scale interventions – new architectural ensembles, buildings and urban accents. The relationship with the past is established in various ways, from adapting the urban network and incorporating existing structures through architectural reminiscences and by establishing new cityscapes. The new urban space is not limited to a specific use but has various functions and the whole is thus imbued with new meanings.

By Decision 44COM 8B.45, the World Heritage Committee decided to inscribe the property on the World Heritage List, with several recommendations. Among these, it recommended “submitting a minor boundary modification of the extended buffer zones, when formalised, with an updated map showing the property and the buffer zones’ boundaries, indicating the total area of the buffer zones in hectares”. It also recommended to consider “submitting in the future a minor boundary modification with a view to including relevant transversal axes, if their state of conservation could be improved to fully meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity”. The World Heritage Committee moreover recommended the State Party to undertake “further detailed identification of the relationships between Plečnik’s interventions and pre-existing buildings and spaces, to allow appropriate protection measures to be put in place for the latter, relative to the role they play in supporting the Outstanding Universal Value”.

The State Party’s request for a minor boundary modification of the property’s boundary and its buffer zones addresses these requests in parts and was submitted to the World Heritage Centre in 2022.

The proposed minor boundary modification was already initiated during the nomination process and described to ICOMOS in the additional information provided on February 2021.

Modification
The proposal involves a minimal boundary expansion of the property’s component part 4, the Roman Walls in Mirje. Changes to the buffer zones are proposed for five component parts: Trnovo Bridge, Green Promenade along Vegova Street, Roman Walls in Mirje, Church of St. Michael, and Plečnik’s Žale – Garden of All Saints. Lastly, the addition of a wider buffer zone in the city centre is proposed. The proposal follows the changes to the legal protection that entered into force in May 2021, namely the Ordinance amending the Ordinance designating the work of the architect Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana as a cultural monument of national importance (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 74/21) of the year 2021.

The minor change to component part 4 adjusts the property boundary north of the pyramid to follow the existing parcel and adds a small rounded parcel at the western corner of the Roman Walls. The component part is thereby slightly enlarged from 0.720 to 0.726 ha as per article 4 of the 2021 Ordinance.
ICOMOS considers that this revision of the property boundary is necessary and contributes to reinforcing the conditions of integrity of the property and hence maintaining its Outstanding Universal Value.

Trnovo Bridge was defined as a separate component part and assigned its own buffer zone as per article 5 of the 2021 Ordinance within the joint buffer zone of component parts 1, 2, 3 and 4. The buffer zone of Trnovo Bridge now encompasses the entire monument of the Gradaščica area which constitutes one of the transversal axes. The joint buffer was enlarged with the addition of the western part of this area.

The buffer zone of component part 2 was extended to the north and west as per article 2 of the 2021 Ordinance. It now includes a series of buildings running from and including the Ursuline Church to the Šubič Grammar School, the crossroads of Slovenska Road and Šubičeva Street in the northwest corner of Zvezda Park, and a series of buildings along the northern side of Zvezda Park from the Kazina Palace to Wolfova Street. These extensions respond to requests from ICOMOS in its Interim Report of December 2020.

The same is the case for the extension of the buffer zone on the western extremities of component part 4 as per article 4 of the 2021 Ordinance. It was extended to the crossroads of Grohharjeva and Jamova Streets. The eastern extremities and the southern setting of the Roman Walls in Mirje are protected under the new wider buffer zone of the historic city centre. Nevertheless, ICOMOS recommends that in the future the buffer zone be complemented, through a minor boundary modification request, with the adjacent stretch of Barjanska Street up to Aškerčeva Street as well as extended onto the plots located south of the traffic artery of Mirje on the entire length of the Roman Walls.

As per the State Party’s proposal, the joint buffer of component parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 is enlarged from overall 88.592 ha to 109.615 ha.

Likewise, in response to ICOMOS’ requests, the buffer zone of component part 5 was extended to the southeast across the road in front of the Church of St. Michael and by parcels on the Ljubljana Marshes. The buffer zone of the component part was thereby enlarged from 12.984 ha to 22.450 ha as per article 1 of the 2021 Ordinance.

Concerns raised by ICOMOS were also addressed with the inclusion of parts of the plots across the roundabouts located southwest of Plečnik’s Žale in the component part’s buffer zone.

In addition, the boundaries of the buffer zone were adjusted with the inclusion of the land next to the petrol station in the southeast and the green areas in the residential zone to the east. The changes, as per article 3 of the 2021 Ordinance, moreover involve the exclusion of the parcels of the existing active cemetery in the north.

The buffer zone of component part 7 was overall enlarged from 45.752 ha to 48.613 ha.

In addition, the State Party designated a new wider buffer zone for Plečnik’s work in the city centre. The boundaries and protection regimes of this new buffer zone as per article 6 of the 2021 Ordinance were defined on the basis of existing municipal acts on designations and spatial acts. It incorporates multi-layered statutory protection regimes for monuments of local and national importance in a single legal act at the state level. It thus strengthens the effectiveness of statutory protection of Plečnik’s interventions and of their pre-existing setting.

The expanded and additional buffer zones include the immediate and wider setting of Plečnik’s interventions, encompass views or include other areas that are functionally or otherwise important for the protection of the property. ICOMOS considers that these revisions of the buffer zone boundaries and the pertinent legislation, which include stipulations for Heritage Impact Assessments (article 8 of the 2021 Ordinance), effectively adds to protecting the property from development pressures.

As per the information provided by the State Party in January 2022, the proposed modification overall leads to a slight enlargement of the property from 19.122 ha to 19.132 ha. A table included in the proposal moreover indicates the areas of the individual component parts which were renumbered as per the requests of ICOMOS’ Interim Report of December 2020. The separated component parts 1 (Trnovo Bridge) and 2 (Green Promenade along Vegova Street) respectively total 0.050 ha and 3.281 ha respectively. Component part 4 (Roman Walls in Mirje) now totals 0.726 ha. For component part 7 a factual error of the nomination dossier was pointed out and the actual area indicated totals 1.326 ha. The entire property is protected by the Ordinance from 2009 designating the work of the architect Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana as a ‘cultural monument of national importance’ (Official Gazette RS, Nos. 51/09, 88/14, 19/16, 76/17, 17/18 and 74/21).

The buffer zone was enlarged from a total of 178.613 ha to 210.908 ha. The additional new wider buffer zone totals 170.872 ha. The protective regimes of the buffer zones are based on point 9 of Article 56 of the 2009 Ordinance.

The proposed minor boundary modification coincides with the additional information provided on the matter to ICOMOS in February 2021. In summary, ICOMOS considers that the proposed minor boundary modification enhances the property’s integrity, complies with the request of Decision 44COM 88.45 (§ 4.a and f) and should therefore be approved.
3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of The works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana – Human Centred Urban Design, Slovenia, be approved.

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundaries of the buffer zones for The works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana – Human Centred Urban Design, Slovenia, be approved.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Considering submitting in the future a minor boundary modification with a view to:
   i) Including within the property relevant transversal axes, if their state of conservation could be improved to fully meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity,
   ii) Extending the buffer zone of component part 4 to the stretch of Barjanska Street leading from the Roman Walls up to Aškerčeva Street and onto the plots located south of the traffic artery Mirje on the entire length of the serial component part;
Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the proposed buffer zone (February 2022)
IV Cultural properties

A Arab States
  Minor modifications to the boundaries

B Europe – North America
  Minor modifications to the boundaries

C Latin America and the Caribbean
  Minor modifications to the boundaries
Portobelo-San Lorenzo
(Panama)
No 135bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Republic of Panama

Name of property
Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo

Location
Province of Colon
District of Cristobal

Inscription
1980 (Word Heritage List)
2012 (List of World Heritage in Danger)

Brief description
The ensemble of fortifications along the Panamanian Caribbean shore constitutes an outstanding example of military architecture from the 17th and 18th centuries, settled by the Spanish Empire to protect the ports that communicated with the transisthmian colonial routes between the Caribbean and Panama City, on the Pacific Ocean coastline. The ensemble of fortifications along Portobelo Bay includes eight of the nine component parts, the last one being the San Lorenzo Castle, a unique fort protecting the entrance to the Chagres River, located some forty-three kilometres from Portobelo. Portobelo is a remarkable fortified town, and the ensemble that makes up the serial property is acknowledged to be one of the most characteristic examples of Spanish military architecture adapted to tropical climate and to the features of the landscape.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
9 March 2022

2 Issues raised

Background
The serial property Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo, Panama, was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980 on the basis of criteria (i) and (iv). The series consists in nine component parts grouped in two locations some forty-three kilometres from each other: San Lorenzo Castle, next to the mouth of Chagres River, and Portobelo, which includes several fortifications strategically located to protect Portobelo bay and town. At the time of inscription, no boundaries of the nominated component parts and buffer zones had been delineated. A joint World Heritage Centre-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission carried out in 2010 stressed the necessity of defining those boundaries. By Decision 34 COM 7B.112 (2010), the World Heritage Committee urged the State Party to formulate and implement the management plan for the property and to define the boundaries and buffer zones for each of the component parts, including regulatory measures for their management.

By Decision 36 COM 7B.102 (2012), the World Heritage Committee inscribed the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger on the grounds of its fragile state of conservation. The adopted Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) included, among other requirements, the full integration of the management plan within the territorial and development plans, as well as precise clarification of the boundaries and buffer zones of the serial property.

In 2014, the World Heritage Committee adopted the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the serial property, where the values and the attributes that convey it are clearly identified. The request to define boundaries and buffer zones for the component parts of the serial property, originally expected in 2013, was reiterated by several World Heritage Committee decisions, and the timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger was consequently updated. The proposal for a minor boundary modification was submitted by the State Party of Panama in January 2022.

Modification
The State Party proposes a different approach to define the boundaries of each component parts of the serial property and their buffer zones, considering the differences between them.

For the San Lorenzo Castle, the boundaries of the component part correspond to the castle itself and its upper battery, encompassing the attributes that convey the contribution of this component part to the Outstanding Universal Value of the series. It has a surface of 2.26 ha.

Since the castle is located on a peninsula surrounded by the Caribbean Sea and next to the mouth of the Chagres River, the proposed buffer zone includes both terrestrial and maritime sections. The terrestrial section is defined by a polygon of 24.7 ha corresponding to the cadastral plan 30106-1024, which encompasses the castle and its surroundings, and is located within the Protected Forest and Protected Landscape of San Lorenzo, created in 2017 by Resolution DAPVS-0001-2017 adopted by the Ministry of Environment, and assigned in use and administration to the Ministry of Culture in January 2021. The above-mentioned ministerial Resolution of 2017 also approved the land-use plan for the natural protected area, which includes the maritime portion of the proposed 50.0-ha buffer zone, which makes a total surface of 72.44 ha.
ICOMOS notes that the rationale for the delineation of the buffer zone is not explained by the State Party. As for the terrestrial section, the Protected Forest and Landscape are much larger than the polygon included in the cadastral plan 30106-1024 and it is not clear how the proposed area will ensure an additional layer of protection for the San Lorenzo component part.

As regards the maritime section, the rationale for its delineation is not explained either. ICOMOS notes that the ancient plan of San Lorenzo Castle included in the Plan for Public Uses of the Protected Forest and Protected Landscape of San Lorenzo (2017) shows a battery on the opposite side of the mouth of the Chagres River. Since there could be both terrestrial and underwater archaeological remains and considering that the coastline has changed since the 17th century, it would be advisable that the maritime section of the buffer zone be extended to reach the beach next to the river mouth.

The boundaries of the component parts that are located in the Portobelo area correspond to those of the fortifications or, in the case of the Santiago Fortification, to a larger area that encompasses the old Fortress and Santiago de la Gloria, the Battery and Hilltop Stronghold. Besides the ensemble of fortifications that support the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial property, the State Party has identified other key elements, such as historic monuments, sites and bridges, which contribute to enhance the historic and cultural values of Portobelo and have also been provided with a precise delimitation and buffer zones.

As for the buffer zone, the State Party proposes a differentiation between the individual buffer zone of each component part, and a larger area, referred to as the “Main Buffer Zone”, designated and regulated by Law 91 of 1976 on regulation of National Monumental Ensembles, which encompasses the whole area of Portobelo Bay and its surroundings, where the ensemble of fortifications and the town are located.

The individual buffer zones consist of a strip of land, and in some cases water, that follows exactly the perimeter of the component parts, with no apparent consideration of the specific features of their surrounding areas. The boundaries of the component parts and their proposed individual buffer zones have been designated and regulated by Resolution 164-18/DNPH from the National Directorate of Historic Heritage, under the National Institute of Culture.

The area of the component parts totals 14,5 ha with buffer zones totalling 85,83 ha.

ICOMOS notes that some of the component parts, as well as additional key elements, are in some cases very close, especially in Portobelo town, but the buffer zones have been provided individually. ICOMOS considers that, whilst the boundaries of the component parts located in Portobelo can be considered adequate, the rationale for defining the individual buffer zones is not explicit, and these boundaries are not related to the features of the surrounding areas. The buffer zones delineated for each of the component parts seem to be clearly insufficient to ensure an additional layer of protection against factors that could affect the Outstanding Universal Value and its attributes, especially taking into account that urban encroachment has been identified among the factors that affect the component parts located in the town of Portobelo.

At the same time, the relationship between the buffer zones designated by Resolution 164-2018 and the Monumental Historic Ensemble of Portobelo designated by Law 91-76 (referred to as Main Buffer Zone in the document provided by the State Party) is not clear either. The latter seems to establish a wider vision in relation to the historic structures, both military and others, and their setting, which is significant to properly understand the rationale for the original location of the fortifications and their relationship with the geographical and landscape features of Portobelo Bay. The Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value adopted in 2014 sets out that Portobelo is a “remarkable example of an open fortified town” and the ensemble of fortifications is “among the most characteristic adaptations of Spanish military architecture to tropical climate and landscape features”, which makes advisable to extend the additional layer of protection provided by the individual buffer zones to both the town and the surrounding landscape.

ICOMOS commends the State Party for identifying other key elements in Portobelo that contribute to the historic and cultural values of the town, although they are not part of the attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial property.

The document provided by the State Party summarises a set of legal instruments that would ensure the adequate protection of the component parts and their buffer zones, but states that the management arrangements are still a work in progress, since the management plan is yet to be provided, and acknowledges that the corpus of laws and regulations needs to be revised. ICOMOS considers that the adoption and implementation of a complete management plan for the serial property becomes a priority to ensure its adequate protection and management.

In conclusion, ICOMOS commends the work done by the State Party in defining and regulating the boundaries of the component parts and their buffer zones but considers that clarifications and eventual modifications are still pending, especially in relation to the buffer zones, in order to ensure the adequate additional layer of protection expected.
3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the proposed minor modification to the boundary and the proposed buffer zones for the Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo, Panama, be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Clarify the rationale to define the boundaries of the buffer zone in the San Lorenzo Castle, and eventually consider its extension if appropriate;

- Consider the possibility to adopt the area of the Monumental Historic Ensemble of Portobelo established by Law 91 of 1976 as a single buffer zone that encompasses the component parts located in the area of Portobelo;

- Elaborate an integral management plan for the serial property that clarifies the protection and management for its component parts and their buffer zones.
Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone (February 2022)
Part II
World Heritage List Nominations 2023
Nominations evaluated by ICOMOS for the World Heritage List 2023
I Introduction

ICOMOS Analysis of nominations

In 2023, ICOMOS was called on to evaluate 33 nominations.

They consisted of:

16 new nominations
2 extensions
1 deferred nomination
1 nomination submitted under an emergency basis
3 nominations of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts
10 minor modifications/creations of buffer zone

The geographical spread is as follows:

Africa
Total: 2 nominations, 2 countries
1 nomination of site of memory associated with recent conflicts
1 extension
(2 cultural properties)

Arab States
Total: 4 nominations, 4 countries
2 new nominations
2 minor modifications/creations of buffer zone
(4 cultural properties)

Asia-Pacific
Total: 7 nominations, 7 countries
6 new nominations
1 minor modification/creation of buffer zone
(6 cultural properties, 1 mixed property)

Europe and North America
Total: 17 nominations, 16 countries
7 new nominations
1 extension
1 nomination submitted under an emergency basis
1 nomination of site of memory associated with recent conflicts
1 deferred nomination
6 minor modifications/creations of buffer zone
(16 cultural properties, 1 mixed property)

Latin America and the Caribbean
Total: 3 nominations, 3 countries
1 new nomination
1 nomination of site of memory associated with recent conflicts
1 minor modification/creation of buffer zone
(3 cultural properties)

ICOMOS notes the weak representation of certain Regions in the submissions, particularly Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Arab States.

General remarks

The 2022/2023 cycle has continued to be challenging, in particular due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to the efforts of and the cooperation between ICOMOS and the nominating States Parties, almost all the technical evaluation missions were carried out and all nominated properties evaluated. Hence, ICOMOS expresses its gratitude to all the experts involved in the Evaluation Process as well as to the nominating States Parties for the efforts made in this difficult period.

ICOMOS thanks as well its experts from National Committees, International Scientific Committees and Board members who provide significant support on a voluntary basis to the work that is delivered. In addition, ICOMOS was requested by the World Heritage Centre to proceed with the evaluation of 4 pending nominations of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts, following decision 18 EXT.COM 4 adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 18th extraordinary session (UNESCO, 2023). The work schedule had to be shortened and the normal evaluation process, as described by paragraph 168 of the Operational Guidelines had, de facto, to be adapted.

ICOMOS adapted its tools related to the evaluation of nominations and widened the profiles of expertise that was contacted through desk reviews (transitional justice, human rights for ex.). A cooperation with ICMEMO (International Committee of Memorial Museums in Remembrance of the Victims of Public Crimes) was established and experts provided desk reviews.

One extraordinary ICOMOS Panel session had to be organised in May 2023 to assess the nominations related to these sites.

1. Quality and complexity of nomination dossiers

Generally speaking, ICOMOS notes that nominations are increasingly complex, sometimes to the detriment of the dossiers’ clarity and coherence.
Certain nominations would benefit if more time were taken in preparation. For example, completing the legal protection process, finalising a management plan or undertaking additional research.


When evaluating the Comparative Analysis included in nomination dossiers, ICOMOS examines the methodology used by the State Party and the relevance of the examples against a set of parameters. Comparisons with the nominated property should be drawn with sites expressing the same values, and within a defined geo-cultural area. Therefore, the values need to be clearly defined and the geo-cultural framework should be determined according to those values. Comparisons should be drawn with similar properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List and with other examples at national and international level within the defined geo-cultural area.

On this basis, ICOMOS indicates whether or not the Comparative Analysis is adequate; and whether or not, the analysis justifies consideration of the property for the World Heritage List.

If the nomination is considered incomplete or insufficient according to the parameters indicated above, ICOMOS takes several actions. It requests additional information from the State Party; checks relevant ICOMOS thematic studies; examines the wealth of information available about properties already evaluated and/or inscribed on the World Heritage List, and on the Tentative Lists; and, consults international experts (belonging or not to the ICOMOS network) to improve its understanding of the nomination.

ICOMOS wishes to point out that its role is to evaluate the properties based on the information provided in the nominations (i.e. the dossiers), and on the basis of field visits and assessments by ICOMOS experts as well as additional international studies. Similarly, ICOMOS evaluates the protection, conservation and management of the property at the time of the nomination and not at some unspecified time in the future after the adoption of proposed laws and management plans. It is thus the duty of ICOMOS to indicate to the World Heritage Committee if adequate protection and management are in place prior to inscription.

2. ICOMOS evaluations

The objective of ICOMOS is the conservation and long-term protection and presentation of cultural heritage, based on whether or not it is of Outstanding Universal Value. In formulating its recommendations, ICOMOS seeks to be as helpful as possible to States Parties, whatever the final recommendation being proposed.

Despite sometimes being under considerable pressure, ICOMOS remains rigorous and scientific, and its first duty remains the conservation of properties.

ICOMOS also notes that the dialogue developed with States Parties during the evaluation process is often very helpful to solve issues and difficulties. In many cases, it contributes to the adoption of the final recommendations made by ICOMOS. However, the current timeframe does not provide enough time for dialogue when the issues are complex.

3. “Referred back” nominations – “Deferred” nominations

ICOMOS wishes to once again express its concerns about the difficulties raised when a “deferred” recommendation is changed into a “referred back” recommendation. This action does not allow the Advisory Bodies to carry out an appropriate evaluation of nominations which are in many cases “resubmitted” as entirely new ones. The changes to the Operational Guidelines adopted in 2021 to clarify these concepts might assist on how they are used.

In its recommendations, ICOMOS clearly distinguishes between nominations which are recommended to be referred back and those which are deferred. For referred nominations, criteria have been justified, and conditions of authenticity and integrity have been met to the satisfaction of ICOMOS. Supplementary information must be supplied to satisfy other requirements of the Operational Guidelines, but no further technical evaluation mission will be required. For deferred nominations, the very nature of the information requested (e.g., a more thorough study, major reconsideration of boundaries, a request for a substantial revision, or serious gaps in regard to management and conservation issues) means that a new mission as well as consideration by the full ICOMOS World Heritage Panel are required. Time is thus needed to reconstitute the nomination, to evaluate that nomination again, and to ensure that it has the consideration needed to advance the nomination further.
4. “Minor” modifications to boundaries

These requests originate either from monitoring, the retrospective inventory or Periodic Reporting.

ICOMOS notes that all modifications to the boundaries of a property and its buffer zone are proposed as “minor” modifications, even when they constitute, in fact, substantial modifications to the property, or even in some cases an extension of the property.

According to the Operational Guidelines, proposals for major modifications, whether extensions or reductions, constitute a new nomination (paragraph 165). ICOMOS recommends to the World Heritage Committee that this provision should be consistently and rigorously applied.

ICOMOS suggests moreover that an extension of the calendar for the evaluation of such requests, above all when they are dealing with creation of buffer zone, should be considered, in order to bring it into line with the calendar in force for new nominations, which would open up the possibility of dialogue and exchange of information with the States Parties.

5. Serial nominations and extensions

ICOMOS recalls that the Operational Guidelines (paragraph 137) validated a change in the approach to serial properties in November 2011. Serial nominations should not consist merely of a catalogue of sites, but should instead concern a collection or ensemble of sites with specific cultural, social or functional links over time, in which each site contributes substantially to the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial property as a whole.

ICOMOS wishes to encourage States Parties to give consideration to the implications of this change when preparing serial nominations.

This year, ICOMOS has examined 11 serial nominations, including 253 monuments, ensembles and sites. These nominations require a more substantial investment in terms of human and financial resources at all levels of evaluation of the properties. The increase in the number of serial nominations needs to be taken into account in the budgets and contracts. Furthermore, ICOMOS notes that there are also enormous pressures on keeping the statutory calendar, which arise from the heavier task of evaluating these large and complex serial nominations.

6. Development projects

ICOMOS points out the newly published Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context developed by the Advisories Bodies and the World Heritage Centre. ICOMOS encourages States Parties to incorporate a Heritage Impact Assessment approach into the management system of their nominated properties. This will ensure that any programme, project or legislation regarding the property be assessed in terms of its consequences on the Outstanding Universal Value and its supporting attributes.

Based on recent experiences where information had not been shared in an adequate manner, ICOMOS reiterates its concerns related to the need of identifying development projects within World Heritage properties during the evaluation cycle, and to bring to ICOMOS’ attention any development projects that are planned within the nominated property or in its vicinity, to ensure that comprehensive information is received concerning these potential projects. ICOMOS once again suggests that during the nomination evaluation procedure the World Heritage Committee should apply provisions similar to those stipulated in paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, inviting the States Parties to inform the Committee of “their intention to undertake or to authorize in an area protected under the Convention major restorations or new constructions which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property […]”.

7. Connecting Practice

As a joint initiative between ICOMOS and IUCN, the Connecting Practice project provides opportunities for exploring new methods and practical strategies for learning and developing new approaches to better recognise and understand the interconnection of natural and cultural dimensions of heritage properties, and the importance of joint protection and management approaches.

Beginning in 2013, the project has completed three phases. Each phase has contributed to increasing awareness among heritage management actors about the close interrelations and integration of natural and cultural dimensions of heritage properties, and the importance of joint protection and management approaches.

As part of phase III, a new resource for the heritage field entitled A Commentary on Nature-Culture Keywords was published and is intended to serve as a basis for the common understanding of relevant terms among cultural and natural heritage professionals. The phase IV of the project is currently
underway and focuses on applying resilience thinking to the planning and management of World Heritage properties.

8. Cultural landscapes

ICOMOS notes some new challenges and trends emerging in some recent nominations. One example is what is called an ‘evolving landscape’ where the idea of an organically ‘evolved landscape’ has been merged with that of a ‘continuing landscape’. This merging is leading to nominations of properties where it is suggested that more or less everything in the property could continue to evolve over time in the future. While it is clearly desirable that continuing cultural landscapes play an active role in contemporary society, in order for this to happen in a way that sustains Outstanding Universal Value, there does need to be a clear understanding of which parts of the evolutionary process may evolve, and how, and what aspects should be maintained as a ‘golden thread’ linking what is there now to the way the landscape has evolved over time.

9. Upstream process

ICOMOS has been active in extending its collaboration with States Parties on upstream work, with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on how to address upstream requests in a more systematic and efficient manner and on the development of Tentative Lists.

ICOMOS wishes to draw attention to paragraph 122 of the Operational Guidelines which invites States Parties to “contact the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre at the earliest opportunity in considering nominations to seek information and guidance”, and in particular the relevance of this paragraph in connection with the preparation of the nomination dossier for mixed properties and transnational serial properties.

In addition, ICOMOS has elaborated with the assistance of IUCN, ICCROM and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, a “Guidance on Developing and Revising World Heritage Tentative Lists” within the context of the ongoing reform of the Nomination Process.

This document responds to an increasing need of basic guidance for States Parties when developing and revising their Tentative Lists. On its first part, the Guidance presents and explains the basic concepts around the Tentative Lists within the context of the Nomination and Upstream processes. It identifies the key steps for preparing and revising Tentative Lists, as well as the stages where the Advisory Bodies might be consulted by the States Parties to provide advice, in terms of methodology and analysis for the development or revision of Tentative Lists, thereby reducing the risk of spending resources to prepare nominations that may be unlikely to succeed.

As follow up to this publication, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies identified the need to further elaborate the operationalisation of the modules presented in this guidance, in particular Module 2 on “the process of developing or revising a Tentative List”. ICOMOS has developed this module in cooperation with IUCN and the World Heritage Centre.

10. Rights-based approach

Important changes to the Operational Guidelines were adopted in 2021 to introduce a reform to the evaluation process to become a two stages process. Within this reform, local communities and Indigenous Peoples involvement has been acknowledged through the Preliminary Assessment request (Annex 3 of the Operational Guidelines) and the revised nomination dossier format (Annex 5 of the Operational Guidelines).

States Parties are now asked formally to submit information on whether and how local communities and Indigenous Peoples have been consulted during the nomination process and are involved in the management of the property.

With a view to preparing such assessments and to fine-tune the methodology, the ICOMOS Evaluation Unit and the OCD-RBA Working Group have conducted a pilot study within the current cycle of nominations to analyse the potential of desk review screening to identify heritage and rights issues in World Heritage nomination dossiers.
ICOMOS procedure

The ICOMOS procedure is described in Annex 6 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. It is regulated by the Policy for the implementation of the ICOMOS World Heritage mandate (latest revision in October 2015). This document is available on the ICOMOS website: www.international.icomos.org.

This policy makes public the existing procedure, and sets out the fair, transparent and credible approach ICOMOS adopts in fulfilling its World Heritage obligations, and the way it avoids conflicts of interest.

The evaluation of nominations, which involves more than 40 to 50 international experts for each nomination dossier, is coordinated by the World Heritage Evaluation Unit of the International Secretariat of ICOMOS, in collaboration with the Chairs of the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

The ICOMOS World Heritage Panel, which brings together some thirty persons, is made up of members of the ICOMOS Board, representatives of ICOMOS International Scientific Committees as well as of some other organisations than ICOMOS and other individual experts. The Panel members are selected each year depending on the nature of the properties nominated (e.g., rock art, 20th century heritage, industrial heritage, Interpretation, etc.) and on the basis of geographic and cultural balanced representation. TICCIH and DoCoMoMo are also invited to participate in discussions in which their expertise is relevant.

Some cooperation with ICOM has been developed for the sites of memory associated with recent conflicts. In principle all members of the Panel participate by drawing on their own financial resources (pro bono work). The Panel’s composition and terms of reference are available on the ICOMOS website. They represent the various professional, geographic and cultural sensibilities present at the international level. The Panel prepares the ICOMOS recommendations for each nomination on a collegial basis.

For each nominated property, ICOMOS assesses whether it bears testimony of an Outstanding Universal Value:

- whether it meets the Criteria of the Operational Guidelines;
- whether it meets the conditions of Authenticity and Integrity;
- whether legal protection is adequate; and,
- whether the management processes are satisfactory.

All properties are given equal attention, and ICOMOS also makes every effort to be as objective, scientific and rigorous as possible.

In order to reinforce consistency of the evaluations and recommendations, and to check which additional information requests should be sent to States Parties, ICOMOS uses a check box tool, which is included in this volume.

1. Preparatory work

The preparatory work is done in several stages:

a. Initial study of dossiers. This first stage of the work consists of the creation of an inventory of the nomination dossier documents. They are then studied to identify the various issues relating to the property and the choice of the various experts who will be called on to review the dossier (i.e., ICOMOS advisers, experts for mission, experts for consultations). A compilation of all relevant comparative material (e.g., Tentative Lists, properties already on the World Heritage List, nomination dossiers, "filling the gaps" ICOMOS study, etc.) is prepared in order to assist the work of the advisers on the specific item of comparative analysis.

b. Consultations. International experts are invited to express their opinion through desk reviews about the Comparative Analysis and the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated properties with reference to the ten Criteria set out in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021), paragraph 77. ICOMOS also consults experts on a desktop basis on issues related to cultural tourism and risk preparedness in order to provide recommendations on these issues in a systematic manner through all the nomination dossiers.

For this purpose, ICOMOS calls on the following:

- ICOMOS International Scientific Committees;
- Individual ICOMOS members with special expertise, identified after consultation with International and National Committees;
- Non-ICOMOS members with specific expertise, identified mostly amongst Universities and Research Institutes or partner organisations.

For the nominations to be considered by the World Heritage Committee at its 45th extended session, around 173 experts provided desk reviews. 30% of the reports received has been drafted by non-ICOMOS members.
c. Technical evaluation missions. As a rule, ICOMOS calls on a person from the region in which the nominated property is located. In certain exceptional circumstances, often in cases in which the nature of the property is unusual, the expert may not originate from the region concerned. The objective of the missions is to study the Authenticity, Integrity, factors affecting the property, protection, conservation and management (Operational Guidelines, paragraph 78).

Experts are sent the nomination dossier (i.e., electronic versions and copy of the maps in colour), a note with key questions based on a preliminary examination of the dossiers, documentation on the Convention and detailed guidelines for evaluation missions.

All experts have a duty of confidentiality. Their opinion about the nomination does not necessarily reflect that of the organisation; it is the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel which, after acquainting itself with all the information, analyses it and determines the organisation's position.

Missions are sent to all the nominated properties except in the case of nominations referred back for which the Operational Guidelines do not stipulate that a mission is necessary (Note: The principle is that properties are referred back because additional information is necessary, and not because thorough or substantial modifications are needed). The deadlines set out in the Operational Guidelines mean moreover that it is not possible to organise missions, desk reviews or consideration by the full ICOMOS World Heritage Panel for properties referred back).

In the 2022-2023 cycle, 23 experts representing 19 countries took part in field missions as part of the evaluation of the 22 nominated properties, which in turn represented 21 countries.

ICOMOS and IUCN have exchanged desk reviews and information about draft recommendations concerning mixed property nominations and cultural landscapes before and after their respective Panel meetings. Observers from both organisations attended respective Panel discussions on mixed sites.

As well, in the 2022-2023 cycle, ICOMOS received comments from IUCN concerning 5 cultural landscape nominations. These comments have been taken into account by ICOMOS in its recommendations.

2. Evaluations and recommendations

a. ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Draft evaluations (in either English or French) were prepared on the basis of the information contained in the nomination dossiers, mission reports, consultations and research. They were examined by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel at a meeting in Paris from 22 to 29 November 2022. The Panel defined draft recommendations and identified the additional information requests to be sent to the States Parties. Individual meetings were organised with each nominating State Party and Panel members during the Panel meeting.

b. Interim reports. As prescribed by the revised Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (Annex 6), the Advisory Bodies have been requested to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2023. These reports provide States Parties with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation process and some include additional information requests. All documents received by 28 February 2023 were examined by the second World Heritage Panel at its meeting from 8 to 10 March 2023.

c. Finalisation of the evaluation volume and its presentation to the World Heritage Committee. Following these meetings, revised evaluations have been prepared in both working languages, printed and dispatched to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for distribution to members of the World Heritage Committee at its 45th extended session.

Nominated properties and ICOMOS recommendations will be presented to the World Heritage Committee by ICOMOS advisers in PowerPoint form.

As an Advisory Body, ICOMOS makes a recommendation based on an objective, rigorous and scientific analysis. However, decisions are the responsibility of the World Heritage Committee. The process relies on the Committee members and their knowledge of the nominations and the evaluations published by the Advisory Bodies.

3. Referred back nominations and requests for minor modifications

By 1st February of each year, preceding the World Heritage Committee meeting, ICOMOS also receives supplementary information on nominations referred back during previous sessions of the World Heritage Committee.

ICOMOS also examines requests for “minor” modifications to boundaries or creation of Buffer Zones, and for changes of Criteria or name for some properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List. Ten requests of this type were submitted by States Parties before 1st February of this year.
4. Dialogue with States Parties

ICOMOS makes every effort to maintain dialogue with the States Parties throughout the nomination evaluation process (i.e. following receipt of the nominations, during and after the technical evaluation mission, and following the meeting of the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel).

First, information may be requested to provide details or clarifications. Of the 2022-2023 nominations, requests for additional information were formulated for almost all the nominations before the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel meeting in November. Requests for additional information were also submitted as part of the Interim reports after the Panel meeting.

The World Heritage Committee decision 38 COM 13.8 called upon the Advisory Bodies to consult and have a dialogue with all concerned States Parties during the course of the evaluation of nominations. Consequently, ICOMOS has strengthened the dialogue and communication in the evaluation process, through discussions organised during its Panel meeting, and through the delivery of the Interim reports.

In most cases, the dialogues with States Parties were fruitful in clarifying issues and elucidating facts.

However, the main point highlighted by these direct dialogues is the fact that, even though the State Party receives advice from ICOMOS earlier than previously, there is still very limited time available for both parties to work together to resolve issues. This is especially true under the current evaluation timetable established to review the dossiers that require reformulation at a wider scale. This is true for all cases even if the State Party expresses a willingness to do so. This is further exasperated by the fact that this is an ad hoc process and not a regularly anticipated step in the review.

In conclusion, ICOMOS encourages States Parties to request Upstream advice which could be useful for resolving issues prior to the submission of nominations.

As the nomination process is currently being reviewed and discussed in detail to introduce the Preliminary Assessment mechanism, ICOMOS is open to ways of increasing dialogue and adopting new methods that would uphold the credibility of the Convention in the future.

5. Conclusion

All the evaluated cultural properties are remarkable and deserving of protection and conservation. In reaching its recommendations to the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS relies on the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the direction of the World Heritage Committee.

The opinion of ICOMOS is both independent and institutional. The opinion of one of its members is not binding on the organisation, and the evaluation texts are each the work of between 40-50 persons on every nomination, with several stages of in-depth peer review. ICOMOS represents cultural heritage experts throughout the five global regions and is working to protect the entire cultural heritage of the world.

ICOMOS takes a professional and rigorous view of all the dossiers received and reviewed. Protection, conservation and management are key for the transmission of all heritage properties to future generations and ICOMOS remains committed to making recommendations for all nominated properties.

Paris, June 2023
### Check tool recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparative analysis</th>
<th>Integrity</th>
<th>Authenticity</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Selection justified (series)</th>
<th>Boundaries</th>
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**OK - Good**

**Adequate - Can be improved**

**Not demonstrated at this stage**

**Not OK - Not adequate**

The grid does not give all possible combinations, but only the lowest benchmarks below which a nomination moves to another category.

This tool is to be used jointly with the table summarizing the ICOMOS recommendations.
### Cultural and Mixed Properties

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## Cultural and Mixed Properties

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<td>Cameroon</td>
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#### Nomination submitted for processing on an emergency basis (1)

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#### Nominations of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts (3)

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<td>ESMA Museum and Site of Memory – Former Clandestine Center of Detention, Torture and Extermination</td>
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Cultural and Mixed Properties
Geographical spread of nominations

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<th>Region</th>
<th>States Parties</th>
<th>Nominations</th>
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</table>
| Africa                  | 2 States Parties, 2 nominations | Cameroon: C 938Bis The Sukur and Diy-Gid-Biy cultural landscape of the Mandara Mountains [Extension of “Sukur Cultural Landscape” (Nigeria)]
|                         |                | Rwanda: C 1586 Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero |
| Arab States             | 2 States Parties, 2 nominations | Palestine: C 1687 Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan
|                         |                | Tunisia: C 1640 Djerba: cultural landscape, testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory |
| Asia – Pacific          | 6 States Parties, 6 nominations | China: C 1665 Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er
|                         |                | India: C 1670 Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas
|                         |                | Indonesia: C 1671 The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks
|                         |                | Iran (Islamic Republic of): C 1690 The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh
|                         |                | Mongolia: C/N 1672 Highlands of the Mongolian Altai
|                         |                | Thailand: C 1662 The Ancient Town of Si Thep |
| Europe and North America| 11 States Parties, 11 nominations | Azerbaijan: C 1696 The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and "Koç Yolu” Transhumance Route
|                         |                | Belgium/France: C 1567rev Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front)
|                         |                | France: C 1569rev The Maison Carrée in Nîmes
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|                         |                | Greece: C/N 1695 Zagori Cultural Landscape
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<p>|                         |                | United States of America: C 1689 Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks |</p>
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# Cultural and Mixed Properties

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III Cultural properties

A Africa
  Extension

B Arab States
  New nominations

C Asia – Pacific
  New nominations

D Europe – North America
  New nominations
  Extension
  Nomination deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

E Latin America and the Caribbean
  New nomination
The Sukur and Diy-Gid-Biy cultural landscape
(Cameroon)
No 938bis

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
The Sukur and Diy-Gid-Biy cultural landscape of the Mandara Mountains

Location
Mozogo Council area
Mayo Moskota and Koza subdivisions
Mayo-Tsanaga division
Far-North Region
Cameroon

Brief description
The Sukur and Diy-Gid-Biy cultural landscape of the Mandara Mountains is located in the Mandara Mountain range, at the current northern border between Nigeria and Cameroon. It encompasses seven villages in the territory, within which are sixteen ancient dry-stone structures contemporary with the human occupation of the area between the 12th and 17th centuries. The builders of these constructions remain unknown and hypotheses about their original functions are yet to be confirmed. These stone constructions are currently part of a human-managed environment characterised by traditional habitat, and dry-stone-wall supported cultivated terraces. The communities currently based in this landscape maintain strong associations with the Diy-Gid-Biy sites through rituals and worship practices.

The Sukur and Diy-Gid-Biy cultural landscape of the Mandara Mountains is nominated as an extension of the Sukur Cultural Landscape World Heritage property, located in Nigeria.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021) paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

Included in the Tentative List
23 June 2020 as “Le paysage culturel de DiyGidBiy des Monts Mandara (extension du Paysage culturel de Sukur)”

Background
This is a nomination for an extension of the site of the Sukur Cultural Landscape, inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 23rd session of the World Heritage Committee (Marrakesh, 1999), on the basis of criteria (iii), (v) and (vi). The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was adopted retroactively in 2013.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 11 to 19 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the description of the property, the extension, the boundaries and cartography, the justification for inscription, the comparative analysis, and management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 7 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 28 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects. Since this nomination proposes an extension of an already inscribed property, the section below includes a short description of the property which the present nomination proposes to extend.

Description and history
Located on a plateau in northeastern Nigeria close to the border with Cameroon, the Sukur Cultural Landscape has been occupied for many centuries and its inhabitants have left abundant traces in the present-day landscape. The landscape in Sukur is characterised by extensive terracing, of a type known elsewhere in the area and Nigeria at large. However, the Sukur terraces are said to be the product of social organisations whose working parties maintained and
progressively extended them. Whilst primarily intended to provide level areas for agriculture, these terraces are invested with a spiritual significance, as shown by the many sacred trees, entrances, and ritual sites within them. This sacred dimension seems to be specific to the Sukur terraces.

This cultural landscape symbolises the political and economic structure of the Sukur people. Authority is represented by the Hidi and his residential complex, built in granite and located in an elevated position overlooking the people in the low-lying villages, which materialises in the space the role of the Hidi. Complex social relationships can be observed in the disposition of the cemeteries, whereas the relationships between iron furnaces and settlements within the agricultural terraces illustrate an elaborate economic pattern of production and distribution.

The Sukur people specialised in iron production, which they exported to other powers in the region and particularly to Borno. The iron industry and trade shaped Sukur society and polity in a specific way not found elsewhere in the Mandara region.

The nominated area encompasses sixteen dry-stone complexes comprising platforms, terraces and other structures, named Diy-Gid-Biy (DGB) by the local Mafa-speaking people, the literal translation of which – Ruins of the chiefs residence – suggests that the Mafa inhabitants of the nominated cultural landscape associate themselves with chiefly power and control over the territory.

The dry-stone construction technique of these sites has created flat and carefully built dry-stone facades, which are a distinguishing element in most of these sites; the technique appears distinctive from the one employed by modern Mafa people in the area. Furthermore, Mafa people seem to have occupied the nominated area in more recent times, well after the construction of DGB. Nevertheless, the Mafa have developed strong associations with these sites and perform rituals related to rains, calamities and socio-economic life. The additional information provided by the State Party further elaborates on the intangible relationships between peoples living in the Mandara region and the role played by the custodians at each site.

The DGB sites represent, so far, the earliest established evidence of human occupation in this region. Despite some differences from one another, researchers have identified common features and consider these sites to be constructed by the same people. However, almost nothing is known about their builders, the functions carried, the role played in the landscape or within the community that built them.

DGB-1 and DGB-2 are two building complexes much larger and more articulated than the other ones. Radiocarbon dating suggests overlapping periods of occupation spanning between the 12th and 17th centuries. Along with their proximity, this has led to interpretation of these two sites as part of the same complex. Archaeological findings led some researchers to hypothesise that rainmakers might have performed rituals on these two major DGB sites and, therefore, have been linked to droughts in the Lake Chad Basin that occurred in the early 15th century. However, more recent findings suggest a more complex and extended use of these sites. Both sites show multiple phases of construction and remodelling. Researchers have paralleled the complexity of this DGB-1 and DGB-2 ensemble with that of the Hill Complex of Great Zimbabwe.

The nomination dossier also suggests, based on the similarities in location and complexities between the DGB-1 site and the Hidi palace in Sukur, that the former might be a chiefly palace like the one in Sukur. However, this is not confirmed in scientific literature so far; some research directions hypothesise a link between the DGB sites with the development of the Wandala polity.

Other DGB sites also exhibit considerable size, albeit significantly smaller than DGB-1 and DGB-2, whilst some are much more limited in size. Questions of whether those smaller DGB sites could be assimilated with the two major DGB-1 and DGB-2 sites or whether they are distinct from each other remain unresolved too.

The terraced landscape that surrounds the DGB sites is cultivated primarily with sorghum and a millet variety but supports other crops too. The landscape features traditional stone constructions with straw roofs, granaries, more modern tin-roofed houses, and terraced fields. The nomination dossier explains that it is difficult to ascertain what was the configuration of the landscape at the time of the construction of the DGB sites, as insufficient archaeological evidence has been gathered; also due to the intensity of occupation of the area in more recent times.

ICOMOS requested additional information in October 2022 on the historical context that led to the formation of the DGB sites, considering the wider geographical, social and historic setting of the Mandara Mountains, in order to understand better the rationale for proposing an extension.

The State Party replied in November 2022 that the region witnessed intense migratory movements of peoples throughout the centuries for a variety of reasons, making it difficult to trace genealogies and provenances of the actual inhabitants of the various areas. Currently, the Mafa people are more numerous in the mountainous area. In general, the understanding of the origins and dynamics of the relations between peoples living in the Mandara region and between those living in the plains and in the mountains is challenging due to the lack of archaeological evidence.

The additional information of November 2022 confirmed that the DGB sites do not share similarities with other stone constructions in the area, with the exception of the grande enceinte of the Mofu Douvangar Chiefdom. The additional information of November 2022 underlined that recent oral accounts from one custodian of DGB-8 recalled that the ancestors of the inhabitants of one village were originally from Sukur. In addition, the people currently associated with DGB-15 consider themselves as Wula Sakon and speak the Sakon language (the current
Nevertheless, the State Party underlines the importance of each other and with the actual sites of occupation. Continuing the nominated extension process because of its meaning of the DGB sites to their builders and the would be needed to understand better the origin and interrelations of the various Mandara peoples amongst themselves. The State Party is aware that significant additional research is worrying.

The State Party replied in February 2023 that, whilst recognising the limits of the information provided in the nomination dossier due to a lack of sufficient research on the complex history of the Mandara Mountains, it considers that a stronger linkage between the Sukur and the ancient builders of the DGB cannot be ruled out. Furthermore, the State Party also put forward hypotheses of migration from the DGB area to Sukur and then back to DGB; however, this has not been explored or confirmed in existing scientific literature.

The State Party is aware that significant additional research would be needed to understand better the origin and meaning of the DGB sites to their builders and the interrelations of the various Mandara peoples amongst each other and with the actual sites of occupation. Nevertheless, the State Party underlines the importance of continuing the nominated extension process because of its potential for promoting sustainable development, sub-regional integration and peace-building.

**Factors affecting the nominated property**

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property include stone extraction from the DGB sites for other uses, agricultural activities carried out at inappropriate locations, namely in the vicinity or even on top of DGB sites, excessive or inappropriate use of sites during rituals, hunting, vegetation growth, and dryness. The landscape suffers from erosion, caused by torrential rains combined with sandy soil and lack of trees, and from the introduction of inappropriate construction materials, progressive loss of traditional construction skills, and emigration.

The nominated extension has an area of 717.31 ha, and a buffer zone of 3,247.73 ha.

**State of conservation**

The DGB sites suffer from structural degradation caused by natural factors, such as erosion, and vegetation overgrowth, and anthropogenic ones, such as agricultural activities in their immediate vicinity, re-use of detached stone blocks for building new structures, and lack of proper conservation/restoration action.

Despite the harsh conditions, the terraced landscape is still used and cultivated widely but is vulnerable. It suffers from erosion, desertification, and security issues, which contribute to the population leaving. As a result, the traditional vernacular architecture of the Mafa people falls into disrepair or is replaced by non-local building types and materials.

Sacrificial sites on the terraces and associated tombs are maintained by their traditional custodians. Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is very worrying.

**3 Proposed justification for inscription**

Proposed justification

The nominated extension is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The cultural landscape of Dyi-Gidy-Bly (DGB) is an exceptional example illustrating a form of occupation of the territory corresponding to a critical stage in human history and reflecting human relationships with the environment.
- It is an extensively exploited agricultural landscape reflecting a traditional system of occupation of the territory.
- It is an eloquent testimony of the strength of the spiritual association between the Mafa and their environment.

ICOMOS notes that the justification for inscription of the nominated extension presented in the nomination is not based on the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the Sukur Cultural Landscape.

ICOMOS also notes that according to the nomination dossier, the nominated extension would complement the Sukur Cultural Landscape by illustrating an earlier period of occupation, with imposing dry-stone structures not used as habitations at the DGB sites, as is the case in Sukur with the Hidi palace, but for ritual practices. The rationale put forward for the nominated extension includes the fact that the cultural landscape of DGB is located in the Mandara Mountains as is the Sukur Cultural Landscape. The DGB sites and associated artefacts remain as evidence of the flourishing of a civilisation able to build imposing dry-stone structures between the
12th and the 17th centuries. Although they predate Sukur, they have similarities in terms of the terraced landscape in which these sites and the Hidi palaces of Sukur are located. Sukur is inscribed as a living cultural landscape, characterised by terraced cultivation, dry-stone constructions and ritual practices, and is considered to shed light on the DGB sites and what their historical significance might be, since the current inhabitants cannot trace them. The nominated extension is seen as a way to strengthen the history of Sukur Cultural Landscape, thanks to the authenticity and monumentality of the dry-stone structures and their territorial integrity.

ICOMOS considered that the justification for the nominated extension appears not sufficiently robust, as it is based on generic visual similarities, proximity and meanings attributed by contemporary inhabitants, who nevertheless seem to have occupied the area in more recent times and do not appear associated with the ancient builders of the DGB sites. Hence additional information in this regard was requested from the State Party.

The State Party replied in February 2023 by reiterating arguments concerning the similarities of the values, the integrity of the landscape, the cultural and historical complementarity between the two sites, and above all the cooperation in the management of two very similar cultural landscapes.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed on the grounds of the following parameters: living/extinct civilisations that built dry-stone structures in western and central Africa; cultural traditions and ceremonies; impressive architectural ensembles; beliefs, festivals, and ceremonies. It has examined two sites in Cameroon and Nigeria, plus additional properties holding similarities with the DGB sites; three World Heritage properties in Africa and three World Heritage properties around the world. Mention is made of two sites on the Tentative Lists of Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

ICOMOS observed that, whilst the selected comparators are relevant, the comparative analysis is only descriptive and does not draw conclusions on the specificities of the DGB sites in comparison to other dry-stone structures located in the selected comparators. No comparison was made among the terraced cultural landscapes in which these sites are located. Furthermore, the comparative analysis has not addressed how the attributes of the nominated extension would reinforce, expand and complement the Outstanding Universal Value of the Sukur Cultural Landscape and the justification of its already-approved criteria. Therefore, ICOMOS requested the State Party to expand the comparative analysis focusing on this aspect.

In the additional information sent in November 2022 the State Party reiterated some of the arguments already put forward in the nomination dossier, namely the similarities between the dry-stone structures, the terraced landscape, the vernacular architecture, and similar spiritual and cultural practices between the Mafa people currently inhabiting the nominated cultural landscape and the Sukur people.

The State Party recognises the different settlement patterns – more dispersed in the cultural landscape of DGB and more concentrated in Sukur – and interprets these differences as specific responses to ecological and social challenges.

The State Party acknowledges the diversity of ethnic groups that have populated and migrated to and within the Mandara Mountains but suggests that the oral tradition supports a history and migration routes shared by communities in the DGB and Sukur areas.

ICOMOS observes that differences between the two areas may also derive from different socio-economic makeups. Wealth and social structure in Sukur developed and revolved around iron-smelting and blacksmithing, whereas the economic basis of the DGB builders is still unclear.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis demonstrates that the DGB sites justify consideration for the World Heritage List as they constitute the most impressive set of dry-stone-built structures in sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception of the Horn of Africa and the complexes of ruins in Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

However, ICOMOS does not consider that the evidence and the arguments put forward by the State Party justify the rationale to nominate the site as an extension of the Sukur Cultural Landscape nor as a continuing cultural landscape.

Although there may be visual similarities between the terraced landscapes and some links between the contemporary communities living in the villages of the DGB area and those living in Sukur, these do not appear to relate to the builders of the DGB sites, which are the most outstanding features of the nominated extension, and Sukur. The connections seem to be the result of more recent migrations of ethnic groups from Sukur to some areas within the nominated extension.

Despite purported similarities between the Hidi palace in Sukur and the DGB sites, research has not confirmed the residential use of these dry-stone structures, nor has it shed full light on their origins, functions and transformations.

ICOMOS does not consider that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated extension for the World Heritage List. However, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis reveals that the nominated property could have a strong potential to justify consideration for the World Heritage List if presented as an independent nomination.
Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The proposed extension is nominated on the basis of the same cultural criteria under which the Sukur Cultural Landscape is inscribed on the World Heritage List: (iii), (v) and (vi).

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the DGB area is an exceptional cultural landscape reflecting a land use which is characteristic of a critical stage of human settlement, determined by the environmental conditions. The dry-stone constructions preserved in the landscape are a unique, exceptional example of a dry-stone masonry tradition in Central Africa, created by a civilisation which has disappeared. Objects found during archaeological investigations bear a resemblance to objects used by the current occupants of the area.

ICOMOS observed that the arguments put forward to justify this criterion are similar to those used to justify criterion (iii) for the Sukur Cultural Landscape. However, these arguments are presented independently and do not specify how the attributes of the nominated extension would support, extend and complement the attributes of the already-inscribed property in expanding and amplifying the original justification for this criterion. Additional information provided by the State Party maintains that the nominated extension shares the same landscape in the Mandara Mountains and illustrates the same cultural traditions as in Sukur. The attributes in the Sukur Cultural Landscape bear exceptional witness to a living cultural tradition, whereas the attributes of the cultural landscape of DGB would offer an insight into a disappeared civilisation, which might refer to the early development of Sukur.

ICOMOS considers that the arguments presented to support the view that the DGB sites could be considered as the beginning of the history of Sukur appear unconvincing. These arguments do not seem supported by scientific research, which is still ongoing and has not reached conclusive findings on the origin and function of the dry-stone structures in the nominated extension in Cameroon. Furthermore, this interpretation does not seem to recognise the exceptional significance and distinctiveness of the DGB sites. The parallel between the Hidi palace in Sukur and the largest DGB sites as residence of the rulers has not been confirmed by archaeological evidence, and, at the current stage, research tends to interpret these structures as distinct from one another.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the cultural landscape of DGB has a centuries-long history, and is now absorbed in an agricultural landscape intensely exploited by the Mafa people who have built the terraces and domesticated this harsh environment for their livelihood.

ICOMOS considers that the justification for this criterion does not relate to the one associated with the Sukur Cultural Landscape, nor does it explain how the attributes of the nominated extension would support, extend and complement the attributes of the already-inscribed property in expanding and amplifying the original justification for this criterion. The explanation that the attributes of the nominated extension represent a complementary continuum with the Sukur Cultural Landscape is not corroborated by research findings.

ICOMOS considers that this reasoning focuses on the more recent layer of the human history of the Mafa people and the terraced landscape shaped by their agricultural activities and associations. According to ICOMOS, the agricultural terraced landscape cannot be considered to be of supranational significance in comparison with Sukur which, for its part, is imbued with sacred meaning and reflects a complex organisation of society and work, which is not a specific feature of the nominated extension, nor in comparison with other terraced landscapes in Africa.

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the cultural landscape of DGB is associated with deep beliefs, ritual practices of libation, rain, fertility, harvest, purification and warding off bad luck, which are carried out at specific places, often near or in the dry-stone-structures. This system of beliefs and practices demonstrates the strong spiritual relationship between the Mafa people and their environment over the centuries.

ICOMOS observes that the justification for this criterion does not build on the justification for criterion (vi) associated with the Sukur Cultural Landscape and does not provide an explanation of how the attributes of the nominated extension would support, extend and complement the attributes of the already-inscribed property in expanding and amplifying the original justification for this criterion.

The additional information provided by the State Party in February 2023 on the traditional and ritual practices carried out in Sukur suggests that they are not the same as those performed in the nominated extension, although they may appear to revolve around similar themes. ICOMOS also notes that the links between the current inhabitants and the DGB sites seem specific to the nominated area and do not seem to complement the intangible associations or ritual practices performed in Sukur, where they seem to be the outcome of a specific social structure.
ICOMOS considers that, as an extension, the cultural landscape of DGB does not demonstrate any of the proposed cultural criteria, since it does not significantly complement the justification for inscription of the Sukur Cultural Landscape.

However, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has a strong potential to meet criterion (iii) if nominated independently.

**Integrity and authenticity**

**Integrity**

According to the nomination dossier, the nominated extension includes all the necessary attributes to support the justification for its inscription on the World Heritage List. The nominated cultural landscape includes structures reflecting a unique architectural morphology – the DGB sites – with which the current Mafa people inhabiting the area are strongly associated and at which they still practise several rituals. The inhabitants of the area have based their sustenance on agriculture and have shaped the landscape surrounding these dry-stone structures with terraces. The intensity of agricultural activities in the area can reach the platforms of the DGB sites and lead to the reuse of their stones for the construction or repair of other terraces or contemporary structures. However, traditional and ritual practices can contribute to the conservation of these imposing dry-stone structures.

ICOMOS observes that the conditions of integrity of the nominated extension do not relate to and strengthen the conditions of integrity of the already-inscribed Sukur Cultural Landscape. They only focus on the inclusion of all the relevant attributes within the boundaries of the cultural landscape of DGB.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated extension have not been demonstrated, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be confirmed and integrity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated.

However, ICOMOS considers that, as an independent nomination, the DGB sites still preserve a high level of authenticity in terms of built structures and information potential that they can provide through further scientific research on their origins, construction methods and processes, past functions and, ultimately, on the civilisation of their builders.

In order to maintain this potential, it is crucial that the reuse of stones from dry-stone structures for contemporary construction purposes be stopped and that agricultural activities are not carried out on DGB platforms or in their immediate vicinity anymore. The strong spiritual associations of current communities inhabiting the area are an important element that supports community identity and resilience, and can also contribute to the preservation of these structures.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated extension are not met. However, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has the potential to meet the conditions of integrity and authenticity if presented as an independent nomination.
Boundaries
The boundaries of the nominated extension include the known sixteen DGB archaeological sites and the seven villages in which these structures are located. The State Party explains that the villages and the landscape are included in the nominated property because separating them from the DGB sites would diminish the heritage significance of these sites, given the strong associations between the current inhabitants of the villages and these dry-stone structures. A buffer zone is established, and is said to encompass the sixteen archaeological ruins, surrounding agricultural areas, and dwellings. The nomination dossier indicates the number of inhabitants for the entirety of the Koza and Mayo-Moskota subdivisions but not specifically for the nominated extension and its buffer zone.

ICOMOS observes that the total of the nominated area is not coherent with the area as delineated in the maps submitted with the nomination dossier and would need to be verified. The total of the buffer zone area also appears incoherent with the delineated perimeter on the maps. The proposed buffer zone seems to be designed as an offset of the boundaries of the nominated area and the rationale for that delineation is unclear.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription
The nominated extension shows a considerable time-depth and several layers of human occupation, which have all left tangible traces, some more ancient and some recent. The nomination presents the DGB sites and the dry-stone constructions as key elements of the nominated cultural landscape. These structures are unique in sub-Saharan Africa and are the remains of a much earlier human presence in the Mandara Mountains. However, the nomination focuses on the most recent layer, related to the cultural landscape shaped by the Mafa people, who arrived in the area more recently than the period of construction of the DGB sites. Based on the links between some of the communities currently living in the nominated area and those living in the Sukur Cultural Landscape; the geographical proximity between Sukur and the DGB area; visual similarities in the terraced landscape, and between the DGB sites and the Hidi palace of Sukur; and the recently strengthened cooperation between communities at Sukur and living in the DGB area, the cultural landscape of DGB has been nominated as an extension of the Sukur Cultural Landscape.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated cultural landscape, as an extension to the Sukur Cultural Landscape, does not adequately reflect the distinctive character and significance of the DGB sites and is restricted to focusing on features that do not contribute to enriching the attributes and enhancing the Outstanding Universal Value of the already-inscribed property, nor do they suggest that the nominated extension, as a continuous cultural landscape, may be of supra-national significance. The comparative analysis seems to be based more on sustaining cooperation processes, and therefore does not succeed in demonstrating the relevance or the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated extension. The justifications put forward for the criteria have been initially conceived independently from those of the already-inscribed property and the additional information provided by the State Party has not been able to reinforce the proposed arguments to support an extension.

Therefore, since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated extension have not been demonstrated, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be confirmed and conditions of integrity and authenticity as per the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention have not been demonstrated.

However, ICOMOS considers that the DGB sites have a strong potential to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value as an independent nomination, as they would constitute the most impressive set of dry-stone structures built in sub-Saharan Africa outside Eastern or Southern Africa.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring
Documentation
The Diy-Gid-Biy (DGB) sites have been inventoried, and two archaeological campaigns were carried out in 2001 and 2002 within an international project called Mandara Archaeological Project. Research on these sites has continued. However, as noted in the additional information provided by the State Party in February 2023, further research is necessary as many uncertainties remain.

ICOMOS considers that additional investment is necessary to carry out research on the DGB dry-stone structures to further elucidate their origins, reasons for construction, functions, the modifications of these structures, and to shed light on the civilisation that built them.

In response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the State Party informed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Arts and Culture (MINAC) and the University of Maroua was signed on 27 February 2023 on research programmes, scientific events, capacity building for the conservation of the DGB sites, and fund-seeking and raising for the protection of the nominated extension. The MoU also envisages the implementation of an action plan.

Conservation measures
Conservation actions are carried out seasonally by the Mafa people to maintain the cultivated terraces before the agricultural season. They also take care of their huts and houses. However, traditional construction and repair methods are no longer as widespread as in the past, so the use of concrete and metal corrugated sheets is spreading.

There are no programmed ad-hoc conservation measures for the DGB sites. The local inhabitants master some aspects of the dry-stone building techniques but do not
seem capable of carrying out the conservation of the DGB architectural monuments.

**Monitoring**

The nomination dossier informs that monitoring is implemented at the national and local levels, which is further complemented by traditional overseeing carried out by the custodians of each site. The State Party has prepared a set of indicators to support the monitoring of the nominated extension. While this is a useful first step, ICOMOS considers that identifying indicators able to tie attributes with factors affecting the nominated area, and understanding the trends in conservation, would better serve the purpose of having a monitoring system. ICOMOS also considers that establishing indicators to measure the achievement of objectives would also support effective conservation. In particular, expanding on active conservation and on research would be useful.

IUCN notes that, despite the fact that the nominated extension intersects with the habitat of critically-endangered species, no indicator for monitoring the state and evolution of the natural heritage, particularly the threatened species included within the nominated extension, has been set out and recommends that consideration is given to this matter to strengthen the monitoring system.

ICOMOS considers that although documentation and research, especially of the DGB sites, have been carried out in the past, they need to be furthered in order to understand better who built these structures and why. The recent MoU represents an important initial step that needs support through human and financial resources. At this stage, no conservation programmes are in place to guarantee that the dry-stone structures are preserved in a professional manner that can maintain their research potential. Dialogue with local communities will be crucial to establish a shared conservation approach and agreed protocols for safe use of the sites during rituals in order to ensure effective protection and conservation whilst respecting and sustaining the associations of the communities with these sites.

The monitoring system could be further developed to ensure that indicators linking the factors affecting the nominated extension and its attributes are set out to assess the changes in their state of conservation. Indicators to assess whether envisaged conservation objectives are achieved or not would also need to be set out. Furthermore, it would be advisable to develop indicators also for the natural heritage.

5 Protection and management

**Legal protection**

Law N°2013/003 regulates the identification, classification, management and enhancement of cultural property as well as the legal provisions for protection. Decree 2020/4601/PM sets out the modalities for applying the provisions of this law with the establishment of the consultative National Commission for the Management of Cultural Heritage (NCMCH) that has the competence to manage national cultural property in a rational and sustainable manner, and of a national register of cultural heritage within the Ministry of Arts and Culture (MINAC). The decree stipulates that the enhancement and promotion of cultural property are the responsibility of the State and the Decentralised Territorial Units. The responsibility for the conservation and restoration of registered cultural heritage falls upon the MINAC with the advice of the NCMCH.

By Order No.0002/MINAC/SG, the MINAC inscribed the cultural landscape of Diy-Gid-Biy (DGB) on the national register of cultural heritage, in February 2019. The management of this cultural property is under the authority of the MINAC in collaboration with local communities and the Decentralised Local Authorities. In May 2019, a Collaboration Platform was created between the MINAC and the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure (MINTOUL) in order to enhance and promote cultural tourism.

In terms of traditional protection, the information provided in the nomination dossier focuses on the taboos and the prohibitions concerning the DGB archaeological ruins, the altars and the sacrificial sites, but does not address other traditional protection mechanisms.

A number of plans addressing local planning are reported in the nomination dossier. These include the National Territorial Planning and Sustainable Development Plan of Cameroon, in course of validation at the time the nomination was submitted; the Regional Territorial Planning and Sustainable Development Plan of the Far North Region (2019); the Municipal Development Plan of Mayo Moskota(2011); Communal Development Plan of the municipality of Koza (2011); and the Development Plan for Mozogo-Gokoro National Park, in course of validation at the time the nomination was submitted.

A curator from the region has been appointed and is the only State employee who is specifically responsible for this vast cultural landscape.

**Management system**

The management system of the nominated extension relies on the legal and institutional framework of Cameroon at the national and local levels. In Cameroon, a multi-tiered management structure is envisaged. Four ministries are expected to be involved: the MINTOUL, the MINAC, the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT) and the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX). A Platform of Collaboration is established between the MINTOUL and MINAC and they participate in the Joint Ministerial Committee, which is the decision-making level tier of the transboundary management structure. Representatives of the MINTOUL and MINAC participate as well in the Joint Technical Committee. At the regional level, the regional services of the MINAC and MINTOUL coordinate with the Prefecture; at the departmental level, the corresponding department offices coordinate with
each other and with the Tourism Office. The Divisional Delegation of Arts and Culture appoints the site manager for the nominated extension. The site manager is a member of the Joint Management Committee. Further key stakeholders are: the Governor and the President of the Far-North Region, the Mayors of Koza and Mayo-Moskota subdivisions, representatives of the seven villages in which territory the DGB sites are located, CSO representatives, and the chairman of the Mafa Development Association.

The Joint Technical and Management Committees are expected to translate transboundary decisions into national policies, and harmonise and implement the management programmes in the two component parts.

ICOMOS requested additional information on the transboundary approach in management and the State Party replied in November 2022 that this approach is reflected by key objectives focusing on the harmonisation of the management of the two component parts of the transnational series, preserving the attributes of these landscapes, improving the presentation of the overall nominated extended property, mobilising resources and integrating the conservation of the proposed extended property and sustainable development opportunities for the two communities, and finally, promoting peaceful coexistence among different communities in the nominated extended property and in the Mandara Mountains at large.

A transboundary management plan has been prepared for the cycle 2022-2026 as an adaptation of the management plan for Sukur (2017-2021). Its main objectives include strengthening the protection system for the proposed transboundary property, safeguarding and promoting intangible cultural heritage to support local communities, and promoting peace throughout the Mandara Mountains. The plan was prepared and validation workshops at the local level were carried out at different stages of the nomination and the final version was transmitted to the MINAC for final adoption. The management plan sets out eight general objectives with related implementation actions.

The management plan also includes a section concerning the establishment of the Mandara International Peace Park.

Funds are made available through decentralised territorial units to municipal councils in the process of administrative decentralisation.

Some heritage-related projects have received support from donors and international organisations; however, with the security crisis, they were suspended, and the focus has been put on humanitarian projects.

The additional information received in February 2023 includes an action plan for the cultural landscape of DGB, set up for the period 2023-2028, that includes several actions to be addressed locally and transnationally.

ICOMOS notes that it is not clear where in the management structure representatives of the municipal subdivisions are included. ICOMOS further observes that the vision and the key objectives of the management plan focus on the communities and on how to improve their living conditions through a variety of strategies and actions, but objectives related to documentation and conservation of the attributes are very general and planned actions on this aspect very limited. In particular, the archaeological ruins of the DGB sites, which are key attributes of the nominated extension, are not the focus of any of the objectives and actions mentioned in the management plan.

Strengthening the management staff of the nominated extension, both in terms of human resources and their capacities, is fundamental to ensuring effective management actions on the ground.

IUCN notes that little consideration is given to natural values within the management plan and recommends that more attention is paid to them, also as a means to strengthen the long-term management of the cultural landscape, for the benefit of the livelihoods of local communities.

Visitor management
The management plan acknowledges the absence of adequate communication infrastructure to access the cultural landscape of DGB and highlights the need to build a road accessible at all times. Some accommodation facilities have existed in Koza and Mogozo since the 1990s. However, after security issues arose in 2014, almost no visitors have come to the area since then. Therefore, accommodation and tourism infrastructure would need to be upgraded and augmented. Also, capacity building in the field of tourism is needed, and there are plans to train new guides. A Platform of Collaboration has been established.

ICOMOS concurs with the State Party that efforts need to be made to reactivate tourism. The process of improving tourism infrastructure will involve addressing issues, such as the feasibility, level and periods of accessibility for visitors to the DGB sites, to which access outside of ceremonies is prohibited by taboos, as well as concerns about the well-being of local communities in the face of tourism development in the area. Although this may be seen as a far-off problem at the moment, tourism may easily and rapidly become a challenge rather than a solution to current issues, if not carefully planned and addressed.

Community involvement
Local communities have been involved in the nomination process since the development of the extension proposal. Meetings have been held locally and the populations are positive about the extension process and have provided useful information for the development of the management plan.
Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

Although legal protection is in place for the nominated extension, the presence of State agents to guarantee the protection is insufficient; hence, potential damage to the site may go unnoticed. The prohibitions deriving from traditional protection and taboos to access the DGB sites outside the rituals have contributed to reducing human pressures, although human presence during the rituals has been identified as a negative factor affecting the nominated extension. However, it is not clear to what extent this traditional protection will be effective with an increased presence of visitors if tourism develops. Despite the existence of spatial plans at different levels, there is no urbanisation instrument that regulates construction, spatial organisation, infrastructure development, and building typologies. At the moment, the pressures are low but if they increase there is no effective tool to regulate them.

The management structure is complex and envisages the involvement of many actors. Whilst participation and representation are very important, ICOMOS considers that this complexity may not be sustainable and effective over time, especially as regards resource constraints. At the local level, ICOMOS recommends that an inter-village management approach, which involves jointly the relevant communities and can facilitate the harmonisation of planning and management approaches of the cultural landscape of DGB, be adopted. The transboundary management plan only focuses on the well-being of the populations of the two component parts and addresses in a very limited manner how the attributes of the proposed transboundary property and particularly of the nominated extension will be protected, conserved and transmitted to future generations. The specificities of the cultural landscape of DGB, such as the archaeological remains of ancient dry-stone structures, are not addressed in the transboundary management plan. An action plan for the cultural landscape of DGB has been submitted with the additional information sent in February 2023 and this represents a first basis for a specific instrument for managing the nominated extension.

ICOMOS considers that one curator for the entire property is largely insufficient, even to ensure minimal monitoring, given the size of the nominated extension and the complexity of the conservation issues of the DGB sites.

ICOMOS considers that specific conservation, research and management strategies should urgently be developed for the DGB sites, the conservation of which is crucial to shed light on an important and early period of human history in the Mandara Mountains which remains largely unknown still. Involving archaeologists and experts knowledgeable about the specificities of these sites will be crucial for this task. The management structure would need to be clarified in relation to the role of local administrations; management staff will have to be increased and their capacity reinforced and a budget for conservation secured. In particular, professionals with a background in archaeology need to be included to address conservation and management issues at the DGB sites, in dialogue with the traditional custodians of these structures.

Making the nominated property accessible to visitors requires the provision of basic infrastructure, which will need to be carefully implemented to ensure that the area is not affected by inappropriate development. An understanding of how the access of visitors to the DGB sites will be managed is urgently needed. The presentation and interpretation of the DGB dry-stone structures will need to be carefully developed, respecting scientific findings and avoiding overinterpretation. It is crucial that their specificities are highlighted and that still open research questions are also presented to visitors.

6 Conclusion

The cultural landscape of Diy-Gid-Biy (DGB) has been nominated as a transnational extension of the already-inscribed Sukur Cultural Landscape, through dialogue and collaboration between Cameroon and Nigeria. ICOMOS appreciates the commitment of the States Parties to transnational cooperation, which has also been a driver to mobilise local communities.

The main justifications for inscription for the nominated extension refer to the links between some communities currently inhabiting the nominated area and the inhabitants of the Sukur Cultural Landscape; the geographical proximity between Sukur and the DGB area; some visual similarities in the terraced landscape, and between the DGB sites and the Hidi palace of Sukur; and to the recently strengthened cooperation between the communities in Sukur and those living in the DGB area.

However, the nominated extension shows a considerable time-depth, and multiple and complex layers of human occupation. These have all left tangible traces, among which the most prominent are the imposing dry-stone structures comprising platforms, high terraces, steps and supporting flat double-sided walls, which are contemporary with human occupation between the 12th and 17th centuries, and which the Mafa people, who currently live in the area, have called Diy-Gid-Biy.

The DGB sites are the remains of much older patterns of human presence in the Mandara Mountains and, in ICOMOS’ view, appear to be the most prominent elements of the nominated extension for they have been recognised by the research as among the most exceptional dry-stone constructions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Nonetheless, the nomination dossier focuses on the more recent layer of human occupation of the nominated extension, related to the cultural landscape shaped by the Mafa people in more recent times, compared to the construction period of the DGB sites.

ICOMOS considers that nominating the property as an extension of the Sukur Cultural Landscape overshadows
the exceptional distinctiveness and importance of the DGB sites and can also be challenging in terms of protection and management. The nominated extension focuses on features that do not suggest that the cultural landscape of DGB can demonstrate supranational significance, nor do they exhibit a strong capacity to complement and augment the attributes of the Sukur Cultural Landscape to strengthen and amplify its Outstanding Universal Value. The comparative analysis has not succeeded in showing the pertinence of the nominated extension and proposed criteria have not been justified. ICOMOS also considers that some ambiguity exists in the nomination approach between a focus on the DGB sites on the one hand, and, on the other hand, on the more recent layer of the cultural landscape shaped by the Mafa. This is reflected by how the boundaries of the nominated extension have been described and measured, and the cartographic material submitted in the nomination dossier.

ICOMOS has come to the conclusion that the DGB sites have a strong potential to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value on their own, through an independent nomination, as they would constitute the most impressive set of dry-stone structures built in sub-Saharan Africa outside Eastern or Southern Africa.

In this regard, ICOMOS notes that the nomination dossier has been developed more as an independent nomination, and its content, along with all additional information provided, includes already a wealth of information on the DGB sites. It would need some integrations and adjustments to be submitted as an independent nomination.

The state of conservation of the nominated property is vulnerable, particularly when it concerns the DGB sites; factors affecting the nominated extension would need to be controlled and reduced, through the active involvement of the local communities, who have developed strong associations with these sites and can therefore contribute to their conservation. Dialogue with local communities to establish a shared conservation approach and agreed protocols for safe use during rituals performed at these sites will be crucial for their effective protection and conservation, and for sustaining the associations of the communities with these sites. The respect for traditional taboos and uses will have to be included in tourism strategies.

ICOMOS considers that specific conservation, research and management strategies should be urgently developed for the DGB sites, the conservation of which is crucial to shed light on an important and early period of human history in the Mandara Mountains which remains largely unknown still. Hence, the management staff needs to be significantly strengthened in terms of human resources, capacities and funds.

The distinctiveness and the specific conservation challenges of the DGB sites compared to Sukur demand a specific management approach that would include a full set of objectives, corresponding actions and priorities for the conservation and management of these structures, which are not currently addressed in the proposed transboundary management plan. Furthermore, with a view to promoting tourism development in the area, it is fundamental that spatial planning be conceived in a way that can effectively regulate the development infrastructure and residential units.

Finally, ICOMOS considers that the cooperation established between Sukur and DGB is extremely positive and should be continued, even in the framework of an independent nomination of the DGB sites. Cooperation and collaboration among States’ Parties and between World Heritage properties lie at the core of the World Heritage Convention and it is crucial for effective protection and management as well as to foster the peace-building mission of UNESCO. However, such cooperation and collaboration need to recognise and celebrate the specificities, distinctiveness and diversity of each World Heritage property as a key element of peace-building.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the extension of the Sukur Cultural Landscape, Nigeria, to include the cultural landscape of Diy-Gid-Biy, Cameroon, and become The Sukur and Diy-Gid-Biy cultural landscape of the Mandara Mountains, should not be approved.

Noting the strong potential of the nominated extension to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value on its own, and taking into account the proposed nomination dossier, which mainly focuses on the qualities of the Cameroonian property, ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of the cultural landscape of Diy-Gid-Biy be submitted as an independent nomination under criterion (iii) by the State Party of Cameroon.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Clarifying the boundaries of the nominated property, by reducing them and focusing on the Diy-Gid-Biy sites and their immediate setting in coherence with the description provided in the nomination dossier.

b) Developing, in dialogue with local communities, a consensus-based approach for the conservation and the appropriate and safe use of the Diy-Gid-Biy sites during the performance of ritual practices and festivals, to ensure that the dry-stone structures are preserved and retain their research potential, whilst at the same time maintaining the relationship of the locals with the archaeological ruins,
c) Developing a specific conservation plan and management approach that addresses the needs of the Diy-Gid-Biy dry-stone structures, which are distinct from the constructions in Sukur, and involving archaeologists and scholars knowledgeable about the specificities of the Diy-Gid-Biy sites,

d) Augmenting the staff dedicated to the on-site management of the nominated property in terms of human resources, competencies and capacities, and funds to implement management tasks and ensure the monitoring of the Diy-Gid-Biy sites and surrounding landscape,

e) Using spatial planning to define the appropriate location of new construction, infrastructure for tourism development and setting up guidance on compatible design, materials and building techniques,

f) Continuing research on the Diy-Gid-Biy sites to shed further light on the important and early period of human history in the Mandara Mountains which remains largely unknown still;

g) Ensuring that presentation and interpretation of the Diy-Gid-Biy dry-stone structures is based on state-of-the-art scientific research, illustrate their specificities and explain as well what is not known yet about these sites,

h) Continuing the cooperation with the Sukur Cultural Landscape for the benefit of the local communities and for the sustenance of the living dimensions of the landscape;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (November 2022)
III Cultural properties

A Africa
   Extension

B Arab States
   New nominations

C Asia – Pacific
   New nominations

D Europe – North America
   New nominations
   Extension
   Nomination deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

E Latin America and the Caribbean
   New nomination
Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan (Palestine)
No 1687

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan

Location
Jericho Municipality
Governorate of Jericho and Al Aghwar
Palestine

Brief description
Located in the Jordan Valley, the nominated property is an oval-shaped tell, or mound, that contains the archaeological deposits of millennia of human activity, and includes the adjacent perennial spring of ‘Ain es-Sultan. A sizeable permanent settlement had emerged here by the 9th to 8th millennium BCE, enabled by the fertile soil of the Jericho oasis and easy access to water. With its monumental features and community structures, Neolithic Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan reflects developments that took place across the Fertile Crescent. Increasingly large and sedentary settlements began to form then, acting as drivers in the development of new subsistence economies, leading eventually to agriculture and pastoralism. Skulls with post-mortem treatment found in abundance on the site and purposefully buried anthropomorphic statues testify to the presence of cultic practices amongst the Neolithic populations living there. The Early Bronze Age archaeological material shows signs of urban planning, while vestiges from the Middle Bronze Age reveal the presence of a large Canaanite city-state occupied by a socially complex population.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

Included in the Tentative List
20 October 2020

Background
This is a new nomination.

Preparatory Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for the elaboration of the nomination dossier was received by the State Party in 2019. The World Heritage Centre supported an International Assistance request submitted in 2020 to prepare a Management and Conservation Plan.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 13 to 16 December 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the proposed justification for inscription, boundaries, and the Jericho Spatial Urban Plan.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 3 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 27 January 2023 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the comparative analysis, the Conservation and Management Plan, new developments, community engagement, and future research.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 27 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
Located northwest of present-day Jericho in the Jordan Valley in Palestine, the nominated property consists of an oval-shaped tell, or mound, that contains the archaeological deposits of human activity going back to about 10,500 BCE, and the adjacent spring of ‘Ain es-Sultan, located immediately to the east, which has been and continues to be an important source of water for the surrounding area.

The stratigraphy of this archaeological site shows twenty-nine phases of occupation. From the earliest period is a large rectangular platform of natural clay with retaining walls. In the Neolithic period, a sizeable settlement developed in the 9th to 8th millennium BCE, with a wall, a tower with internal staircase, and a ditch dug into the bedrock. In the 8th to 7th millennium BCE, archaeological vestiges prove the existence of an enclosure wall and terraced walls constructed on the western side of the tell.
Remnants of different types of houses found on the site testify to the evolution of housing in the Neolithic period—from circular semi-subterranean houses made of timber to more sophisticated mud-brick houses with courtyards and rectangular rooms, to pit dwellings.

Graves found under the floors of houses, and skulls and skeletons with post-mortem treatment discovered under what was probably a shrine, testify to the presence of cultic practices in Ancient Jericho from at least the 8th millennium BCE. Numerous plastered skulls buried in groups in different places around the site are evidence of a practice widely known in this period across the Levant and in Anatolia, which tends to be associated with ancestor worship. Buried anthropomorphic plaster statues may hint at the presence of an organised religion.

The archaeological material from the Bronze Age includes three massive fortified walls constructed in the Early Bronze Age (3000-2350 BCE) and four walls dating to the Middle Bronze Age (1950-1550 BCE) visible in the excavated sections. Ancient Jericho in the Early Bronze Age had an oval shape and included within its enclosure walls the spring of ‘Ain es-Sultan. Semi-circular towers strengthened the walls. The archaeological deposits contain the remains of residential and public buildings, including rectangular houses with rounded corners, a large apsidal construction for communal functions, and a multi-storey mud-brick structure known as Palace G, which is thought to have played an important economic and political function. The layout of Ancient Jericho at that time shows early signs of urban planning, with a central street created in a residential quarter along which houses were constructed.

From the Middle Bronze Age, a large defensive system with ramparts, buttresses, and retaining and revetment walls (a so-called Cyclopean wall) has been preserved. Amongst the excavated houses and public buildings is a structure that probably served as a temple, as well as an edifice considered to be the Hyksos palace. The uncovered material shows that during the Middle Bronze Age the city was occupied by a socially complex population.

Most of the excavated artefacts are in museums and collections outside Palestine.

The nominated property has an area of 5.93 ha and a buffer zone of 22.53 ha.

Historic evidence shows the presence of hunter-gatherer groups in the area of the nominated property from the Late Epipaleolithic period: Natufian culture is attested at this site around 10,500 BCE. Towards the end of the 9th millennium BCE, Ancient Jericho developed into a sizeable settlement due to the favourable conditions and fertile soil of the Jericho oasis, with easy access to water from the perennial springs of ‘Ain es-Sultan, ‘Ain ed-Duyuk, and ‘Ain en-Nueima. An irrigation system was established as early as the Neolithic period, and was developed substantially later under the Romans. Destroyed, abandoned, and rebuilt several times during the 8th to 6th millennium BCE, the settlement regressed and was finally deserted during the Chalcolithic period.

In the Early Bronze Age, Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan witnessed impressive growth and saw early urban development. In the Middle Bronze Age, it became a large, flourishing Canaanite city-state with a highly developed urban centre inclusive of palaces, cemeteries, and architecture that served both private and public purposes. The city was destroyed around the year 1550 BCE, and in its place a number of villages developed in the Jordan Valley.

The settlement relocated to Tulul Abu al-‘Alayiq in the Hellenistic period, and in the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods the urban core of the Jericho oasis was at Tell Hassam. During the Ottoman period, Jericho was barely a village until the beginning of the 20th century CE, when it became an agricultural centre under the British Mandate. At that time, the ‘Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp grew north of Tell es-Sultan. The city, together with the reminder of the West Bank, was controlled by the Kingdom of Jordan from 1948-49 until 1967. During Israeli occupation from 1967 to 1994, Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan became an Israeli National Park and was opened to the public in 1984. It has been under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority since 1994.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party clarified that the chronological timeframe for the nominated property with respect to its proposed Outstanding Universal Value is limited to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. Earlier and later historical developments, which span several millennia and are demonstrated by material remains beyond the boundaries of the nominated property into the wider setting of the Jericho oasis, constitute the cultural context and are not the focus of the nomination.

State of conservation

Scholarly interest in the nominated property goes back to the 18th century CE. The first archaeological soundings and investigations took place in the 19th century CE. The tell was conceptually associated with Ancient Jericho in 1841. A series of trenches were excavated in 1907-09, followed by an archaeological campaign in 1930-36 that confirmed that the tell had a multi-stratified history. Additional archaeological excavations were carried out from 1952 to 1958, led by Kathleen Kenyon, who determined the chrono-stratigraphy of the site. Except for a sounding done in 1992, no works were undertaken on the site between 1958 and 1997.

Between 1997 and 2019, a Joint Palestinian-Italian Expedition reassessed previous excavations and rehabilitated the uncovered vestiges. Mud-brick walls were strengthened and consolidated; some were plastered using traditional mortar. Some of the collapsed structures were restored and trenches were backfilled. The new mud-bricks installed to protect the original walls were intentionally made larger to be easily distinguishable from the originals. In 2021, the Neolithic tower, which
previously had metal beams installed to stabilise it, underwent maintenance work. Cracks in its lintels and flaking of staircase steps were documented.

The ‘Ain es-Sultan spring was rehabilitated in 2009 in order to improve the water supply for the nearby present-day city of Jericho, and to develop the spring as a tourist destination. Works included landscaping and installation of a retractable roof.

Today, about thirty percent of the tell is excavated. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party explained that excavations have temporarily been suspended in order to focus on conserving the uncovered vestiges. Future archaeological work will be based on a research strategy that will form part of a Management and Conservation Plan.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory, but the site in general, and certain sections in particular, require urgent attention. Past excavations damaged portions of the archaeological strata, and soil erosion keeps degrading the exposed structural remains and causes open trenches to widen. Due to the fragility of the material, urgent conservation measures and continued maintenance are needed.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are environmental and anthropogenic pressures.

Rainfall and its runoff, paired with high temperatures and wind, are the main causes of erosion on the nominated property. Rising groundwater leads to the destruction of archaeological deposits, and nesting birds, burrowing animals, and uncontrolled vegetation further exacerbate the fragility of the archaeological material. Earthquakes are a major risk, as the nominated property is located in a high seismic hazard zone.

In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party explained that drainage channels have been made around the excavated areas to control rain runoffs. ICOMOS considers that the planned Management and Conservation Plan should include a hydrological strategy for the evacuation of rainwater from the nominated property.

Amongst the anthropogenic factors, pressure from tourism and the effects of urbanisation, including urban encroachment on the land immediately surrounding the nominated property, are key threats. Currently, two tourist centres are located close to the southern boundary of the nominated property, within the buffer zone: the Sultan Tourist Centre, and the Temptation Tourist Centre. The latter encroaches on the nominated property. Negotiations with the developer to relocate the facility are currently underway.

In 2018, the Japan International Cooperation Agency together with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine conducted a survey to better understand the existing dynamics amongst tourists, and to plan for the future. Accordingly, the State Party is planning new tourist infrastructure adjacent to the nominated property. It is to include a new visitor facility with an interpretation centre, site museum, and new parking lot. A cable car that connects the nominated property with the Mountain of Temptation to the northwest provides visitors with a panoramic view of the area, but affects the views to and from the nominated property. The State Party will seek to remove the cable car system in the future, though no date has been specified.

The land surrounding the nominated property is subject to increasing development pressures. The ‘Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp spreads immediately north of the nominated property, with no buffer between it and the tell. The State Party has no control over the camp, as it is under the authority of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The spring of ‘Ain es-Sultan is currently separated from Ancient Jericho by a public road. Re-routing this road to a location at the eastern edge of the buffer zone has been approved and financed by the Jericho Municipality. Completion is planned for July 2023. The former public road will then become a pedestrian path on the site.

Some issues in relation to re-routing the road were raised by the residents of the ‘Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party clarified that residents of the ‘Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp were engaged, through the committee of camp, in the re-routing of the road, which has been included in planning documents since the 1950s. Part of the new road was built in the 2000s, and a short section was added in 2022. The State Party also explained that an archaeological survey was conducted before the construction of this alternative road began. It indicated that the area did not contain any archaeological remains. As such, the State Party did not consider an Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessment to be necessary.

ICOMOS considers that independent Heritage Impact Assessments need to be carried out as a pre-requisite for any development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the nominated property.

ICOMOS also considers that the plans of the State Party regarding the expansion of tourism facilities are not clear, including the location of the land to be acquired for this development.
ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory, and that factors affecting the nominated property need attention. A hydrological strategy for the evacuation of rainwater from the nominated property should be included in the Management and Conservation Plan.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan exhibits an interchange of ideologies with civic living, creating developments in architecture, technology, and the arts, and the domestication of plants and animals during the Neolithic, Early Bronze Age, and Middle Bronze Age.
- As an outstanding testament to cultural traditions and ancient civilisations, it is the oldest fortified city of the world, a fundamental milestone in the history of humanity for more than 10,000 years, one of the first settled agricultural societies, a main centre of the Neolithic Revolution, and one of the earliest instances of ancestor worship.
- As an outstanding example of Neolithic development of a permanent sedentary settlement, the unique architectural and technological innovations of Ancient Jericho best illustrate the development of permanent urban centres. It is also amongst the best examples in the Levant of rampart construction techniques during the Bronze Age.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are the archaeological deposits and the above-ground archaeological vestiges of Ancient Jericho dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, as well as the adjacent spring of 'Ain es-Sultan.

ICOMOS considers that some conclusions drawn by the State Party on the significance of Ancient Jericho, especially in the Neolithic period, appear to be based on 20th-century theories about the development of agriculture, urbanisation, and the spread of cultic practices in the Levant and the wider Near East cultural context. These theories have been challenged by more recent archaeological investigations and interdisciplinary studies of Neolithic sites in the Near East, which indicate that a more nuanced understanding of the values of the nominated property is needed.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed around the following parameters (which are implicit rather than explicit): sites from the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, particularly the Middle Bronze Age; sites located in the Fertile Crescent; sites with long histories as urban centres on major trade routes; and sites with virtually continuous occupation over millennia. It has examined properties within the Near East geo-cultural region and beyond, that have been inscribed on the World Heritage List or inserted in the Tentative Lists of States Parties, as well as other properties.

The State Party considers that the main attributes relevant to the comparative analysis are the Neolithic fortifications, the development of housing, ritual practices related to the treatment of skulls, Neolithic material culture, and Bronze Age fortifications. It also discusses the nominated property as a place where pioneering archaeological methods were developed and scientific terminology was devised.

Given the large number of relevant archaeological sites in this geo-cultural region, the State Party provides a general overview, with selected sites being mentioned as examples rather than being analysed in a systematic or comprehensive manner. Amongst the important properties from the Neolithic period inscribed on the World Heritage List, the overview mentions Göbekli Tepe (Türkiye, 2018, criteria (i), (ii) and (iv)) and the Neolithic Site of Çatalhöyük (Türkiye, 2012, criteria (iii) and (iv)), which differ from the nominated property either in their dating or their purposes.

Bronze Age fortifications on the World Heritage List such as Byblos (Lebanon, 1984, criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi)) and the Biblical Tels - Megiddo, Hazor, Beer Sheba (Israel, 2005, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi)) are compared to Ancient Jericho, which is said by the State Party to stand out due to its impressive and technologically complex ramparts.

The comparative analysis also includes a list of sites that testify to the Neolithic traditions of house construction, and that have evidence of ritual practices related to post-mortem skull treatment. Ancient Jericho is said by the State Party to stand out amongst them because it attests to the development of housing styles and skull treatment practice over a long period of time.

The comparative analysis uses a largely quantitative approach that offers few details in support of a robust examination. In addition, it relies on interpretations of the nominated property that have been challenged in recent studies.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested the State Party to provide a more focused and complete comparative analysis developed around a set of values that are based on more recent archaeological investigations and interdisciplinary studies. In its response provided in February 2023, the State Party presented an expanded and better focused qualitative analysis that includes a large number of comparators. Properties such as Choirokoitia (Cyprus, 1998, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)) and the Archaeological Site of Troy (Türkiye, 1998, criteria (ii), (iii) and (vi)) have similarities to the nominated property, but are shown to represent different cultural contexts and to have stratigraphies that are significantly different from the nominated property.
ICOMOS considers that the revised comparative analysis demonstrates in a convincing way that the combination of values and attributes that the site convey are not yet represented on the World Heritage List, and that the nominated property stands out within its geo-cultural region.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan bears witness to an exceptional interchange of cultural values and religious practices as well as technological innovations in the Near East during the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. According to the State Party, its location along major trade routes helped Ancient Jericho to act as a cultural centre from which ideas and experiences in the fields of plant and animal domestication, architecture, and mortuary practices related to ancestor worship spread throughout the region. The nominated property is also known as the place where the so-called Wheeler-Kenyon method of archaeological excavation used widely by archaeologists in the Near East and Anatolia was popularised.

ICOMOS considers that Ancient Jericho was an important permanent settlement in the Levant during the Neolithic period and later. Its inhabitants shared cultural and religious practices with the populations in the wider region, with whom they communicated and exchanged goods. However, ICOMOS considers that the claims that specific ideas and values around agricultural production, technological and architectural developments, and cultic practices were developed specifically in Ancient Jericho and were exported from there to influence the region over time have not been fully substantiated. The early dating of the material remains discovered in the nominated property does not necessarily indicate this influence.

ICOMOS further considers that, while the Wheeler-Kenyon method of archaeological excavation is of importance in the history of archaeological research and methodology, its significance as regards the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is limited. ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property represents one of the earliest examples of a permanent settlement, with virtually continuous occupation over ten millennia. The inhabitants domesticated plants and animals and developed agriculture to sustain their lifestyle, which, according to the State Party, makes it one of the progenitors of the Neolithic agricultural revolution in the Near East. It is also claimed to be the oldest fortified city, where innovative technology was used in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A period to create fortifications that included a ditch and a tower, which must have required the existence of socio-political structures and an economic system at that early period.

While there is evidence of a long settlement history on this site, ICOMOS considers that Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan cannot be considered to have been occupied virtually continuously. The archaeological record from the tell shows gaps in occupation in the Chalcolithic, Late Bronze Age, and Iron Age I periods. ICOMOS further considers that it is difficult to confirm whether Ancient Jericho is the oldest fortified city, as there is a body of scholarship that proposes the Neolithic settlements were rather large villages or mega-sites, the concept of urbanism having developed much later. The defensive character of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A walls in Ancient Jericho remains a matter of debate.

ICOMOS does, however, consider that the nominated property testifies in an exceptional way to developments that took place across the Near East in the Early Neolithic, when increasingly large and sedentary settlements began to emerge and to act as major drivers in the development of new subsistence economies, eventually leading to agriculture and pastoralism. Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan demonstrates how people learned to live together in larger and more permanent settlements. Monumental features, the presence of shared structures, and the treatment of skulls all belong to the wider Neolithic framework where people developed new social and ritual methods of communal living. The nominated property provides important insights into changes in social organisation, and into the degree of skill, planning, and labour that this social organisation required. The deep stratigraphy preserved on the tell has the potential to answer many questions related to development and change in the Neolithic period. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified on these grounds.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is an exceptional example of the development of permanent urban centres in the Near East, which marked the significant stage of human transition from hunter-gatherers to a sedentary lifestyle. As a fortified town with elaborate defensive architecture in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A period, the nominated property, according to the State Party, demonstrates the architectural and technological innovations in the realm of urban housing until the Bronze Age, based on a long record of consecutive habitation phases and a range of
housing styles preserved on the site. It is also said to bear exceptional evidence, on the scale of the Levant, of Middle Bronze Age rampart construction techniques.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is an outstanding example of a permanent sedentary settlement with a long history that illustrates the transition of the people of the Levant from hunter-gatherers to a sedentary lifestyle in the Neolithic. With monumental architectural features such as a wall with a ditch and a tower dating to the Neolithic, the nominated property exemplifies in an exceptional way the process of Neolithisation of the Fertile Crescent, a significant stage in human history. It also testifies to the rise of early Levantine urban culture in the Early Bronze Age, and the Middle Bronze Age ramparts show evidence of innovative construction techniques. Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan further testifies to the development of building traditions in both private and public spheres in the Neolithic and later in the Bronze Age. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv), but that criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the wholeness and intactness of the archaeological deposits and uncovered vestiges of Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. The boundary has been drawn to encompass the archaeological elements and the ‘Ain es-Sultan spring that together support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The nominated property contains all the attributes necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The archaeological deposits and deep stratigraphy are generally well preserved, though some of the structures have been destroyed as a result of past archaeological investigations. The excavated artefacts have been alienated from the site. The integrity of uncovered structures is fragile in some instances, due to a lack of systematic maintenance and conservation measures. Environmental factors pose great risks to the intactness of the vestiges and are not adequately addressed at the moment. Erosion has affected the uncovered structures and widened the trenches post-excavation.

A public road that separates the tell from the ‘Ain es-Sultan spring is being re-routed to restore the connection between the tell and the spring. The views from the nominated property are compromised to some extent by existing developments within the proposed buffer zone. Tourism facilities have encroached on the southern end of the nominated property and the infrastructure for a neighbouring cable car is visually intrusive. The State Party has indicated that it will seek to have both removed. The refugee camp immediately to the north affects the views from the nominated property, but the State Party has no control over it.

ICOMOS considers that the impacts of existing developments, although negative, are relatively limited and may be mitigated by appropriate management solutions in the future.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of the archaeological deposits and uncovered remains to credibly express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The nominated property can be said to be authentic in its forms and designs, materials and substance, as well as its location.

Past excavations damaged portions of archaeological material, resulting in the loss of some structures from the Neolithic period. Given the fragility of the mud-brick, the exposed parts of archaeological deposits remain vulnerable. Conservation measures undertaken to consolidate the mud-brick have not always been successful. New interventions are urgently needed in several cases, such as for the Middle Bronze Age ramparts. No large-scale reconstructions have been made at the site. Where minimal interventions have occurred, mud-bricks made from local materials have deliberately been made distinguishable from the originals.

The few intrusive elements on the site include metal supports that have been installed in the Neolithic tower and a footbridge that has been constructed to enable visitors to appreciate the results of the excavations without damaging them.

The ‘Ain es-Sultan spring has retained its original function as a water source. It has been rehabilitated and covered with a retractable roof.

The immediate context of the nominated property has been altered and compromised by urban and peri-urban encroachment. The nominated property now exists as an isolated island within a mixed and dynamic urban, peri-urban, and agrarian landscape that also includes the ‘Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp (which at seventy-five years old has become part of the cultural landscape of Jericho).

ICOMOS considers that, despite some concerns, the attributes truthfully convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and therefore the authenticity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.

ICOMOS also considers that the setting of the nominated property may be less of an authenticity issue in this particular case and more of a management issue, which
should be addressed as an integral part of future management planning.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met.

**Boundaries**
The nominated property is a National Archaeological Park with no permanent inhabitants. About 300 people reside in the buffer zone.

The boundaries of the nominated property follow the base of the mound except for the eastern side where they extend to encompass the spring. They are based on the limits of the National Archaeological Park, which incorporates the tell and the spring of ‘Ain es-Sultan along with a small area of rehabilitated historic drainage channels. The boundaries have been defined by the existing and known attributes of Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan in the Neolithic through Bronze Age periods. ICOMOS notes that the wider context of the Jericho oasis is directly relevant and integral to the development of the tell. Areas immediately adjacent to the nominated property that have been included in the buffer zone may contain features or deposits with the potential to contribute to and enhance understanding of the nominated property in the future, but at present remain unknown.

The buffer zone includes a very narrow strip of land on the north containing ‘Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp dwellings, an open landscape to the west as far as the break in slope at the foot of the Rift Valley escarpment, beyond which the whole area is protected as a Provisional Protected Cultural Landscape, and a section of land to the east and south with commercial centres and tourism facilities. The boundaries of the buffer zone largely follow the road infrastructure or limits of land plots, except for the northern side where it is arbitrary and cuts through the terrain. Parts of the immediate setting have been included within the buffer zone, which is said to include areas that are visually important to the nominated property.

The State Party proposed an additional outer protection zone that includes areas beyond the buffer zone to the west, northeast, east, and south (but still excluding the refugee camp). This zone is intended to provide additional protection of views and to restrict urban expansion and development, although with slightly fewer restrictions than in the buffer zone itself. Work is underway by the Jericho Municipality to modify the Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan by preparing a Detailed Urban Master Plan for the Tell es-Sultan Area, scheduled for completion in 2023, which will accommodate this additional outer protection zone in addition to the buffer zone.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party explained that, while the tell has been an integral part of the wider Jericho oasis, the historic cultural landscape has been heavily changed due to subsequent developments. While some elements of the landscape are crucial to understanding the history of human settlement in and around Ancient Jericho over millennia, the State Party indicates that they do not contribute directly to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and thus have been included in the buffer zone. The sites that testify to the relocation of the Jericho settlement after the Hellenistic period have been left outside the buffer zone, as they are a considerable distance from the nominated property.

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party consider simplifying the proposals for protecting the wider settings of the nominated property by extending the buffer zone (and the associated regulatory mechanisms that are being developed) to include the proposed additional outer protection zone, when this becomes possible, through a minor boundary modification request.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List. The nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv) on the basis of a more nuanced understanding of its values, but criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated. The conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**
The post-1997 inventory of the nominated property is part of the National Register. The records are kept in the archives of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and are available in a digital format. The documentation includes information on the restoration works. Monitoring records are stored at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and Jericho Municipality.

Pre-1997 excavation documentation and the unearthed artefacts are held by a number of institutions across the world, including the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the Amman Citadel Museum and Jordan National Museum in Amman, the Institute of Archaeology at University College London, the State Collection for Anthropology in Munich, the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology at Oxford University, and many more. Some are held at the Palestine Archaeological Museum/Rockefeller Museum in East Jerusalem.

ICOMOS considers that copies of inventories, reports, and other records of works that predate 1997, and which are spread across many countries, should be assembled and deposited at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities as baseline documentation for any future management, conservation, and monitoring activities.

**Conservation measures**
A dedicated site manager with a small team at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities’ Jericho Office is in charge of on-site administration and maintenance. The nominated
property is checked daily in terms of cleanliness and safety for visitors. Specialised personnel are engaged as needed.

There is no programmed conservation or maintenance regime in place. However, a three-year conservation and management project recently begun. It includes development of a Management and Conservation Plan for the nominated property, which aims at addressing this gap. In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party indicated that the Management and Conservation Plan should be finalised and adopted by December 2023. Emergency conservation and consolidation activities will be continued during 2023, but large-scale interventions, including restoration, will not be implemented until the Plan is approved by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

The archaeological remains exposed during excavations require regular maintenance and consolidation in situ. The human resources and expertise available at the site to attend to these needs on a regular basis are currently very limited. ICOMOS considers that the State Party needs to ensure adequate resources are in place to sustain appropriate levels of conservation and maintenance over the long term.

**Monitoring**

The monitoring system is operated and technically implemented by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities’ Jericho Office. It is rudimentary, and largely quantitative in nature.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system needs to be further developed to address more directly all the attributes of the nominated property, and the identified threats to them. ICOMOS further considers that it is unclear how the monitoring indicators inform specific interventions, and what constitutes a baseline for reference.

ICOMOS considers that adequate resources are needed to sustain appropriate levels of conservation and maintenance. Complete baseline documentation should be assembled and deposited at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is further developed to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and is conceived for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

**5 Protection and management**

**Legal protection**

The nominated property is protected by the Tangible Cultural Heritage Law (No. 11, 2018). The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has the primary legal responsibility for its management and conservation. According to this Law, any major intervention, including conservation activities and excavations, must first be approved by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and any new structures or major changes in the areas surrounding the nominated property require an Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessment.

Additionally, the Law of Environment (No. 7, 1999) prohibits acts that would have a negative impact on archaeological sites, including their visual aesthetics.

The Building and Planning Law (No. 79, 1966; Jordanian Law) is in force in the buffer zone. Its implementation is overseen by the Ministry of Local Government, which has a mandate to investigate any building site and stop any construction where an archaeological discovery has been made. The buffer zone is owned primarily by private individuals and the Islamic and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate Endowments.

Additional regulatory measures apply through the Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan, which regulates land use and urbanisation of the area. The Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan identifies the nominated property and the majority of its buffer zone as a protected archaeological area (antiquities zone) under the provisions of the Tangible Cultural Heritage Law (No. 11, 2018), which prohibits any change to its current land-use classification without the endorsement of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Building activity is also not allowed in these areas, while activities such as farming, gardening or construction of reversible structures require a special permit from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The western area of the buffer zone, outside the archaeological protection zone, is classified for rural land use, which imposes restrictions on the heights of buildings. On the south, a tourist zone with special regulations has been created.

In the additional information submitted in November 2022, the State Party clarified that, regardless of ownership of land within the buffer zone, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has full legal authority over the protected archaeological area (antiquities zone) to determine the appropriate use of this land, in line with the provisions of the Tangible Cultural Heritage Law (No. 11, 2018). It is also mandated through the Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan to review all interventions and developments in other zones having special regulations. The existing regulations will be supplemented in 2023 by additional special protection regulations in the Detailed Urban Master Plan for the Tell es-Sultan Area, which are intended to control land-use patterns and construction in the wider area around the nominated property, except for the area of the refugee camp to the north.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has a satisfactory level of statutory protection at the national and local levels.

**Management system**

The nominated property is owned by the State Party and managed as a National Archaeological Park by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the highest heritage authority in Palestine. The Ministry of Tourism and
Antiquities’ Jericho Office is responsible for managing the site. The ‘Ain es-Sultan spring, as well as main roads inside the nominated property and buffer zone, are managed and maintained by the Jericho Municipality. In the future, the spring will be managed jointly by the Ministry and the Municipality.

At the level of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, an Advisory Council for Heritage composed of representatives of different ministries, academic institutions, and civil society is responsible for guidelines on conservation, protection, management, and development of heritage in the country. On an operational level, several directorates within the Ministry are responsible for implementation, including approvals of major interventions, conservation activities, and excavations within the nominated property. The General Directorate of World Heritage oversees the management of World Heritage properties and ensures their long-term conservation. At the local level, a small team in the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities’ Jericho Office is responsible for on-site administration and maintenance of the nominated property. The Jericho Office is also responsible for issuing construction permits.

The annual budget of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities covers the costs of maintenance, repairs, presentation, and promotion of the nominated property, while conservation and management depend largely on external funding. Income generated by the nominated property is accumulated centrally and redistributed by the Ministry according to needs of heritage sites across the country.

Currently, the management objectives for the nominated property are based on the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities’ Sector Strategic Plan (updated every four years). A Management and Conservation Plan is under preparation and will integrate a research programme and a community involvement strategy, as well as an interpretation and presentation strategy that will be aligned with international standards.

In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party clarified that, to inform interventions, an assessment of the state of conservation, the factors affecting the nominated property, a dynamic tourism study, and, if needed, a hydrological survey will be prepared as part of the Management and Conservation Plan. A risk management strategy will also be included in the Plan.

ICOMOS observes that it is not clear whether all heritage-related oversight and decision-making takes place at the national government level, or if some functions have been delegated to local authorities.

ICOMOS considers that the existing budget for the nominated property is modest. The current centralised Ministry budget arrangement may limit the flexibility needed to be able to respond to urgent needs at the nominated property.

Visitor management
A tourism management and promotion strategy will be developed by 2023 to organise the flow of tourists and reduce any undue pressures on the individual attributes of the nominated property.

New tourism facilities are planned by the State Party, including a rehabilitated interpretation centre and a site museum. It is unclear where these are planned to be constructed.

There is currently no provision for access or facilities suitable for the disabled. ICOMOS considers that the current presentation and interpretation of the nominated property require upgrading in order to make the archaeological site more accessible, both physically and intellectually. The complexity of the archaeological stratigraphy and the absence of a meaningful and linear visitor route make understanding the nominated property challenging.

ICOMOS also considers that the interpretation and presentation strategy should guide the development of all on-site and off-site interpretation of the nominated property as a whole, as well as the interpretation of the specific features of the site. It should also establish common design principles. These improvements should not have any negative impacts on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity or integrity of the nominated property.

Community involvement
The State Party has engaged in a dialogue with relevant stakeholders during the nomination process, including property owners, residents of the ‘Ain es-Sultan Refugee Camp, and the business community, and the same will be done for the elaboration of the Management and Conservation Plan. A community involvement strategy will be drafted as part of the said Plan to ensure participation of the local communities in the conservation and sustainable development of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the local communities should continue to be actively involved when decisions are being made about the nominated property.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the current protection and management systems are adequate, but there is a need to enhance the resource base, in terms of both human capacities and financial means. A Management and Conservation Plan that is currently being prepared will address the most important aspects of research, management, conservation, and interpretation. It should include a risk management strategy, a research strategy, a community involvement strategy, and an interpretation and presentation strategy, and be integrated with a tourism management and promotion strategy. A hydrological strategy for evacuation of rainwater from the site needs to be included as well.
6 Conclusion

Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan contains a multi-layered history of occupation that testifies to two historical-cultural contexts, namely the Neolithisation of the Fertile Crescent and the phenomenon of urbanism in southern Levant during the Bronze Age. The nominated property exemplifies changes and dynamics that the Near East region experienced in the Neolithic period, related to the shifting of humanity to a sedentary lifestyle and the related transition to new subsistence economies.

ICOMOS acknowledges the effort made by the State Party in elaborating the nomination dossier and appreciates the work it carried out to provide clarifying additional information.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (iii) and (iv) have been met, although with a more nuanced understanding of the values of the nominated property. Criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated. The claims that specific ideas and values were developed in Ancient Jericho and were exported from there to influence the region have not been fully substantiated. The conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

ICOMOS further considers that the protection and management of the nominated property are satisfactory, but the long-term provision of adequate financial and human resources needs to be ensured. The Management and Conservation Plan currently in preparation should provide an appropriate basis for relevant conservation and maintenance regimes. Complete baseline documentation of the nominated property needs to be assembled, and the monitoring system should be further developed.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan, Palestine, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Located northwest of present-day Jericho in the Jordan Valley in Palestine, Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan consists of an oval-shaped tell, or mound, that contains archaeological deposits of human activity dating back to about 10,500 BCE, and the adjacent perennial spring of ‘Ain es-Sultan, which for millennia has been an important source of water for the inhabitants of this area.

The stratigraphy of this archaeological site shows twenty-nine phases of occupation and testifies to two historical-cultural contexts, namely the Neolithisation of the Fertile Crescent and the phenomenon of urbanism in southern Levant during the Bronze Age.

By the 9th to 8th millennium BCE, Neolithic Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan was already a sizeable permanent settlement, as expressed by surviving monumental architectural features such as a wall with a ditch and a tower. It reflects the developments of the period, which include the shifting of humanity to a sedentary communal lifestyle and the related transition to new subsistence economies, as well as changes in social organisation and the development of religious practices.

The Early Bronze Age archaeological material on the site provides insights into urban planning, while vestiges from the Middle Bronze Age reveal the presence of a large Canaanite city-state, equipped with an urban centre and technologically innovative rampart fortifications, occupied by a socially complex population.

Criterion (iii): Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan testifies in an exceptional way to developments that took place across the Near East in the Neolithic, characterised by the shifting of humanity to a new sedentary lifestyle and the related transition to new subsistence strategies. It demonstrates how people learned to live in larger, more permanent settlements and develop new social and ritual methods of communal living. Monumental features of the property, the presence of shared structures, and the evidence of post-mortem treatment of skulls provide important insights into changes in social organisation, and into the degree of skill, planning, and labour that this social organisation required. The deep stratigraphy preserved on the tell has the potential to answer many questions related to development and change of societies in the Neolithic period.

Criterion (iv): Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan is an outstanding example of a permanent settlement with a long history that testifies to the transition of the people of the Levant from hunter-gatherers to a sedentary lifestyle in the Neolithic, and provides evidence of the rise of early Levantine urban culture in the Early Bronze Age. With its monumental architectural features and shared structures dating from the 9th to 8th millennium BCE, the property exemplifies in an exceptional way the process of Neolithisation of the Fertile Crescent, a significant stage in human history. It further allows developments in building traditions to be observed in both the private and public spheres in the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, its Middle Bronze Age ramparts in particular showing evidence of innovative construction techniques.

Integrity

All the attributes necessary to convey the Outstanding Universal Value are located within the boundaries of the property. These attributes include the archaeological deposits and the above-ground archaeological vestiges of Ancient Jericho dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods, as well as the adjacent spring of ‘Ain es-Sultan. The excavated artefacts have been alienated from the
site. The property is of sufficient size to ensure the complete representation of the features and values that convey its significance. Its archaeological deposits and deep stratigraphy are well preserved, despite destruction of some structures as a result of past archaeological investigations. The uncovered structures are fragile in some instances. The property does not suffer from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

Authenticity

Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan is authentic in terms of its forms and designs, materials and substance, and location. The Neolithic and Bronze Age archaeological vestiges of Ancient Jericho, while in some cases damaged during early excavations, truthfully convey the Outstanding Universal Value. The designs, materials and substance of the archaeological vestiges in situ are authentically preserved and have maintained their intact forms. Conservation measures are needed in several cases, such as for the Middle Bronze Age ramparts. No reconstructions have been made at the site, which remains in its historical location. Minimal interventions that have occurred have been made distinguishable from the original fabric. The rehabilitated ‘Ain es-Sultan spring has retained its original function as a water source.

Protection and management requirements

The property is protected by the Tangible Cultural Heritage Law (No. 11, 2018) of Palestine, according to which any major intervention, including conservation activities and excavations, must first be approved by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and any new structures or major changes in the areas surrounding the property require an Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessment. The Building and Planning Law (No. 79, 1966; Jordanian Law) is in force in the buffer zone. Additional regulatory measures apply through the Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan, soon to be supplemented with regulations pertaining to the Detailed Urban Master Plan for the Tell es-Sultan Area. The Jericho City Spatial Urban Plan identifies the property and the majority of its buffer zone as a protected archaeological area (antiquities zone).

The property is owned by the State Party and managed as a National Archaeological Park by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the highest heritage authority in Palestine, whose Jericho Office is responsible for on-site management. The ‘Ain es-Sultan spring will be managed jointly with the Ministry. A Management and Conservation Plan is intended to address the most important aspects of research, management, conservation, and interpretation of the property.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Completing and adopting the Management and Conservation Plan for the property, integrated with a tourism management and promotion strategy, research strategy, risk management strategy, community involvement strategy, and an interpretation and presentation strategy that includes careful elucidation of the wider setting of the property, and submitting the Plan to the World Heritage Centre as soon as it is finalised,
b) Undertaking a hydrological study and including in the Management and Conservation Plan a hydrological strategy for the evacuation of rainwater from the property,
c) Assembling complete baseline documentation of the property, and further developing the monitoring system,
d)Negotiating with relevant stakeholders for the removal of the existing tourism facilities encroaching on the property, and developing a process to remove the cable car as soon as is practicable,
e) Considering extending the buffer zone (and the associated regulatory mechanisms that are being developed) to include the proposed additional outer protection zone, when this becomes possible, through a minor boundary modification request,
f)Carrying out Heritage Impact Assessments as a pre-requisite for any development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the property, such as tourism facilities and road realignments,
g)Informing the World Heritage Centre of the intention to undertake or authorise all major projects which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in line with paragraph 172 of Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Djerba: cultural landscape, testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory

Location
Médenine Governorate
Djerba Island
Tunisia

Brief description
This serial property is a testimony to a settlement pattern that developed on the island of Djerba around the 9th century CE amidst the semi-dry and water-scarce environment. Low-density was its key characteristic: it involved the division of the island, except for the uninhabited coastal areas, into a type of neighbourhoods called *houma* composed of homesteads referred to as *menzels*. These neighbourhoods, clustered together, were economically self-sustainable, connected to each other and to the religious and trading places of the island, through a complex network of roads. Medina-like neighbourhoods inhabited by Jewish communities complemented this spatial organisation pattern that served a mixed economy based on the complementarity between agricultural, artisanal and commercial resources. Resulting from a mixture of environmental, socio-cultural and economic factors, including a symbiotic relationship between Ibadite and Jewish populations, the distinctive human settlement and land-use model of Djerba demonstrates the way local people adapted their lifestyle to the conditions and restrictions of their water-scarce natural environment.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of twenty-four monuments and seven sites.

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021), paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

Included in the Tentative List
17 February 2012 as “Île de Djerba”

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

Comments on the natural attributes of this nominated property, their conservation and their management were received from IUCN on 8 December 2022 and have been incorporated into the relevant sections of this report.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 18 to 23 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the justification for the selection of component parts, the boundaries of the component parts, the boundaries of buffer zones, the comparative analysis, legal protection, and management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 4 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022, summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the conceptualisation of the nominated property, the legal protection, the vision for the future of the island and the nominated property, as well as factors affecting the property.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 24 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The nominated serial property, located in Djerba, bears testimony to a settlement pattern that evolved on this Tunisian island between the 9th and 18th century CE in an environment characterised by an endemic water scarcity. It consisted of low-density, dispersed settlements organised into the *menzel-houma* system which covered the entire island, except for the uninhabited coastal areas.

A *menzel*, typically two to three hectares in size, represented a place of habitation and agricultural
production. Delimited by *tabia* (plant hedges), it included within its boundaries a household (*houmcha*) with additional outside facilities. Hydraulic installations within the *menzel* included a well, a water basin connected to irrigation canals and tanks for collecting rainwater.

A typical *houmcha*, no matter the social status of its inhabitants or location, was based on a square plan, designed around (a) patio(s). The structure was whitewashed and shut off from the exterior. Small towers (*ghorfâa*) flanked corners of the house. The household was reserved for the immediate family.

A *houma* (*pl.* *houem*), an ensemble of *menzels* belonging to the same family lineage, traditionally comprised different production facilities – weaving workshops, pottery studios, lime kilns, oil mills. The families that were related to each other inhabited neighbouring *houem*, which were organised into a bigger cluster unit and were economically self-sufficient, independent of any urban centre. They constituted a nucleus of the settlement pattern of the island.

*Houem* were connected through a complex network of roads of different types and sizes to each other, to the main centre for trade and exchange in Houmt-Souk, and to residential neighbourhoods for Jewish communities (*Hara Sghira* and *Hara Kbira*); the latter echoed the typical dense and compact *medinas* of the cities of the Maghreb. All together they constituted one single agglomeration of rural, which could be deemed neither fully urban nor rural. The settlement pattern of Djerba based on a *menzel* as a habitation unit was organised around diversification and complementarity of activities centred on agricultural production – with irrigated agriculture being practised inside the *menzel* and dry farming outside it, in the green zones called *ghaba* where olives, grains and legumes were grown next to orchards (*jnen*). Wild palm trees grew along the coast (*fraoua* zones), while the date palms were cultivated within *menzels* for food, construction materials and crafts.

The nominated property is composed of thirty-one component parts, seven of which are sites and twenty-four are monuments.

Among the sites, five represent sections of rural *houemm* clusters – *Temmel* (component part Z1), *Khazroun* (component part Z2), *Sedghêine* (component part Z3), *Guecêine* (component part Z4) and *Mehmê* (component part Z5) – and include numerous examples of *menzels* with *houmches* and the associated production facilities and hydraulic installations. The other two (component part Z6 and Z7) comprise parts of urban-type centres. Component Z6 represents the vestiges of *Hara Sghira*, a Jewish residential neighbourhood dating back to the 10th century CE, and includes remains of a Jewish school, cemeteries, and a number of synagogues, the oldest of which dates back to probably the 17th century CE. Component part Z7 comprises parts of the historic centre of Houmt-Souk, which from the Middle Ages until colonial times functioned solely as a trade hub. Its core was the vaulted bazaar *Souk Erbaa*, dating from about the 16th or 17th century CE, around which developed multiple caravansarai-type lodging establishments (*fondouk*) for traders and their merchandise. Places of worship of different religions are located within this component part.

Among the monuments are twenty-two mosques of different types and rites (component parts M1 to M22), as well as Synagogue El Ghriba (component part M23) and Saint-Nicolas Church (component part M24), which testify to the presence of different religious communities in Djerba. The mosques served as places of worship and epicentres of community life, Koranic schools, or cultural and civic centres. Those erected along the coast played a defensive role forming together lines of surveillance. Others functioned as places of resistance and refuge. The oldest mosques included in this serial nomination date back to the 9th (as component part M11) and 10th centuries CE (as component parts M10 and M16).

The exact origins of the settlement pattern and land-use system on Djerba are uncertain. They can be seemingly attributed to a mixture of environmental, socio-cultural and economic factors. From Antiquity until the Byzantine period, agricultural farms were distributed around the island, and major urban agglomerations developed at Meninx, Haribus and Souk el Guébli. With the arrival of Islam in the 7th century CE and installation of the first mosques, rural-type settlements started multiplying while the urban zones remained limited. In the Middle Ages, the land-use system was reorganised, resulting in the spatial division of the island into evenly spread *houem*. In the 8th century CE, Islamic Ibadi communities arrived at the island, and the local population adopted their philosophy and religious practices. Ibadi spirituality, its ethical and philosophical values, with a strong emphasis on the virtue of work, moderation and equality, influenced the lifestyle of the islanders and the architecture of Djerba, which remained austere, simple in form and solemn in style. In the 11th century CE, the inhabitants of Djerba created a religious-political organisation (*Azzaba*) to act as a local governing body and manage the life of the island in line with the Ibadi tradition. It allowed Djerba to remain quasi-autonomous but also resulted in politico-religious animosities between the island and the mainland. The defensive character of the architecture of Djerba is clearly influenced by the need of the islanders to protect themselves. The imposing structures of the houses with corner towers made them appear like fortresses. The form of the *fondouks* and sturdy fortified mosques are further testimonies to the need for self-protection.

Targeted by attacks since the Middle Ages, Djerba was controlled by the Norman Kingdom of Sicily for a period of time in the 12th and the 13th century CE, then by Spain in the 16th century, before it fell under the rule of the Ottoman regency of Tunis. In the 19th century CE, the island became a French protectorate, gaining independence as part of Tunisia in 1956. The distinctive spatial organisation pattern of Djerba started changing around the 1960s as a result of the evolving economic climate, socio-cultural transformations, and developmental pressures.
Due to contradictory figures provided in the nomination dossier and the additional information, ICOMOS has been unable to confirm the land area of the thirty-one component parts and their buffer zones. The boundaries of component parts Z1 to Z7 follow the perimeters of land plots, roads, or natural attributes of the landscape. The boundaries of component parts M1 to M24 are defined by the enclosure walls or access roads of the monuments. Each component part has its own buffer zone, except for component parts Z2, Z3, Z4, which share one. In a few instances the boundaries of the buffer zones are contiguous. They tend to follow natural features, roads or property perimeters.

In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party elaborated on the role of Ibadite and Jewish communities in shaping the distinctive built culture of the island. The two have been peacefully coexisting in Djerba in what can be seen as a cultural symbiosis, reflected in two modes of habitation (the menzel-houma rural system typical for the Ibadites and the urban-type Hara inhabited by the Jewish community); the complementarity of economic specialisations (with the Muslims skilled in wool weaving, while the Jews specialise in tanning, goldsmithing and shoemaking); as well as in the trade relations (the Ibadite community was involved more in the trans-Saharan commerce, while the Jewish community participated in the trade networks within the Mediterranean). Cultural influences can also be traced in religious architecture.

State of conservation
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the component parts of the nominated serial property is acceptable, albeit very uneven. While some parts are in a satisfactory state of conservation, substantial sections of the component parts are in fragile condition and in urgent need of attention.

The cultural landscape of Djerba has been changing dramatically since the 1960s. ICOMOS considers that the traditional land-use pattern as a system once prevalent on Djerba is no longer legible at an island-wide scale. The main changes in the spatial organisation of the territory include dense occupation of the north-east sector of the island where a tourist zone has developed, growth of urban centres to the detriment of rural-type settlements, sprawl of urbanisation along the main transport axes, and occupation of what were once natural, uninhabited zones.

In the component parts Z1 to Z5, a large number of houchs (up to 85%) have been abandoned and economic activities have stopped. The buildings suffer from structural damage, and some have been converted for other purposes. Land plots are being increasingly subdivided and land use changed. Component parts Z1 and Z5 have been deserted due to salinisation and depletion of groundwater. Component parts Z2 to Z4 have partly retained their agricultural activities. In many places, however, traditional hydraulic devices have been replaced with modern technological solutions.

In component part Z6, only one of at least six synagogues once in existence is still active. The area is undergoing the process of gentrification to be converted into a tourist attraction. The key element of component part Z7 – Souk Erbaa – is in a fragile condition and needs urgent maintenance. Some buildings within the area have been damaged due to improper renovations and use of incompatible materials. Fondouk Ben Ghorbal remains a rare example of a well-maintained structure.

The majority of component parts M1 to M22 are in good condition and have retained their structural elements; half have recently undergone restoration (component parts M2 to M6, M8, M14, M18, M20, M21), and one has been rehabilitated (M15). Some of the mosques have been partly modified through extensions and refurbishments. Mosques located along the coast show signs of damage from salt-laden winds. Component part M23 (Synagogue El Ghriba), which is a 19th-20th century reconstruction, and component part M24 (Saint-Nicolas Church), the construction of which can be attributed to the same period, are in a good state of conservation.

The green zones of the nominated property are vulnerable to urbanisation. Ghaba surrounding the houem are threatened by urban sprawl and tourism expansion. Date palm groves within menzels are disappearing.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are urbanisation and development pressures combined with the associated socio-economic changes, as well as environmental threats largely resulting from climate change-related effects. Unregulated mass tourism is an additional factor with negative impacts.

Since the 1960s, Djerba has been experiencing major changes in its spatial organisation pattern and socio-economic structure, both processes influencing one another. Introduction of mass tourism and installation of a tourist zone on the north-east coast precipitated expansion of infrastructure and services, but also changed drastically the land-use pattern and contributed to the island’s vulnerability to impacts of climate change. Tourism further brought consumerism and a different lifestyle, thus initiating a long-term process of socio-cultural change. Ongoing urbanisation and modernisation continue to threaten the preservation of the traditional menzel structure and the agricultural production of the island, where land parcels are being subdivided and agricultural land lost to construction. Land speculation further results in changes to the traditional organisation of houem.

Among the environmental and climate change-related factors affecting the property, decline in rainfall leading to
drought affects the long-term groundwater resources, already over-exploited by the tourism industry. Salinisation of groundwater adds to the problem. Coastal erosion and humidity as well as strong winds and salt-laden air negatively affect the structures of buildings situated along the coasts. Some of the areas, including component part Z7, remain vulnerable to floods resulting from hydraulic erosion. Long-term predictions show the possibility of sea levels rising, which could cause submersion of coastal areas.

In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party explained that a sea water desalination plant has been in operation since 2018 to ensure access to drinking water for the islanders. Rising sea levels are being monitored and rockfill put in place to help with erosion of coasts, in addition to the restoration of dunes, artificial extension of beaches, and refraining from building on the shorelines. The State Party is also reviewing its approach to tourism in order to develop a model that would be more sustainable and based on the valorisation of cultural and natural heritage, including the traditional agricultural landscape, rather than beach tourism.

A study on the carrying capacity of Djerba as a tourist destination is being developed to establish the acceptable limits for tourism development.

IUCN notes that Djerba hosts three Ramsar sites, two of which are adjacent to the component parts of the nominated property. Human activities, including tourism pressures, pollution, or sand extraction may affect the state of conservation of these sites and the species they host. IUCN considers that the study on the carrying capacity of Djerba as a tourist destination should include the assessment of the carrying capacity of the individual component parts of the nominated property to establish relevant indicators, which would also take into consideration the Ramsar sites and help prevent loss of their internationally-recognised natural values.

ICOMOS notes that while selecting the component parts, the State Party considered the best preserved and the most representative evidence of the land-use pattern of Djerba; green zones of the island (jnen, ghaba, fraoua); uninhabited coastal areas; religious architecture.

In the additional information sent in November 2022, the State Party explained that the component parts represent the cultural landscape of Djerba. All of these component parts are said to represent the cultural landscape of Djerba.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the component parts is acceptable but both built heritage and natural attributes need urgent attention. The land-use pattern within the houem is vulnerable. ICOMOS also considers that factors affecting the nominated property are not adequately managed.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The cultural landscape of Djerba shows exceptional evidence of a settlement pattern that developed around the 9th century CE as a result of a combination of varied historical and socio-cultural circumstances as well as specific conditions of an insular environment characterised by endemic water scarcity.
- The low-density, dispersed rural settlements which were at the heart of it developed around a neighbourhood called a houem, composed of menzels that represented places of habitation and agricultural production. Equal in status and with no distinguishable centres, houem sustained economic self-sufficiency of the lineages inhabiting them, and represented on a small scale the social and economic organisation of the entire island. The pattern was complemented by urban-type habitats.
- The landscape of Djerba is an outstanding testimony to the ways in which the islanders interacted with their natural environment and adapted their lifestyle to the natural conditions offered by the island, while facing the dangers it represented – of which the defensive features of the architecture of the island are a key evidence. It further throws light on the socio-cultural framework of the life of the population of Djerba, defined by the spiritual tradition and moral values of Ibadism.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are: the spatial organisation of the territory of the island; the houem with menzels centred around a houch with the associated production facilities; urban-type habitats of the island; hierarchical network of roads that connected the structural elements of the land-use pattern of Djerba; green zones of the island (jnen, ghaba, fraoua); uninhabited coastal areas; religious architecture.

In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party further observed that the scattered nature of the traditional settlement pattern was a way of taking possession of the territory of the island, while considering the security requirements and the availability of resources. The dispersion of structural elements of the system further reflected the economic complementarity of the rural- and urban-type habitats. The fragmentation of the nominated property is, however, a testimony to the fragmented way in which the traditional system has survived today. Its elements have been presented as...
Given the developmental pressures and socio-economic changes that have impacted the traditional cultural landscape of Djerba to the extent that it is now preserved in a very fragmented way, as reflected by the selected component parts, ICOMOS considers that it would be difficult to present the settlement pattern that was once prevalent on the island using a cultural landscape approach. A serial approach in which the combination of component parts would reflect the best remnants of the traditional land-use and settlement pattern that evolved in Djerba may be potentially a more viable nomination strategy. However, to be considered as a serial property, the nominated component parts need to be seen as interconnected elements of a whole that represents the settlement pattern. Currently, the connections and relations between the structural elements of this pattern are not easily readable through the proposed boundaries of the component parts or their buffer zones. Also, given the fragmented way in which the nominated property is presented, the contribution of each component part to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is not clear at this stage.

ICOMOS also considers that the proposed name of the nominated property may need to be revised to better reflect the nature of the property as a testimony to a settlement pattern that structured the island rather than a cultural landscape.

**Comparative analysis**

The comparative analysis has been developed around similar human settlements that developed in the relevant geo-cultural region, defined as the Maghreb, Mashreq, and the islands of the Mediterranean. Two parameters have been used for analysis: urban system, and architecture that demonstrates defensive characteristics (with Ibadi and Berber influences). The chronological timeframe used has not been specified. The comparative analysis has examined properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, as well as other properties. No properties have been used for analysis: urban system, and architecture that demonstrates defensive characteristics (with Ibadi and Berber influences). The chronological timeframe used has not been specified. The comparative analysis has examined properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, as well as other properties. 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medina-like centres, the entire island functioned as one socio-economic system that shared urban- and rural-type land-use modes and depended on complementarity of economic activities. Developed as a result of a combination of environmental, socio-cultural and economic factors, this traditional land-use and settlement pattern is an outstanding representation of the efficient interaction between humans and the water-scarce environment, and the adaptation of the local population to living with the constraints of insularity and the challenges it presented.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (v). The serial approach is justified. However, ICOMOS considers that the cultural landscape approach is not suitable.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the wholeness of the structural elements that constituted the traditional settlement pattern of Djerba, together with the related structural and functional connections that allowed the island to function as one system. It is articulated further by the intactness of the built heritage and the natural landscape attributes which demonstrate the interaction between humankind and the environment.

The component parts represent only the structural elements of the traditional settlement pattern of Djerba. Their boundaries were drawn to encompass elements that still preserve their authenticity, and mainly include the built heritage and sections of agricultural land.

Natural landscape elements, such as ghaba, have been left outside the boundaries of the nominated property, in the buffer zones. Uninhabited coastal areas with fraoua have been left out of the nominated property. The structural and functional connections between the structural elements of the pattern have also not been well reflected within the proposed boundaries or the buffer zones. The network of roads that linked together the structural elements of the island in a tangible way has been largely left outside the boundaries of the nominated property. The functional connections between coastal mosques that together constituted lines of surveillance are not legible. Only in a few instances do the associations seem to be suggested through adjoined buffer zones of some component parts. Few important viewsheş or visual connections between the component parts have been considered when delineating the buffer zones.

The integrity of the component parts has been in many cases compromised. Menzels are in dire need of attention, houses and the related production facilities falling into disrepair or being abandoned. New constructions, often incompatible in terms of style, and new technologies, replace older structures, land plots are being sub-divided and the land-use pattern changed. The integrity of some of the buildings within urban-type habitats has been compromised by improper restorations, whereby structural elements have been removed or remodelled. The key element of the component part Z7 – Souk Erbaa – is in a fragile state. Natural landscape attributes are fragile. Ghaba are threatened by urban sprawl and tourism expansion. Date palm groves within menzels are disappearing.

ICOMOS considers that not all attributes supporting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have been included in the boundaries of the nominated property. ICOMOS also considers that the way the property is said to represent a system with scattered but interconnected elements, and express the combined works of man and nature, is not well reflected by the proposed boundaries of the component parts and their buffer zones. Neither the structural nor functional connections between the component parts are easily readable.

Since not all attributes supporting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have been included in the boundaries of the nominated property, integrity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, cannot be confirmed at this stage.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of the component parts to credibly express its cultural values through its attributes. The property can be said to be authentic through its forms, designs, techniques, materials and functions, as demonstrated by its built environment and natural environment attributes.

The original land-use and settlement pattern can still be confirmed in the component parts, though subdivision of plots and construction on arable land is multiplying. Coastal areas are vanishing as a result of erosion and their character has largely changed from uninhabited spaces to tourism epicentres.

Authenticity of the houem has been compromised. Few menzels continue to fulfil their original purpose, many being used as secondary residences. New technologies are replacing traditional hydraulic systems and some weaving workshops have been demolished. Subterranean oil mills are now covered with rubbish.

Many of the mosques continue to be used as places of worship but have lost their function as community centres, educational institutions or surveillance and defensive structures. Most of them have been restored in line with the traditional construction techniques; their architectural elements reflect authentic features even if they have been fashioned in different materials.

Restorations of buildings within urban-type habitations have not always observed rules for the conservation of historic structures, resulting in damage to the architecture.
Hara Sghira has undergone gentrification to serve as a tourist destination.

Since the component parts do not fully reflect the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, authenticity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, cannot be confirmed at this stage.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that while the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the individual component parts have been met, the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have not been met at this stage.

**Boundaries**

The number of permanent inhabitants in the nominated property and/or the buffer zones has not been confirmed.

In selecting the component parts, the State Party took into consideration the structural elements of the spatial organisation pattern of Djerba that can still be said to have retained their integrity and authenticity.

In the additional information sent in November 2022, the State Party further explained that it has selected attributes that demonstrate local origins and an internal rather than external focus.

ICOMOS considers that not all attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have been included within the proposed boundaries. In particular, key elements of the natural environment – ghaba, fraoua and the uninhabited coastal areas – are missing. The network of roads that connected and organised the structural elements into a pattern is also largely left outside the boundaries.

ICOMOS further considers that the twenty-four monuments (component parts M1 to M24) included in the nominated property received rather tight boundaries that include the structures themselves with additional facilities but not much of their natural setting. Since these structures have been included as separate monuments, their meaning and role in the spatial organisation pattern of the island is not fully reflected by the boundaries.

The boundaries of the buffer zones are said to have been demarcated at a distance of 500 metres from the corresponding boundaries of the component parts, and, in the case of houem, do not exceed the neighbouring ghaba. However, there are many exceptions to this rule. For instance, in component parts Z6 and Z7, the buffer zones have been reduced to between 75-400 metres. The buffer zones around the monuments are very irregular and generally do not exceed 200 metres. In some cases, urban expansion in the area required tightening of the buffer zones quite radically to make them fit into the uninccluded empty spaces. In a few cases, larger buffer zones have been created to protect the views towards the sea.

Given the many limitations and exceptions, ICOMOS considers that the proposed boundaries of the buffer zones do not follow a clear logic. As the proposed rationale is not being applied consistently, it is not clear what role each buffer zone plays, as neither protective measures nor visual or functional connections nor the important setting and views seem to have been consistently considered as criteria.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List. The proposed justification for inscription under criterion (v) is appropriate. The serial approach is justified but not all the attributes of the nominated property have been included within the proposed boundaries, and the individual contribution of each component part to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is unclear. The important connections between the component parts have not been properly reflected. Accordingly, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have not been met at this stage. ICOMOS further considers that the cultural landscape approach is not appropriate.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

The Association pour la Sauvegarde de l’Île de Djerba (ASSIDJE) holds the documentation related to the nominated property, which includes drawings, plans, photographs, maps as well as results of academic research. Finalisation of the inventory of the built heritage and the natural environment attributes of the nominated property is planned for 2022-2023. Realisation of an inventory of intangible heritage of the island is projected for 2022-2027.

ICOMOS considers that it is unclear whether any documentation related to the conservation and past refurbishments or reconstructions of the architectural elements of the nominated property is available. A detailed baseline documentation of all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is key for any future management, conservation measures and monitoring.

**Conservation measures**

There is no integrated conservation plan for the whole nominated property. Neither are there any conservation measures nor regular maintenance in place for the component parts. As most of them are private properties, their owners are responsible for their upkeep. Maintenance of mosques, which belong to the State, is in the hands of management committees created individually in each of these religious establishments and supervised by the Institut National du Patrimoine (INP), which also takes care of the restoration and
refurbishments of mosques on behalf of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the relevant municipalities.

By 2027, the State Party plans to prepare a detailed study of the conservation and development needs of the built heritage of the nominated property, in order to develop a programme of interventions. Restoration of publicly-owned buildings and public spaces is also planned and will be funded by the INP, ASSIDJE and Agence de Mise en Valeur du Patrimoine et de Promotion Culturelle (AMVPPC). The State will assist with the maintenance and restoration of the privately-owned component parts.

ICOMOS considers that urgent conservation measures are needed to preserve the nominated property. Conservation plans for each component part should be integrated into an overall plan developed for the entire serial nomination. Close collaboration with private owners will be needed to ensure the quality of restorations. Establishing a sustainable source of funding for long-term conservation and regular maintenance will be necessary.

**Monitoring**

The INP, under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, is responsible for the monitoring of the nominated property. The monitoring system is at a rudimentary stage of preparation. It is being developed around the management objectives and will focus on the future short- and long-term goals, which are yet to be established based on the assessment of conservation needs.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system should be based on the relevant documentation of the attributes. While linked to the management objectives, it should reflect the factors directly affecting the nominated property, and establish a baseline that would inform relevant management actions.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property is in a state of neglect. There are no comprehensive conservation measures in place and the monitoring system is under preparation. The conservation programme and the monitoring system will be finalised once the relevant inventory of attributes and the assessment of their conservation needs are completed. ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is further developed to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and is conceived for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

**5 Protection and management**

**Legal protection**

Cultural heritage in Tunisia is protected through the Code du Patrimoine Archéologique, Historique et des Arts Traditionnels and the Code de l’Aménagement du Territoire et de l’Urbanisme (CATU).

The protection provided by the first one currently applies to component parts M8, M10, M12, M13, M15, M18, M21, M23 of the nominated property. Additionally, three mosques located within component parts Z1, Z3, and Z7 have been registered as national historic monuments. The proposed buffer zones do not have a legal basis, except for the area within a radius of 200 metres around the above-mentioned registered monuments.

The CATU consists of three planning instruments: Schéma Directeur d’Aménagement de la Zone Sensible de l’Île de Djerba (SDAZS), Plan D’Aménagement Urbain (PAU); Règlement Général d’Urbanisme (RGU). The recently prepared SDAZS describes a new vision for the development of Djerba based on the premise of sustainable development. It regulates land use, introduces restrictions on construction and engages with the issue of tourism. The SDAZS will come into force once an appropriate ordinance is passed. It envisages protection of ghaba and selected coastal zones through a ban on construction. Component parts Z1 to Z5 are incorporated into the SDAZS. However, it is unclear what kind of controls or restrictions will apply with regard to them. For component parts Z6 and Z7, individual architectural charters addressing their specific needs will be drafted. The SDAZS also makes provisions for Ramsar sites within Djerba; the development of a monitoring system and a conservation plan for these sites is included among the planned activities within the SDAZS.

In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party explained that the vision for the future of Djerba proposed by the SDAZS includes valorisation of cultural heritage in order to develop sustainable tourism solutions around the history and culture of the island, rather than beach tourism. Reactivation of agriculture to ensure food security and help preserve the agricultural landscape of Djerba is also envisaged.

Aligned with the SDAZS is the Charte du Développement Durable de Djerba which stipulates the commitment of the State, local authorities as well as the communes to the implementation of this new vision. It is accompanied by the Plan Climat, a framework and a planning mechanism for ensuring resilient territorial development and reduction of risks related to climate change. The implementation of the Plan Climat, correlated with the SDAZS, is scheduled over twenty years.

The PAU applies in component parts Z6 and Z7. It regulates public easement rules, stipulates activities allowed within, defines protection zones for national monuments, and controls new constructions and restoration works.

The RGU applies in general to agricultural lands. But the houem in component parts Z1 to Z5 fall under local intercommunal plans instead, which regulate land use and property matters but do not have any control over activities allowed within privately-owned properties.
ICOMOS considers that the nominated property does not have the required legal protection to ensure its preservation. Only a few component parts are protected through the Code du Patrimoine Archéologique, Historique et des Arts Traditionnels. The regulations under the CATU either do not apply to the component parts, do not provide the relevant protection, or are not yet in force. The proposed buffer zones, except for the areas around the few declared historic monuments, do not seem to provide any additional protection either.

Management system
The nominated property lies within the jurisdictions of the communes of Houmt-Souk, Midoun and Ajim. There is currently no integrated management system for the entire series or for the individual component parts of the nominated property.

Component parts Z1 to Z5 and some buildings inside Z6 and Z7 are private properties, usually with joint ownership rights. Component parts M1 to M23 are State-owned. The ownership of component part M24 has not been confirmed. The mosques (M1 to M22) are managed individually by management committees, overseen by the Institut National du Patrimoine (INP).

As a short-term provision, the Conservation de l’Île de Djerba (CIDJE), a heritage body under the INP (the main institution that manages the heritage of the island) will oversee the management of the nominated property. The CIDJE will be responsible for research programmes, oversee conservation of the built heritage, and take care of the authorisation of development projects within the component parts. In the mid-term, the State Party envisages the creation of a specific body that would be responsible for the management of the property and help coordinate cooperation between the multifarious actors.

The State Party has undertaken to improve the governance system of the nominated property by 2026 and design a new dedicated management structure by 2031, based on a participatory arrangement. Varied stakeholders will be included in the management processes to guarantee their effectiveness, among them: the INP, CIDJE, Association pour la Sauvegarde de l’Île de Djerba (ASSIDJE), Association des Architectes de Djerba (AAJ), Agence de Mise en Valeur du Patrimoine et de Promotion Culturelle (AMVPPC), Fédération Tunisienne de l'Hôtellerie, as well as the communes. They are expected to provide the necessary financial resources.

The management plan prepared for the nominated property is more of a long-term vision with guidelines and timelines. An action plan that accompanies it stipulates management objectives that the State Party aspires to achieve over fifteen years and lists strategic activities. The action plan is to be operationalised in three stages: short-term (2022-2026), mid-term (2027-2031), and long-term (2032-2036). Risk management is not part of the presented plan.

In the additional information sent in November 2022, the State Party clarified that it expects to work with the civil society through a partnership between the INP and ASSIDJE, which will revolve around restoration of heritage and its valorisation in line with the premises of sustainable development. The CIDJE will ensure that a consultative process agreed between public and private stakeholders is followed, and decision-making is done in a participatory manner, respecting ownership rights. The CIDJE will be responsible for the operationalisation of the decisions.

ICOMOS considers that the hierarchical structure, functions and responsibilities of the proposed short-term managerial arrangement are unclear. ICOMOS also considers that the CIDJE does not currently have the capacity to manage effectively the full extent of the nominated property.

Visitor management
Tourism is not currently managed within the nominated property. Visitors can visit freely all places except for a few mosques closed to the public. Organised tourist groups usually visit urban centres (component parts Z6 and Z7) and a few religious establishments (component parts M1 to M24). There is no tourist information and the guides need capacity-building to understand the heritage values of the nominated property. There is no relevant tourism infrastructure in the vicinity, except for the amenities available in Houmt-Souk and Hara Sghira, where fondouks have been turned into accommodation for tourists or restaurants, and private houses have been converted to receive guests. The study of the carrying capacity of Djerba as a tourist destination, which is being developed, should help in planning for tourism development. The study will inform the establishment of rules for visits at the property, with relevant restrictions put in place.

A tourism strategy will be developed as part of the management plan (scheduled for 2022-2023). It will consider the values of the nominated property as a whole rather than focus on singular component parts.

IUCN considers that the proximity of some component parts to Ramsar sites needs to be taken into consideration when planning for tourism activities, so that the pressures exerted on the internationally important natural values of the island are not exacerbated. Establishing carrying-capacity indicators for the component parts of the nominated property (besides indicators for Djerba as a whole) should be considered.

Community involvement
Awareness-raising initiatives and capacity-building interventions have been included in the action plan for the property. The prospects presented by the development of tourism around the nominated property have attracted attention to the nomination process among some private owners.
ICOMOS considers that the local communities affected by the nomination process need to be continuously engaged in the development of the plans related to the management and conservation of the property. Buy-in, active involvement and full participation of rights-holders and other affected parties at all stages of the development of the nominated property are of key importance for the process to be effective.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the current protective measures and the management system of the nominated property are insufficient. Active involvement of rights-holders and local communities in the development of the nominated property and the preparation and implementation of the management and conservation plans is a prerequisite for its effective protection, especially given the mixed-ownership rights.

6 Conclusion

ICOMOS considers that one of the primary interesting features of the nominated property, Djerba: cultural landscape, testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory, is the fact that the spatial organisation pattern of Djerba was neither fully urban nor rural. Having evolved as a result of historical developments and environmental conditions, it reflected a cultural symbiosis between the Muslim and Jewish communities inhabiting the island.

There is an evident strong commitment to the conservation of the nominated property by the State Party, and a long-term vision for its development.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property represents an interesting example of a settlement pattern of an island and the related socio-economic system within the relevant geo-cultural region. The challenge lies in conveying the exceptional character of this model through a selection of component parts.

ICOMOS considers that the extent of the structural and socio-economic changes that Djerba has experienced as a result of urbanisation and modernisation since the 1960s makes a cultural landscape approach, initially proposed by the State Party, difficult to support. The traditional land-use and settlement pattern has been preserved only in fragments scattered across the island, which, combined, cannot be said to represent a cultural landscape.

A serial approach in which the component parts would reflect the key remnants of the now relict spatial organisation pattern that once covered the entirety of Djerba seems to be a more appropriate nomination strategy.

However, to pursue this approach further, the combination of the component parts and/or their boundaries and the extent of their buffer zones need to be adjusted. At this stage, not all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are included within the boundaries of the nominated property, and the structural and functional connections between the component parts are not well reflected through the boundaries and the buffer zones for the nominated serial property to be representative of an integrated system. Furthermore, it is unclear how each component part contributes substantially to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The inclusion of twenty-two mosques as separate component parts is particularly problematic, as it does not reflect their defensive function.

ICOMOS also considers that the nominated property does not have at this stage sufficient protection at the relevant level, and the short-term management system risks being ineffective given the extent and complexity of the property, and the mixed-ownership rights. Appropriate legal, administrative, financial and technical instruments need to be put in place to ensure the conservation of the nominated property, many attributes of which are in a state of neglect.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that further work is needed that may involve adjusting the combination and/or the boundaries of the proposed component parts, and extending or connecting their buffer zones to ensure that the nominated property reflects fully the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and includes all the attributes as well as the structural, functional and visual connections between the component parts forming the serial nomination.

Significant additional work is also necessary to prepare the inventory of the attributes of the nominated property and assess their conservation needs to develop relevant conservation plans and an effective monitoring system.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of Djerba: cultural landscape, testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory, Tunisia, be referred back to the State Party to allow it to:

- Further clarify how each component part contributes to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and ensure that each of them individually does so in a substantial way, as required by paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention;

- Adjust the combination and/or the boundaries of the component parts and/or their buffer zones to ensure that all attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are included within the nominated property, and the key structural, functional and visual connections between the component parts are reflected in the proposed boundaries;
• Ensure relevant legal protection for all the component parts of the nominated property;

• Improve the governance system of the nominated property and create relevant management structures that will take into consideration different rights-holders and stakeholders.

**Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Putting in place urgent conservation measures to preserve the nominated property,

b) Completing the inventory of the attributes of the nominated property and preparing the assessment of their conservation needs which would further inform conservation plans (for each component part and the overall conservation plan for the entire serial nomination) and constitute the basis for the development of the monitoring system for the nominated property,

c) Ensuring a sustainable source of funding for long-term conservation and regular maintenance,

d) Including the assessment of the carrying capacity of the individual component parts of the nominated property in the study on the carrying capacity of Djerba as a tourist destination to establish relevant indicators, which would also take into consideration the Ramsar sites and help prevent loss of their internationally-recognised natural values,

e) Considering the proximity of some component parts to the Ramsar sites when planning for tourism activities, so that the pressures exerted on the latter are not exacerbated;

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed name of the nominated property be revised to reflect better the nature of the nominated property as a once-prevailing spatial organisation pattern of Djerba rather than a cultural landscape.
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
III Cultural properties

A Africa
   Extension

B Arab States
   New nominations

C Asia – Pacific
   New nominations

D Europe – North America
   New nominations
   Extension
   Nomination deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

E Latin America and the Caribbean
   New nomination
Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain (China) No 1665

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er

Location
Huimin Town
Lancang Lahu Autonomous County
Pu’er City
Yunnan Province
People’s Republic of China

Brief description
Located on Jingmai Mountain in Huimin Town, Pu’er City, Yunnan Province, in southwestern China, the nominated property consists of a tea production area comprised of traditional villages located within old tea groves surrounded by forests and tea plantations. This cultural landscape was developed over a period of a thousand years by the Blang and Dai peoples following practices that began in the 10th century. The traditional understory cultivation of old tea trees is a method that responds to the specific conditions of the mountain’s ecosystem and subtropical monsoon climate, combined with a particular governance system maintained by the Indigenous communities residing in this area. Traditional ceremonies and festivities relate to the Tea Ancestor belief that spirits live in the tea plantations and in the local fauna and flora, a belief that is at the core of this cultural tradition.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021), paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

Included in the Tentative List
29 January 2013 as “Ancient Tea Plantations of Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er”

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

Comments on the natural attributes of this nominated property, their conservation, and their management were received from IUCN on 8 December 2022 and have been incorporated into relevant sections of this report.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 6 to 11 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the organically evolved cultural landscape, justification for inscription, state of conservation, protection, factors affecting the property, free, prior and informed consent, and management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 6 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: conservation measures, planning and potential tourism development in traditional villages, ownership, and waste management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The nominated property is located on Jingmai Mountain in Huimin Town, Pu’er City, Yunnan Province in southwestern China. It consists of a tea production area composed of traditional villages located within old tea groves surrounded by forests and tea plantations, at an altitude of 1,250-1,500 metres above sea level. Tea cultivation is maintained by the Blang and Dai peoples, who follow traditional practices dating back to the 10th century.

Using the characteristics of the subtropical mountainous monsoon climate, Blang peoples developed an agroforestry system known as understory tea cultivation, which
consists of domesticating wild tea trees and planting them under tall trees ("tea beneath arbours"). Three vertical layers are created, consisting of tall trees in the higher layer, tea trees and bushes in the middle layer, and herbaceous plants in the lower layer. Diverse and complementary species are arranged between tea trees and in the higher and lower levels. This method protects the tea plants from heavy rains, enables the level of sunlight to be controlled, and promotes the production of large tea leaves. Neither pesticides nor fertilisers are used; nutrition comes from fallen leaves and herbs in the lower layer, and protection from diseases is provided by the biological diversity of the plant community.

Tea leaves are picked in three seasons: spring, summer and autumn. The system is based on hand picking the top bud and two leaves from a tea plant's branches. The traditional cultivation is accompanied by festivals, religious ceremonies, and traditional dances such as the Blang people's Circle Dance, representing scenes of people working in the fields, or the Dai people’s Elephant Foot Drum Dance, celebrating the harvest.

The Jingmai Mountain – a general name designating a complex of mountains in the nominated property – is divided into three geomorphological units: Baixiang Mountain in the northeast, Nuogang Mountain in the northwest, and Mangjing Mountain in the south. Five clusters of old tea forests are found on these mountains, where nine traditional villages are also established. These Blang and Dai villages are each laid out with a central village core used for religious ceremonies and social gatherings. Each village is guarded by a sacred mountain, and each cares for one old tea forest. The Blang and Dai peoples follow animism, Theravada Buddhism, and Tea Ancestor worship. The latter is the belief that special spirits live in the tea plantations, the local fauna, and the local flora. Several religious structures are found in the traditional villages, including Buddhist temples and pagodas, and in the forests, such as spirit altars.

On Baixiang Mountain, three Dai traditional villages are scattered on its northern slope. Manggeng and Mengben villages are found within the Manggeng-Mengben Old Tea Forest. Jingmai Dazhai Village is established in the Old Tea Forest of the same name. The Dapingzhang Old Tea Forest is located south of this traditional village.

Nuogang Mountain contains the Nuogang Old Tea Forest, where the Dai Nuogang traditional village is located.

Five traditional Blang villages are scattered on the western slope of Mangjing Mountain, also known as Alieng Mountain to commemorate Pa Aileng (Alieng King or Alieng Chief). According to the Blang belief, Pa Aileng was the Blang tribal chief who first discovered tea in the area, and is worshipped as their Tea Ancestor. Mangjing Zhangzhai and Xiazhai Villages-Manghong Old Tea Forest contains three traditional villages – Mangjing Zhangzhai, Mangjing Xiazhai, and Manghong. The Wengji-Wengwa Old Tea Forest contains two traditional villages – Wengji and Wengwa.

Within the traditional villages, traditional wooden dwellings and stilted structures with tiled roofs are preserved. These houses have evolved over generations from simple wooden structures with thatched roofs to the latest type being used as residences and for tea processing and storage. Materials have changed throughout the years, but the overall architectural style has been maintained. Dai and Blang houses are similar, their differences being in the details and decorations. The most prominent difference is the symbol of the tea plant’s top bud and two leaves that Blang peoples place on their roofs.

The five clusters of old tea forests are separated by three protective partition forests, namely: the Jingmai-Nuogang protective forest, the Nuogang-Mangjing protective forest, and the Jingmai-Mangjing protective forest. They serve as protection from strong winds and pests, and as village boundaries.

The land-use system developed by the Blang and Dai peoples on Jingmai Mountain consists of a horizontal land use that connects the forests, the old tea forests, and the traditional villages, and a vertical land use that connects the headwater forests at the top of the mountains to the river at the bottom, providing water to the whole social-ecological system of traditional villages, tea forests and tea plantations, farms, and the valleys located at lower altitudes.

The nominated property has an area of 7,167.89 ha, and a buffer zone of 11,927.85 ha. Property boundaries follow natural features such as ridgelines and rivers (Nanlang and Nanmen rivers) as well as forests’ edges. The delineation of the buffer zone follows natural features as well as the administrative boundaries of towns and villages surrounding the nominated property.

Historically speaking, the region of the Lancang-Mekong river basin where Yunnan Province is located is regarded as the origin of cultivated tea trees and the centre of distribution of *Camellia sinensis*, the tea plant that is currently cultivated worldwide. The nominated property is considered to be the place of origin of Pu'er tea, one of its varieties. Ethnographic studies indicate that the ancestors of Blang people discovered tea groves in this area a thousand years ago, during the Tang and Song Dynasties. Following their arrival in this area in the 14th century, the Dai people collaborated with the Blang people to enrich existing technologies for tea planting and processing while integrating their own worldview. A tea culture gradually emerged, involving various activities around tea, including tea-making, tea-eating, tea-drinking, tea-tasting, and tea-utilising. Tea gradually developed into a commodity. During the Song Dynasty and up to the Qing Dynasty, Pu'er City was the centre of tea collection and distribution for important transportation routes, including the Ancient Tea Horse Road. In 1406, the tea of Jingmai Mountain became a tribute tea, which was offered to the Emperor as the best product. This designation resulted in enlarged tea plantations and new villages being formed in parallel with the development of farming activities. During the Qing Dynasty, until 1949, Pu'er tea went through a period of
protection of the old tea forests persists under the control of the villages’ regulations. The area came under Lancang County heritage protection in 2002, along with the promotion of tourism activities in Jingmai.

The tribal management system was abolished in 1949. A villager governance system has since been developed. It separates administration from religion and is based on a tripartite social governance system of tribe-government-religion that combines traditional and modern systems. The protection of the old tea forests persists under the control of the villages’ regulations. The area came under Lancang County heritage protection in 2002, along with the promotion of tourism activities in Jingmai.

**State of conservation**

The remote location of the nominated property has supported its protection. Old tea forests and the environment of Jingmai Mountain have been protected for centuries by local communities through their belief systems, with some tea trees in the forests being more than 200 years old.

According to the State Party, the historic layouts of the villages have been maintained, though some villages have been expanding in size since 1949. Newer tea processing factories, tea drying sheds, and modern buildings have had an impact on the traditional villages. The Old Tea Plantations of the Jingmai Mountain was inscribed on the seventh list of National Priority Protected Sites in 2013. Demolitions of modern buildings and repairs and reconstructions of traditional dwellings have subsequently been undertaken in six of the traditional villages (Wengji, Manghong, Mangjing Shangzhai, Mangjing Xiazhai, Nuogang and Jingmai Dazhai). Improvements have also been made in their basic infrastructure, including water systems, sewage, waste management, and roads. Strict regulations have been enforced in the area to maintain the traditional building style, including for newly built infrastructure.

Traditional cultivation was disrupted after 1949, with an increase in tea production and the establishment of terraced tea cultivations in the forests. Agricultural modernisation also affected the health of the old tea forests. Restorations have been undertaken recently to recover the traditional understorey tea cultivation system in the terraced plantations, now called “ecological tea plantations”, and the protective partition forests have been restored.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good.

**Factors affecting the nominated property**

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are development and demographic pressures, potential tourism pressures, and possible future impacts of climate change on tea production and culture.

Urban development, particularly population growth and village expansion, is currently affecting the nominated property. This factor is being addressed by Lancang County through town planning, including the delineation of village boundaries and the elaboration of guidance for building and maintaining traditional features in new housing projects. A document entitled *Guidelines for Construction Activities in Jingmai Mountain Heritage Site* has been produced and is under implementation since April 2022, according to the additional information provided by the State Party in February 2023. These guidelines aim at maintaining the historic layouts of the villages and the traditional architectural style for old and new buildings, and are based on the *Regulations on the Protection of Traditional Villages* adopted in 2009.

Even though population is growing in the area, ICOMOS notes that a lack of youth engagement in the agricultural practices and traditions could become a factor affecting the sustainability of the nominated property. In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party described the initiatives being developed, motivated by the registration of Jingmai Mountain as a national heritage site, to involve youth in the conservation and continuation of the tea culture of the area. The State Party confirms that educated youths are returning to the area to undertake tea-related business, get involved in the tourism sector, and provide support to the older generation in adapting the traditional tea market to digital technologies.

The main environmental pressures are the lack of sewage systems in the villages and the pollution and traffic caused by the transportation network within the nominated property. These issues are currently being addressed by installing appropriate sewage systems and by reducing and re-routing the existing traffic within the nominated property.

In October 2022, ICOMOS requested additional information about the potential impacts of the proposed Menglian-Menghai Expressway to be constructed to connect Jingmai Mountain to the new regional airport. The State Party responded in November 2022 that a Heritage Impact Assessment had been undertaken and an alternative route had been selected to avoid negative impacts on the nominated property.

ICOMOS also notes the lack of adequate waste management at the nominated property. In additional
information provided in February 2023, the State Party clarified that a waste management system has been established since the submission of the nomination dossier, and that facilities to collect garbage as well as appropriate sewage systems have been installed in the traditional villages. In addition, environmental awareness campaigns are being carried out.

Potential tourism development is foreseen in the event of an inscription on the World Heritage List. The number of annual visitors reached 500,000 in 2018. The tourism strategy proposed in the Conservation Plan for the Cultural Heritage of Old Tea Plantations of Jingmai Mountain as a National Priority Protected Site (2017-2035) sets out provisions for visitor management, including limiting development within the nominated property and buffer zone.

Weather variations caused by climate change could potentially affect the nominated property. The production of tea and maintenance of the old tea forests and traditional cultivation methods are highly dependent on the current subtropical mountainous monsoon climate and a specific calendar for harvesting. Traditional practices and the intangible cultural heritage expressions associated with the nominated property related to tea cultivation could also be vulnerable to shifting seasons and potential extreme weather events. In October 2022, ICOMOS requested further information from the State Party on strategies to address the possible impacts of climate change and the potential development of a climate adaptation plan for the nominated property considering its potential Outstanding Universal Value. The State Party responded in November 2022 that scientific studies have been carried out on the resilience of the old tea forests, and a monitoring system has been developed to understand the impacts of factors related to climate change. Furthermore, the State Party mentioned that a property-based climate adaptation plan was being contemplated.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good; and that factors currently affecting the nominated property are development and demographic pressures, while the impacts of tourism pressures and climate change may increase in the future.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The cultural landscape of the old tea forests developed on Jingmai Mountain is an exceptionally well-preserved testimony of the traditional understorey tea cultivation model, being maintained for over a thousand years by Blang and Dai peoples.
- The unique tribe-government-religion tripartite social governance system has been maintained by the Indigenous peoples living in the area and promotes the sustainable use of the natural resources and especially the old tea forests, based on their distinctive Tea Ancestor belief.
- The horizontal and vertical land-use system based on the traditional knowledge of the Indigenous peoples of Jingmai Mountain and developed by adaptation to the mountain environment represents an outstanding and sustainable landscape system which protects the old tea forests and promotes the harmonious living of communities in traditional villages and forests.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are the interrelations between the horizontal land-use patterns – forests, tea forests, and villages – and vertical land-use patterns – mountain, headwater forests and forests, tea forests, traditional villages, dry farming fields, paddy fields and rivers; the topographic features of Jingmai Mountain; the water system; the five clusters of old tea forests; the three protective partition forests; and the nine traditional villages where Blang and Dai peoples reside. As well, important attributes include the characteristics of the traditional dwellings; the locations and layouts of the traditional villages; and the religious structures located within these villages and forests. Traditional festivals, religious ceremonies and the Tea Ancestor belief associated with the tea culture are also attributes, as is the tripartite social governance system of tribe-government-religion, which supports the protection and conservation of the old tea forests.

In the nomination dossier, the State Party presents the old tea forests, protective partition forests and traditional villages as attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, whereas two villages are not considered as attributes but are located within the nominated property, namely Laojufang (The Old Wine Houses Village) and Nuogang Xinzhai. In October 2022, ICOMOS requested a clarification regarding these villages in relation to the protection of the cultural landscape as a whole. The State Party responded in November 2022 that all villages within the nominated property, even those that are not considered as attributes, have been designated and comply with the regulations associated with a National Priority Protected Site.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed around qualitative assessments on the grounds of a thematic approach referring to agricultural landscapes generally, and within these, to tea landscapes specifically. It has examined agricultural landscapes throughout the world inscribed on the World Heritage List, as well as properties with tea plantations, following the guidance of the ICOMOS Asian Tea Cultural Landscape Research Framework. It includes comparisons with tea plantations within Asia, China, and other Pu’er tea mountains in Yunnan Province, where the nominated property is located.

The comparative analysis proposes that a gap exists in the World Heritage List regarding tea cultural landscapes
that the nominated property would fill. The analysis includes fifteen World Heritage Sites that are cash crop agricultural landscapes, such as the Tokay Wine Region Historic Cultural Landscape (Hungary, 2002, criteria (iii) and (v)) and the Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia (Colombia, 2011, criteria (v) and (vi)), and four rice farming landscapes, including the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras (Philippines, 1995, criteria (iii), (iv) and (v)).

Specifically addressing tea cultural landscapes, comparisons are made with Assam, India (19th century), Darjeeling, India (19th century), Kyoto and Uji, Japan (12th century), Java Island, Indonesia (19th century); Embo, Kenya (20th century), Central Province, Sri Lanka (19th century), and Phongsaly, Laos (approximately 17th century). The analysis proposes that the understorey cultivation model stands out from the large-scale terraced tea plantations around the world, as does the longer history of Pu’er tea cultivation on Jingmai Mountain compared to other tea growing areas.

Within China, the nominated property is said to distinguish itself from other tea plantations due to the preservation of the traditional understorey cultivation method and to the belief system associated with it. The analysis concludes that the nominated property is representative of the Pu’er tea mountains, as it has maintained the authenticity of the particular tea cultivation method, land-use system, and Tea Ancestor belief.

ICOMOS considers that the comparison to other types of agricultural landscapes inscribed on the World Heritage List is not as relevant as the comparison with other tea plantations in the world, and especially those located in Asia and China. ICOMOS considers that a more in-depth analysis of the similarities and differences with these properties could have strengthened the case presented. ICOMOS notes that a more extensive analysis of traditional villages with similar characteristics is missing, and that a focused analysis of religious, spiritual, and cultural associations with tea cultivation would have been relevant. Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that the type, number, and location of the properties covered in the comparative analysis is adequate to demonstrate the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property in relation to the type of property within its geo-cultural region and the global context.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (v).

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property represents a unique model of understorey tea cultivation, supported by a tribe-government-religion tripartite social governance system that, based on the Tea Ancestor belief, has protected the environment and preserved the old tea forest cultivation traditions for more than a thousand years.

ICOMOS considers that the continuous upkeep of the understorey tea cultivation for more than a thousand years is remarkable, and provides an exceptional testimony to the history of tea culture. The nominated property bears this living cultural tradition supported by the belief and governance systems of Indigenous peoples which promote sustainable practices for tea production and the use of natural resources. These traditional practices developed by the Blang and Dai peoples over a long period of time follow careful considerations of the mountain climate, topographic features, and local flora and fauna, demonstrating an important local and traditional knowledge. Traditional knowledge and belief systems in Jingmai Mountain have enabled the conservation of ancient tea forest, the sustainable use of natural resources and the development of an organically evolved cultural landscape that safeguards cultural and biological diversity.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the cultural landscape of old tea forests is an outstanding example of a system of sustainable land use that is based on a combination of a horizontal and a vertical land-use patterns. This land-use system permits the complementary use of natural resources in the mountainous environment of Jingmai Mountain. The location and layout of the traditional villages and the style of the residential buildings represent the Blang and Dai peoples’ cultures and traditional knowledge, which are founded on a worship of mountains, nature, and Tea Ancestors. This belief system enables a harmonious coexistence between the Indigenous peoples and their environment.

ICOMOS considers that the traditional land-use system in the nominated property represents an outstanding example of a human interaction with a challenging environment that is vulnerable to negative impacts of modernisation, urban development, and climate change. The complementary spatial distribution of different land uses and settlements provides for a water system and the creation of microclimates that support both the cultivation of tea and the well-being of communities residing in this organically evolved cultural landscape.
Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the preservation of the social relationships and ecological interdependencies between the climate, the topographic features, and the cultural practices of the Blang and Dai peoples on Jingmai Mountain. All the key attributes necessary to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are included within the boundaries, including the old tea forests, the protective partition forests, the tea plantations, the traditional villages, the traditional knowledge and governance system associated with the tea culture, and the cultural and spiritual expressions associated with that culture such as festivals, religious ceremonies, and traditional dances.

The boundaries also encompass the immediate setting, thus reinforcing the integrity of the cultural landscape.

The buffer zone adds a layer of protection to the nominated property, containing forests, farms, and villages where development is regulated. ICOMOS notes that traditional villages within the nominated property are currently under pressure from urban development and could be negatively affected in the future by increased tourism development.

ICOMOS considers that the restoration of forests and “ecological tea plantations” in the tea terraces has had a positive impact on both the functional and visual aspects of the nominated property. ICOMOS also notes that the integrity of the cultural landscape is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

While recognising the existence of threats, ICOMOS considers the integrity of the nominated property to be satisfactory.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the location, use, and function of the old tea forests, the location, form, and design of the traditional villages, the form and design of the traditional houses, and the form, function, and substance of the land-use system, including the horizontal and vertical patterns. It is also based on the continuity of traditions associated with the tea culture on Jingmai Mountain. ICOMOS notes that maintaining the authenticity depends on the continuous presence of the landscape elements and the continuous upkeep of the land-use system, as well as the cultural practices associated with the understorey tea cultivation and the related belief and governance systems.

Written sources on the history of the tea cultivation in the area and the occupation and development of Jingmai Mountain by Dai and Blang peoples are missing, and most existing information is based on legends, oral history, and traditional knowledge held and transmitted to younger generations by the elders of the Jingmai communities.

According to the State Party, the traditional understorey tea cultivation method has remained the same over time, and the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is justified on the basis of the continuity of the cultural tradition of old tea forest cultivation by Dai and Blang peoples. However, the nomination dossier indicates that tea cultivation practices have undergone changes throughout the years, with modernisation and tea commercialisation having had a particular impact. In its additional information letter of October 2022, ICOMOS asked for further evidence that demonstrates the continuity of traditional tea cultivation practices in the nominated property, such as current and historical illustrations and land-use maps of the tea forests and plantations, and for more information on the relationship between Blang and Dai peoples and the cultural practices proposed as sustaining the cultural landscape of old tea forests. The State Party responded in November 2022 that the elderly on Jingmai Mountain are witnesses to the continuation of the understorey tea cultivation method, and are the carriers of this traditional knowledge. Furthermore, the State Party clarified that historical illustrations of this remote area are not available.

ICOMOS notes that Nuogang village has been relocated and that the majority of residential buildings within Manggeng and Mengben villages are not considered to be traditional. Furthermore, restorations have been undertaken in some of the landscape elements. In October 2022, ICOMOS requested additional information regarding these restorations in order to better understand whether they may have had an impact on the authenticity of the nominated property. The State Party responded in November 2022 that the restorations refer to the recovery of the understorey tea cultivation method in tea terraces that had been altered in the 1980s to increase yields, and which are not considered attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. In February 2023, the State Party provided further explanation regarding the conservation measures in the nominated property, clarifying the methods used that are proposed in the Guidelines for Construction Activities in Jingmai Mountain Heritage Site (2022) and the Regulations on the Protection of Traditional Villages (2009). ICOMOS notes that these measures aim at maintaining traditional building practices and recovering the traditional built environment in the traditional villages of the nominated property.

While noting that landscape elements and cultural practices have evolved and are in a state of ongoing adaptation to various social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors, ICOMOS considers the authenticity of the nominated property to be satisfactory. Furthermore, ICOMOS considers that, due to the nature of the nominated property, limits of acceptable change need to be established in order to maintain its authenticity and its proposed Outstanding Universal Value, based on its present state of conservation.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met.
Boundaries
The estimated number of inhabitants in the nominated property is 5,365, and 1,126 in the buffer zone is 1,126. At present, the population occupies the nominated property and buffer zone in four administrative villages and seventeen “natural villages” (term used to refer to the traditional villages in the law). These include the Dai, Blang, Han, Wa, Lahu, and Hani peoples.

The proposed boundaries of the nominated property are based on the boundaries of the Old Tea Plantations of the Jingmai Mountain National Priority Protected Site. These boundaries are largely defined by natural features such as forest edges, rivers, and ridgelines. The underlying rationale for the delineation of the boundaries of the nominated property has been applied appropriately and consistently.

The Han village of Laojiufang with 221 residents and the Dai village of Nuogang Xinzhai with 277 residents are located within the nominated property but are not considered to be attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Laojiufang belongs to a different tradition (not tea culture) and was built more recently. Nuogang Xinzhai was built in 2000 to protect Nuogang Laozhai, the Dai traditional village located on Nuogang Mountain, from development.

The buffer zone corresponds to the construction control area created to protect the environment, setting, and visual characteristics of the National Priority Protected Site, plus an area where no settlement is located. In October 2022, ICOMOS requested further information on the rationale to define the buffer zone and the mechanisms currently in place to protect the land use, setting, and key views of the nominated property. In its reply of November 2022, the State Party clarified that the buffer zone is designed to protect the setting, ecological integrity, watershed, and views from surrounding mountains by limiting development and restricting damaging activities in the buffer zone.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property are adequate to encompass the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and that the buffer zone provides an added layer of protection.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies the consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List, and that it meets criteria (iii) and (v). ICOMOS notes that there is a continuity of the traditional practices of tea cultivation even though the modernisation of tea production and its commercialisation have had an impact on the landscape and practices. ICOMOS considers that the requirements of authenticity and integrity have been met. However, the integrity of the nominated property is vulnerable to negative impacts of tourism development and climate change, and limits of acceptable change need to be established to maintain its authenticity. The boundaries and buffer zone are adequate to support the integrity of the nominated property.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring
Documentation
Documentation related to the nominated property is collected, collated, stored, and maintained at the Archives Center of the Administration for the Conservation of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain. Surveys of the old tea forests, wildlife, and plant diversity were carried out in 2021, which can serve as a baseline for management, conservation, and monitoring. For the traditional villages, inscription as a National Priority Protected Site required an inventory of all heritage assets, thus establishing a baseline for conserving, managing, and monitoring the nominated property.

Conservation measures
The conservation of the nominated property is undertaken with the cooperation of the different levels of government (province, municipality, county, and village) and the traditional governance system based on the Tea Ancestor belief system at the village level. Since the different attributes in the nominated property require different conservation measures, a plan for each element has been created. The Regulations on the Protection of Traditional Villages (2009), and the Guidelines for Construction Activities in Jingmai Mountain Heritage Site (2022) laid out principles for the maintenance of the traditional villages and the traditional houses. Traditional conservation techniques are used for the old tea forests following the cultural practices of Blang and Dai peoples. Village regulations and folk conventions still regulate the practices of the residents on Jingmai Mountain.

The Plan for Villages in the Jingmai Mountain (2019-2040), based on a survey and analysis of the current state of fifteen villages in the nominated property and buffer zone, formulates conservation measures for the elements of each of the villages and proposes specific measures for each existing building in terms of repair, maintenance, preservation, minor restoration, major restoration or demolition. Regular maintenance is conducted as required in the Conservation Plan for the Cultural Heritage of Old Tea Plantations of Jingmai Mountain as a National Priority Protected Site (2017-2035). Villagers receive technical guidance from the Administration for the Conservation of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain on maintenance projects for protected traditional residential buildings under its responsibility. Funding is guaranteed through multiple channels, including different levels of government.

Monitoring
Monitoring of the nominated property is proposed to be carried out on five aspects: the natural environment; the human and social environment; the heritage attributes; presentation and utilisation of the property; and management capacity and effectiveness. Indicators include aspects related to the maintenance of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural practices. The Jingmai
Mountain Heritage Monitoring Mechanism has been established as a monitoring and early warning system. It includes daily inspection and disease monitoring of the old tea trees, among other tasks. Data is collected via satellite remote sensing, drones, high-resolution cameras, on-site environmental monitoring equipment, and a mobile application, Jingmai Mountain Monitoring Cloud. On-site automatic monitoring equipment has been installed in different key locations of the nominated property, and a patrol is carried out regularly. The data collected flows to a centralised system managed by the Administration for the Conservation of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain. ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system is adequate and supports the management of the nominated property by providing evidence for follow-ups, control, and decision making. Furthermore, ICOMOS considers that the State Party should establish monitoring thresholds in order to determine limits of acceptable change for the nominated property in light of its potential Outstanding Universal Value.

In addition, IUCN notes in its report that the management system, including the monitoring programme, does not consider other species than the tea and protective partition forests. Following the recommendation of IUCN to integrate biodiversity values in the management system, ICOMOS considers that the State Party should integrate biodiversity indicators into its monitoring system considering as well the traditional knowledge of Blang and Dai peoples.

ICOMOS considers that the existing documentation provides a baseline for the management, conservation, and monitoring of the nominated property. Conservation measures encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and the monitoring system is adequate. Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that monitoring thresholds for establishing limits of acceptable change and biodiversity indicators need to be included in the monitoring system.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The nominated property is protected by several laws that apply to its natural and cultural values. The Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics provides heritage protection to the entirety of the nominated property as a National Priority Protected Site (2013). The National Cultural Heritage Administration and Yunnan Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism are in charge of enforcing these protective measures. In addition, the nominated property is subject to agricultural and urban planning laws. These laws are enforced by the People’s Government of Yunnan Province at the provincial level, and by the People’s Government of Pu’er City at the municipal level. The People’s Government of Lancang County, in coordination with the Jingmai Village Office and the Mangjing Village Administration Office, are in charge of implementing the laws at local levels. The People’s Government of Pu’er City has established the Administration for the Conservation of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in 2018, which is responsible for the protection and utilisation of the nominated property. It coordinates with other relevant agencies and levels of government, as well as other stakeholders.

The villages of Nuogang, Wengji, and Mangjing were included in the second list of Traditional Chinese Villages by the Chinese Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Finance, in 2013. Religious monuments and sites in the villages are protected as Provincial Priority Protected Sites. In 2013, the People’s Government of Yunnan Province established the Mangjing Village Blang People Traditional Cultural Ecological Protection Area. The Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Wildlife and the Environmental Protection Law of the People’s Republic of China protect the natural environment, flora, and fauna of the nominated property. In 2017, the State Forestry Administration of China included Jingmai Mountain as part of the Lancang National Forest Park of Yunnan, where the old tea forests are located. The Law of the People’s Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage applies to the cultural expressions and traditions related to tea culture of the Blang and Dai peoples inhabiting the nominated property and other peoples living in the buffer zone. A traditional protection system is carried out by the Blang and Dai peoples, who care for the forests through their belief systems and customary laws based on communal and collective stewardship of the landscape.

The buffer zone is a construction control area with regulations for development and architectural style, thereby adding a layer of protection to the nominated property.

In addition, the “Old Tea Plantations and Tea Culture System in Pu’er, Yunnan” has been granted the status of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 2012, which promotes the maintenance of sustainable agricultural practices in the area.

Management system

The Administration for the Conservation of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain is responsible for managing the nominated property and implementing the Conservation Plan for the Cultural Heritage of Old Tea Plantations of Jingmai Mountain as a National Priority Protected Site (2017-2035) and the Conservation Management Plan for the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er (2020-2040) produced for the nominated property as a World Heritage site and that integrates other national, provincial and municipal plans, and other laws relevant to conservation and management. The inter-departmental and central-local coordination system combines five levels of
management: national, provincial, municipal, county, and town. This includes the Jingmai and Mangjing Village Committees that formulate village rules based on legal provisions and regulations for daily management. In 2018, an Advisory Committee of Experts for the Conservation and Development of the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er was set up, composed of experts from academic institutions and inheritors of the intangible cultural heritage of the nominated property. The Committee provides advice for decision-making on major issues concerning heritage protection and management.

The proposed Conservation Management Plan (2020-2040) is based on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and its attributes, and provides the basis and guidelines for the protection and management of the nominated property. The period of the plan runs from 2020-2040, including a short-term plan up to 2025, a mid-term plan from 2026-2030, and a long-term plan from 2031-2040. Covering both the nominated property and the buffer zone, the plan presents an assessment of the current management framework of the nominated property, including the legal and political context, as well as factors affecting the property. Based on this assessment, strategies are proposed and an action plan elaborated. Disaster risk management, tourism management, and interpretation are included in this plan. The plan is anticipated to be approved by the National Cultural Heritage Administration and implemented by the People’s Government of Yunnan Province through the People’s Government of Pu’er City and the Administration for the Conservation of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain as site manager.

Risks of earthquakes are moderate in Jingmai Mountain, and traditional pile dwellings can effectively reduce damages and losses caused by seismic events. Risks of fire are important in the traditional villages, where wooden architecture predominates. Adequate infrastructure to prevent hazards has been installed and the Village Plans for the Jingmai and Mangjing Administrative Villages in the Jingmai Mountain sets out priority arrangements for fire control facilities. Risk of pests are addressed by the Lancang County Forestry Bureau through daily monitoring, prevention, and control.

Construction activities that may have an impact on old tea forests and traditional villages but that meet management requirements of the protected site are subject to examination and approval by the competent administrative department in collaboration with the Administration for the Conservation of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain. Heritage Impact Assessments have been incorporated into the legal system. These must be submitted by proponents for any construction project within the National Priority Protected Site and be approved by the National Cultural Heritage Administration.

Visitor management

A tourism strategy and visitor management measures are proposed in the proposed Conservation Management Plan (2020-2040). The overall strategy is to focus on a “deep tea culture” experience, among other objectives. The tourist infrastructure (tourist service, visitor centre, and transportation centre) will be established in Huimin Town at the foot of Jingmai Mountain, outside of the boundaries of the nominated property. A carrying capacity has been established at 3,350 visitors per day (1,050 for the old tea forests and 2,300 for the traditional villages). Visitors arriving at the transportation centre will transfer onto clean-energy buses, with the aim of controlling the number of visitors and reducing pollution. Overall planning and strict controls will be put in place to restrict tourist accommodation facilities in order to avoid excessive commercialisation of village tourism. An overall interpretation and presentation framework has been developed for the nominated property.

In its interim report, ICOMOS requested further information regarding the tourism strategy for the nominated property and how potential pressures from the development of the villages would be contained. The State Party provided summaries of the Village Plans for the Jingmai and Mangjing Administrative Villages in the Jingmai Mountain (2021-2035), the Plan for Villages in the Jingmai Mountain (2019-2040) and the Strategies for Sustainable Tourism Development of the Jingmai Mountain in the additional information of February 2023. In these documents it is clarified how the State Party is controlling tourism and development pressures in the nominated property using strict village planning, boundaries, construction controls, capacity building and a controlled transportation system.

Community involvement

Residents of the nominated property are responsible for the daily management of the old tea forests and traditional residential buildings. A mechanism for communication and cooperation with the community stakeholders is proposed in the proposed Conservation Management Plan (2020-2040). According to the State Party in the additional information of November 2022, suggestions by villagers and approval of proposed regulations by them have been requested and integrated into the management system. A Protection Convention for Pu’er Jingmai Mountain Ancient Tea Forest Cultural Landscape proposes consultation with relevant villages and protection commitment letters has been signed by property owners and users of the old tea forests and traditional residential buildings, as well as the Agreement on Repair and Conservation of Traditional Dwellings (F1-protected at national level). The content of these documents was explained and translations to English were provided by the State Party in the additional information sent in February 2023.
Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the property is comprehensive and that the management system is robust. ICOMOS considers that the proposed Conservation Management Plan should be approved in priority and start implementation accordingly. In particular, ICOMOS considers that the integration of the traditional governance system and the participation of the local communities in the management of the nominated property will be positive for its long-term conservation.

6 Conclusion

The Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er represents a significant contribution to the development of a tea culture and to the continuous practice of understorey tea cultivation by the Blang and Dai peoples inhabiting the Yunnan Province in China. Comprising an organically evolved cultural landscape of ancient tea forests, tea plantations, and traditional villages, the nominated property illustrates a combination of horizontal and vertical land-use patterns that support the sustainable use of natural resources and the well-being of its communities. The land-use system and tea cultivation method are the result of adaptations and interactions of Indigenous communities with the mountainous environment and subtropical monsoon climate in Jingmai Mountain for more than a thousand years.

ICOMOS notes that the comparative analysis would have benefitted from an in-depth analysis of the similarities and differences of the tea landscapes presented as comparators, a more extensive analysis of traditional villages with similar characteristics, and a focused analysis of spiritual and cultural associations related to tea cultivation. ICOMOS nevertheless considers that the comparative analysis is adequate regarding the type of property, the geo-cultural region, and the global context, and thus justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (v). ICOMOS notes that the condition of authenticity is satisfactory in spite of disruptions to cultural practices, modern development, and recent restorations. As well, ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property is satisfactory, though vulnerable to negative impacts of tourism development and climate change.

The state of conservation of the property is good.

The legal protection of the tangible, intangible, natural, and cultural heritage, complemented by a comprehensive planning system, is adequate. The management system is based on the establishment of a property-specific administration authority, the Administration for the Conservation of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain, operating in cooperation with five levels of administration (national, province, city, county, and village) and following a tripartite social governance system of tribe-government-religion with the support of local communities.

The proposed Conservation Management Plan (2020-2040) for the nominated property as World Heritage integrates protection and planning instruments and comprehensively addresses short-, medium-, and long-term objectives, including daily management, disaster risk management, tourism management, and interpretation. Heritage Impact Assessments have been adequately integrated into the management system.

ICOMOS recommends that, due to the vulnerability of the integrity of the nominated property as an agroforestry site, a climate vulnerability assessment and climate change resilience and adaptation plan be developed for the nominated property, addressing the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, in conjunction with the establishment of monitoring thresholds for defining limits of acceptable change. In addition, ICOMOS recommends the integration of biodiversity indicators in the monitoring system considering the traditional knowledge of Blang and Dai peoples. Furthermore, ICOMOS notes that the daily management of the nominated property falls under the responsibility of the local communities, and considers that the integration of modern and traditional governance and management should be maintained. ICOMOS further notes that the involvement of youth in the sustainability of the nominated property is of primary concern and recommends the development of specific strategies that would ensure the continuity of the traditional tea cultivation.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er, China, be inscribed, as a cultural landscape, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (v).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis
The Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er is located in Huimin Town, Pu’er City, Yunnan Province, in southwestern China. This organically evolved cultural landscape consists of a tea production area of old tea groves, tea plantations, forests, and traditional villages on Jingmai Mountain. This land-use system has been developed over a thousand years by the Blang and Dai peoples following traditional practices that date back to the 10th century. The traditional understorey cultivation of old tea trees is a method that responds to the specific conditions of the mountain ecosystem and subtropical monsoon climate combined with a particular governance system maintained by the Indigenous communities residing in this area. Traditional ceremonies and festivities related to the Tea Ancestor belief that special
spirits live in the tea plantations, local fauna, and flora are at the core of this cultural tradition.

**Criterion (iii):** The Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er represents an exceptional testimony of the understorey tea cultivation traditions that enabled the development of a complementary spatial distribution of different land uses providing ecosystems and microclimates that support both the cultivation of old tea forests and the well-being of communities residing in this organically evolved cultural landscape. Blang and Dai peoples sustained these traditions for over thousand years by following a tripartite social governance system of tribe-government-religion that, based on the Tea Ancestor belief, has protected the natural resources and preserved the old tea forests. Traditional practices follow careful considerations of the mountain climate, topographic features, and local flora and fauna, demonstrating important local and traditional knowledge that safeguards cultural and biological diversity.

**Criterion (v):** The Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er is an outstanding example of a sustainable land-use system based on a combination of horizontal and vertical land-use patterns. This land-use system permits the complementary use of natural resources in the mountainous environment of Jingmai Mountain and represents an exceptional example of a human interaction by Blang and Dai peoples with a challenging environment that is vulnerable to negative impacts of modernisation, urban development, and climate change. The location and layout of the traditional villages and the style of residential buildings represent the cultures and traditional knowledge of Blang and Dai peoples.

**Integrity**

The integrity of the property is based on the preservation of the social relationships and ecological interdependencies between the climate, the topographic features, and the cultural practices of the Blang and Dai peoples on Jingmai Mountain. All the key attributes are included within the boundaries, including the old tea forests, the protective partition forests, the tea plantations, the traditional villages, the traditional knowledge and governance system associated with the tea culture, and the cultural and spiritual expressions associated with that culture such as festivals, religious ceremonies, and traditional dances. The boundaries also encompass the immediate setting, thus reinforcing the integrity of the cultural landscape.

Traditional villages within the property are currently under pressure from urban development and could be negatively affected in the future by increased tourism development.

**Authenticity**

The authenticity of the property is based on the location, use, and function of the old tea forests; the location, form, and design of the traditional villages; the form and design of the traditional houses; and the form, function, and substance of the land-use system, including the horizontal and vertical patterns. It is also based on the continuity of traditions associated with the tea culture on Jingmai Mountain.

Sources of information include the continuous presence of the landscape elements and the continuous upkeep of the land-use system, the cultural practices associated with understorey tea cultivation, legends, oral history, traditional knowledge and the related belief and governance systems.

**Protection and management requirements**

The property is protected at the highest level by national laws for cultural property, ecology, environment, forests, animal and plant species, and intangible cultural heritage. In addition, the local authorities have prepared and announced laws and regulations tailored to its protection. The buffer zone adds a layer of protection to the property, containing forests, farms, and villages where development is regulated.

A protection and management system that involves all stakeholders, including the local authorities, villagers, and professional institutions, has been developed. This protection and management system, along with the tribe-government-religion tripartite social governance arrangement and relevant planning documents such as the Conservation Plan for the Cultural Heritage of Old Tea Plantations of Jingmai Mountain as a National Priority Protected Site (2017-2035), the Plan for Villages in the Jingmai Mountain (2019-2040), and the Conservation Management Plan for the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er (2020-2040) provide a robust mechanism for the conservation and management of the property and the sustainable development of its communities. The old tea forests, protective partition forests, villages, and entire environment of the property are the subjects of comprehensive monitoring, and a disaster preparedness mechanism has been developed.

**Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Approving in priority and implementing accordingly the Conservation Management Plan for the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu’er (2020-2040),

b) Further developing a climate vulnerability assessment and climate change resilience and adaptation plan that address the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in conjunction with establishing clear limits of acceptable change for the cultural landscape with monitoring thresholds,
c) Developing a strategy and programmes for the sustainability of the property by engaging youth in the intergenerational transmission of tea culture and related cultural practices,

d) Integrating biodiversity values and indicators in the monitoring system of the property considering the traditional knowledge of Blang and Dai peoples,

e) Strictly enforcing the tourism strategy, maintaining the carrying capacity of the property, ensuring adequate access, and managing potential growth of the traditional villages,

f) Developing and implementing a Heritage Impact Assessment for any development proposals in the property, its buffer zone and/or wider setting that could potentially affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property,

g) Informing the World Heritage Centre of the intention to undertake or authorise all major projects which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in line with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas

Location
Channakeshava Temple:
Town of Belur
Hassan District
State of Karnataka

Hoysalesvara Temple:
Town of Halebidu
Hassan District
State of Karnataka

Keshava Temple:
Village of Somanathapura
Mysuru District
State of Karnataka

India

Brief description
The Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas is a serial nomination of the three most representative examples of Hoysala style temple complexes dating from the 12th to 13th centuries in the present State of Karnataka in southern India. The Hoysala style was created through the careful selection and integration of temple features from the past with those of contemporary temples in the region, with the intent of creating an identity different from the culturally strong neighbouring kingdoms. The stellate-shaped shrines are characterised by hyper-real sculptures and stone carvings that cover the entire architectural surface, a circumambulatory platform that follows the shape of the shrines, a large-scale sculptural gallery of religious, epic, and other stories thematically arranged along the circumambulatory platform, a multi-tiered frieze, and sculptures of the Sala legend. The excellence of the sculptural art underpins the artistic achievement of these temple complexes, which represent a significant stage in the historical development of Hindu temple architecture.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of three groups of buildings.

Included in the Tentative List
15 April 2014

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The nominated property comprises three temple complexes considered to be the most representative of the architectural and artistic achievements of the Hoysala kingdom in southern India.

Component part 1: Channakeshava Temple

Located in the town of Belur, the early royal capital of the Hoysala rulers and at the heart of a traditional settlement for the Brahmin or priest community, this temple complex is enclosed by a quadrilateral wall with two entrances, one of which is a gopura (a barrel roofed temple gateway). The
building complex comprises eight primary and ten subsidiary structures. The primary structures are the Channakeshava Temple (the main shrine), Kappe Chennigaraya Temple, Vira Narayana Temple, Saumyanayaki Temple, Ranganayaki/Andal Temple, Vasudeva Sarovara (temple tank), and the two entrances. The subsidiary structures are the Garuda shrine and flag pole, lamp pole, Swing Pavilion, South-Eastern Pavilion and ancillary structures, North Pavilion, Muzrai office, granary, Kalyana Mandapa, East Pavilion, and rampart walls.

The Channakeshava Temple is the main shrine of the complex. Its central axis is aligned with the gopura to the east. It is a single-celled (sanctum) shrine with a sixteen-pointed stellate plan. To the east is the central pillared hall linked to the sanctum through an antechamber. It is accessed through entrance halls from the south, east, and north. A raised platform carrying all these structures follows the shape of the stellate plan of the sanctum, with a much larger footprint serving as the circumambulatory path for worshipers. This type of platform was the first amongst Hoysala dynasty temples and was adopted by the later temples of the Hoysala kingdom. Flanking the three entrances to the shrine are Hoysala symbolic sculptures showing the legend of Sala killing a tiger.

Both the exterior and interior of the building are fully decorated with sculptures and stone carvings of extremely high quality. At the plinth level of the external wall, the sculptures of the Kalyani Chalukyan idioms are arranged along the circumambulatory path. The corbelled shallow dome-ceiling over the central bay of the pillared hall features gods and goddesses, scenes from the epics, dwarves, lions, dancers, musicians, and decorative motifs. There are twenty-one inscriptions in the temple bearing the names of the sculptors and their home towns, which is unusual in Indian temples.

Outside the rampart walls in the proposed buffer zone there are several historical and religious sites associated with the temple complex.

Component part 2: Hoysalesvara Temple

Located in the town of Halebidu, the ancient capital of the Hoysala dynasty between the mid-11th and mid-14th centuries, and bordered by Dorasamudra Lake on the east, the temple complex is a symmetrical double-celled shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. Facing east, the shrines are arranged side by side, one on the north and the other on the south, and are linked by a corridor through two central pillared halls. The stellate-shaped sanctums are accessed from the central pillared halls through their antechambers on the east. Each sanctum has a pavilion on the axis east of its entrance hosting a Nandi sculpture (Shiva’s sacred bull). The southern pavilion is larger than its northern counterpart, having an extension dedicated to Surya, the Sun God. The raised platform follows the shape of the shrines and serves as the circumambulatory path. The enclosure walls were lost in the past. Archaeological excavations have revealed sections of the walls and the plinths of an unidentified group of temples. The southern entrance of the temple has been partially reconstructed. In the southwestern corner of the main temple stands a memorial pillar with a dedicatory inscription to Kuvara Lakshma, who killed himself after the death of his king Ballala II. An open-air archaeological museum with a display of independent sculptural blocks stands northeast of the temple.

Both the exterior and interior of the temple are fully decorated with carvings and sculptures. The lower portion of the exterior walls is an eight-tiered horizontal sculptural narrative frieze, which became a standard feature in later Hoysala temples. The themes of these sculptures are the Hoysala idiom, epics such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavata Purana, and mythical aquatic creatures. On the interior, square or rectangular ceilings are of flat or corbelled forms. The sculptures of the Sala legend are found in the interior. Approximately twenty names of sculptors are found, a few of which overlap with those at the Channakeshava Temple, suggesting that some sculptors worked on both temples.

Component part 3: Keshava Temple

Located in the strategic village of Somanathapura fronting the neighbouring Chola kingdom during the Hoysala dynasty, the Keshava Temple is the last major temple built in the Hoysala style of temple architecture, and represents this culmination of this style. It comprises triple-celled shrines, an enclosure wall, and a lamp pole.

The temple sits in the centre of a rectangular courtyard. The temple takes a cruciform configuration with three identical sanctums hosting three different forms of the god Vishnu. Each sanctum has a sixteen-pointed stellate plan and each is accessed through an antechamber. The antechambers link to a common pillared hall at the centre of the cruciform. The central hall is approached from the entrance through a spacious nine-bay entrance hall to the east. A six-tiered moulded platform follows the stellate floor plan of the temple, serving as both the circumambulatory path and access to the temple. The enclosure wall is rectilinear in form, with an entrance hall in the middle of the east wall. It was reconstructed in its original form at its original place, though using granite. A granite lamp pole with a slender sixteen-sided circular shaft is located outside the temple, northeast of the entrance.

Both the exterior and interior of the main shrines are fully decorated. The exterior is decorated with nearly 200 figures arranged at eye level, making the act of circumambulation an intimate bodily encounter with the god. The superstructures are fully decorated. At least ten names of artists are repeated under specific sculptures, amongst which the work of two distinct guilds can be detected.

The area of the nominated property totals 10.47 ha for the three component parts, and the buffer zones, as revised by the State Party in November 2022, total 195.87 ha.
History and development

The Hoysalas, initially a mountain chieftainship in the Western Ghats, expanded their territory into the adjacent plains, transformed into a feudatory of the Kalayan Chalukyas, and gained independence in the early 12th century. The kingdom ruled over large parts of the present-day State of Karnataka from the 11th to the 14th centuries.

Along with their expansion and transformation, the Hoysalas seemed to be consciously forging a distinct identity to distinguish themselves from their long-lasting and culturally strong neighbouring kingdoms. The invention of the legend of the heroic Sala killing a tiger, along with continuing patronage of architecture, art, and literature by the royal family and elite class, were all parts of the same pursuit. In a region where religions played the dominant role in society, the functions of the temples were not just for fulfilling the needs of local believers, they were also used as displays of power by the Hoysala dynasty.

In this context, the Hoysala style temples were created through a careful and selective adoption, adaptation, and combination of temple forms prevalent in the region and in other parts of India, integrated with Hoysala art and literature. This new form of temple complex is distinctly different from the styles of its neighbouring kingdoms. The Hoysala style is the combination of several features, including stellate sanctums, platforms following the shape of the sanctums, multi-tiered friezes, thematically arranged sculptural galleries of religious, epic and other stories along the circumambulatory path, extensive sculpture and stone carvings that cover the entire surface, and, most importantly, sculptures of the legend of Sala killing a tiger, serving as the quintessence of the temples. During their ruling period more than 1,500 temples were constructed by the Hoysalas, of which about 140 survive today.

The Hoysala style was initially formed in the early 12th century, as represented by the Channakeshava and Hoysalesvara temples, and reached its mature stage in the mid-13th century, as demonstrated by the Keshava Temple. This style was carried forward in the region after the fall of the Hoysala dynasty. The temple complex took on its current configuration by the end of the 19th century.

Research shows that the use of schist played a significant part in the formation of the Hoysala style. The locally abundant schist is a type of stone that is soft, malleable, and ductile at the time of quarrying, but becomes harder once exposed to the sun. This special quality made possible the profuse ornamentation and fine detail that characterises the Hoysala Style. The soft quality of the schist also dictated the size of the temples. They had to be relatively small, without room for an internal circumambulatory around the sanctums as was common in temples constructed of granite. To compensate for this limitation, platforms were constructed following the shape of the sanctums but with larger footprints to serve as exterior circumambulatory paths. At the same time, the height of the temples was raised to allow enhanced veneration.

Consecrated in 1117 CE to commemorate a successful military campaign to capture the town of Talakadu, the Channakeshava Temple was continuously patronised by the royal family, generals, and wealthy merchants throughout the Hoysala dynasty until the end of the kingdom in the 14th century. Enclosure walls were constructed during this period. The Kappe Chennigaraya Temple, Vira Narayana Temple, temple tank, granary, and entranceways were built, and miniature shrines were added to the main temple and Kappe Chennigaraya Temple.

After the fall of the Hoysala dynasty, the temple was continuously used as the religious centre of the region and was patronised by the rulers of the subsequent dynasties. During this period up to the end of the 19th century, the Ranganayaki/Andal and Saumyanayaki temples, Swing Pavilion, and several other structures were added. The entrance tower was reconstructed several times, and the tower of the main temple was dismantled in the late 19th century to save the temple itself from collapsing. The temple complex took on its current configuration by the end of the 19th century.

Sponsored by Ketamalla Dandanayaka, a prominent merchant and general, in honour of the ruling king Vishnuvardhana and his principal queen Shantaladevi, the Hoysalesvara Temple was consecrated in 1121 CE. The southern pavilion was extended possibly in the 12th and 13th centuries in the form of a shrine dedicated to Surya, the Sun God. After the fall of the Hoysala dynasty, the rulers of the subsequent dynasties continuously patronised the upkeep of the temple.

Built by Somanatha Dandanayaka after having received funds from the reigning King Narasimha III, the Keshava Temple was consecrated in 1268 CE. After the fall of the Hoysala dynasty, the temple was continuously patronised for its upkeep and religious functions. Buttresses were constructed in 1930 to support the outer walls of the complex. The area surrounding the complex was landscaped in the 1960s, which has been maintained and improved to the present.

State of conservation

A long conservation history for each temple complex is provided, with more than 150 entries of conservation activities undertaken in the modern era of conservation, which started in the 1890s. These activities can be categorised as structural stabilisation, waterproofing, cleaning and consolidating sculptures, improving drainage systems, repaving courtyards, landscaping, installing electricity and other modern facilities, documentation, and monitoring. Benefitting from these activities, the nominated property is in good condition.

The buffer zone of the Channakeshava Temple complex contains historic remains, some of which are in fragile condition, and important views of the complex are obscured.
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is good. ICOMOS considers, however, that the conditions of the historic remains and important views in the buffer zone of the Channakeshava Temple component part should be improved.

**Factors affecting the nominated property**
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are natural deterioration of the stone sculptures and damage by human activities and birds.

Natural deterioration of the sculptures has been a slow process in the past, as evidenced by the still well-preserved details. However, with increasing air pollution the decay process may accelerate. ICOMOS considers that systematic monitoring and research are needed to keep a close watch on this issue, followed by mitigation measures.

Channakeshava Temple is one of the primary tourist attractions and religious centres in the State of Karnataka. Daily visits average about 500 to 1,000 on a regular day and about 2,000 in the peak season. However, more than 100,000 visitors are present at the complex during the annual fourteen-day religious festival of Belur. In October 2022, ICOMOS requested additional information from the State Party on the safety and security of both the crowd and the sculptures. The State Party responded in November 2002 that administrative arrangements are made amongst the staff and the event organiser, aided by the police force. According to the State Party, these potential risks are well under control. The ritualistic application of anointing oil on pillars and sculptures is believed to have a negative impact on the stone and has been stopped by the site management body.

Birds’ nests can be found under the eaves of several temples. Timely removal of these nests is essential to prevent the sculptures from being damaged by bird excreta and physical contact.

The temple complexes are located in an area where natural disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, and flooding are unlikely to occur. However, disaster management plans at the district level are in place to address any unexpected disasters.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good and that factors affecting the nominated property are minor and are under control. ICOMOS considers that improvements should be made to the conditions of the historical remains and important views in the buffer zone of the Channakeshava Temple component part, and the impacts of the increasing air pollution on the sculptures should be closely monitored, followed by mitigation measures.

### 3 Proposed justification for inscription

**Proposed justification**
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The extremely complex stellate plans with rhythmically indented walls of the Hoysala style temples, their horizontal sculptural bands, and multi-tier friezes featuring intricate and hyper-real detail across all levels of sculpture reflect an exuberant *horror vacui* (fear of emptiness) of exterior and interior surfaces while demonstrating the relentless pursuit of detail and technical mastery over materials of the artists.
- There is a creative genius in translating beliefs, stories, and abstract ideas into the medium of stone. The innovative use of the large sculptures of deities, combined with stories from the Hindu epics and puranas, unfold in sequence along the outer walls, allowing a religious experience of circumambulation that has been carried forward in later temples in the region and beyond.
- The unprecedented number of signatures of the artists, such as their names, initials, titles, epithets, and lineages, reflects the high standing of the artists in Hoysala society.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property include the layouts and orientations of the primary and subsidiary structures in the three temple complexes; the Hoysala style plans and forms of the various structures; the exterior and interior decorations; the sculptures, stone carvings, and friezes; the surviving enclosure walls; and the inscriptions in the temples bearing the names of the artists.

ICOMOS considers that in the past, the temple styles in India have been classified into three broad categories namely the northern, southern and mixed ones. Recent researches show that many temple styles, including the Hoysala style, do not fit comfortably in this system. The Hoysala style was consciously created to distinguish itself from its contemporary counterparts in the region and beyond. It holds an important position in the historical development of temple architecture and thus deserves international recognition.

**Comparative analysis**
The comparative analysis has been developed around the following three parameters identified by the State Party: architectural eclecticism; profusion, ornament, and embellishment to enhance sacredness; and artistic agency. It has examined properties inscribed on the World Heritage List both within and outside India, a property on the Tentative List of India, as well as other similar places in India not currently on either list.

Twenty-three Hoysala dynasty temples in India, including the three component parts of the nominated property, are briefly compared in terms of religious inclusiveness,
iconography, variations in plan typologies, artistic tastes, profusion, ornament, embellishment, integrity, and authenticity. The comparison concludes that, amongst the 140 surviving Hoysala temples, the three component parts of the nominated property are the most representative in terms of their completeness of architectural forms and artistic works.

Temples of the Kalyani Chalukyas (973-1189 CE, once the overlords of the Hoysala kingdom) and Solanki (Maru-Gurjara) temples (10th to 13th centuries, western Indian regions) are compared. The analysis concludes that the Kalyani Chalukyan architecture shows experimentation in terms of combining the northern and southern Indian temple styles, creating the stellate plan, and using platforms to raise the majesty of the temples. The Hoysala temples took these elements to a mature stage, featuring a developed form of stellate plan with a raised platform, a fully decorated surface, and a much more developed level of sculptural art. The Hoysala temples distinguish themselves from their Solanki counterparts by their much more realistic style of sculpture, more organic decorations, well-planned themes of the stone carvings that unfold the narratives of the epics and ancient texts placed continuously along the circumambulatory path, and the platforms that follow the contours of the sanctums.

A comparison is made with Evolution of Temple Architecture – Aihole-Badami-Pattadakal (India, Tentative List). Envisioned as an extension of Group of Monuments at Pattadakal (India, 1987, criteria (iii) and (iv)), it comprises several temple complexes in the Malaprabha River Valley dating from the 6th to 8th centuries. The State Party concludes that the nominated property demonstrates the unique Hoysala style in terms of architectural eclecticism, intricate carvings in the embellishment of the sculptures, narratives, and ornamentation of the architectural structures.

Comparisons are next made with four contemporary temple complexes in India already on the World Heritage List. The differences between each World Heritage property and the nominated property are analysed in great detail. The analysis concludes that the nominated property is distinctively different from these counterparts in terms of eclecticism, ornamentation, and surface treatment with sculptures.

The nominated property is compared to two contemporary World Heritage temple complexes outside India, Angkor (Cambodia, 1992, criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)) and Prambanan Temple Compounds (Indonesia, 1991, criteria (i) and (iv)). A very detailed and positive comparison is made with each complex.

In October 2022, ICOMOS requested additional information on the rationale for selecting the component parts and on whether more temples should be included in the nominated property to better support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. In its response, the State Party provided a comprehensive explanation of its reasons for selecting the three component parts. The response included a detailed illustrated inventory of twenty-three prominent Hoysala temples, including the three temple complexes that comprise the nominated property.

While ICOMOS considers it would have been more effective and the conclusion would have been clearer if the Hoysala style per se was used for comparison, it considers the methodology of the comparative analysis to be sound, and the conclusions to be justified.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i) and (ii).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the profuse embellishment, high relief, and joyous horror vacui (fear of emptiness) are an exceptional testimony to the combination of the matchless technical expertise in stone carving and creativity in translating religious beliefs and stories into sculptures of the artists. In addition, the unusually rich signatures of the sculptors reflect a large number of artisans of the time and their respected position in society.

ICOMOS considers that the creation of the Hoysala style temple architecture and the artistic achievement of the sculptural art of these temple complexes are exceptional testimonies to the outstanding creativity and inventive genius of the Hoysala people. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is a new form of temple complex that was a result of creative modifications to the plans and elements of temple architecture prevalent elsewhere, complemented with original innovations. This form emerged from considered and informed choices of elements and features that were used in very conscious ways, with a clear understanding of the overall outcome that was desired. Some elements of this new language of temple architecture were carried forward in other regions.

ICOMOS considers that the Hoysala style, as demonstrated by the nominated property, is the successful outcome of the interchange of human values that was motivated by the desire to establish an identity distinct from neighbouring kingdoms and was executed through a consciously navigated process. The Hoysala style exerted a strong influence on later temple
Constructions in the region and beyond. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion was not proposed by the State Party. ICOMOS nevertheless considers that the nominated property is an exceptional testimony to the Hoysala style temples, which illustrate a significant stage in the historical development of Hindu temple architecture. Furthermore, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is an exceptional physical testimony to the diversity of religious architecture in India. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i), (ii) and (iv).

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is demonstrated at two levels: the whole series and the individual component parts.

At the level of the whole series, the selected component parts cover the most significant periods of Hoysala style temple construction, from its initial phase to its high point. The sculptural and structural variations of the component parts complement each other, and collectively they illustrate the richness of the sculptural art and the high degree of artistic agency that characterise the Hoysala style. ICOMOS considers the integrity of the whole series is justified.

At the individual component part level, some past alterations adversely affect the integrity of the nominated property, such as the demolition of the superstructures of the Channakeshava and Hoysalesvara temples and the loss of the Hoysalesvara Temple’s enclosure walls. ICOMOS considers that while these past losses have limited adverse impact, the exclusion of the Vishnusamudra Tank and the Kere Beedi (Tank Road) associated with the Channakeshava Temple complex impairs its integrity because they are related to the architecture, the planning and the use of the temple complex.

ICOMOS requested the opinion of the State Party on this matter in October 2022. In its response in November 2022, the State Party agreed to enlarge the buffer zone of this component part to include the above-mentioned elements, and submitted a revised map showing the new boundary. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS reiterated this issue to the State Party by requesting the reasons for including the two elements in the buffer zone instead of the area of the property, and what the legal provisions are for their protection. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party responded that although they are of cultural and religious significance, they are not considered as attributes, and hence have been included in the buffer zone. The Vishnusamudra Tank is in the process of being declared a State Protected Monument for legal protection.

ICOMOS considers that the Vishnusamudra Tank and the Kere Beedi (Tank Road) are related to the architecture, the planning and the use of the temple complex and contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. The condition of integrity of this temple will be met when they will be integrated to its nominated area.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the three component parts has been preserved over time, with their forms and designs, materials and substances, and locations remaining mostly unchanged. Some alterations have affected their authenticity to some extent. The tower of the main entrance of the Channakeshava Temple has been reconstructed several times. The setting of the Hoysalesvara Temple has been transformed into a modern landscape. The function of the Keshava Temple has changed from a living temple to a museum. Its enclosure walls were reconstructed at the same location in the original form using anastylosis. Past conservation interventions have also cast their marks on the original fabric and settings.

Although such changes have affected the authenticity of the individual component parts to a certain degree, ICOMOS considers that the attributes that define the Hoysala style, which is what makes the nominated property outstandingly significant, have remained authentic. ICOMOS considers, therefore, that the authenticity of the whole series as well as the authenticity of each of the component parts has been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have been met. The conditions of authenticity of the individual component parts have been met. The condition of integrity of Channakeshava Temple will be met when the Vishnusamudra Tank and the Kere Beedi (Tank Road) will be integrated in the nominated area.

Boundaries

No permanent inhabitants live in the nominated property. The number of permanent inhabitants in the buffer zones of the Channakeshava, Hoysalesvara, and Keshava temple complexes is approximately 2,500, 1,200, and 1,500, respectively.

The proposed boundaries of the nominated property are based on those of the nationally protected monuments. The boundaries can be considered appropriate in that they encompass the key attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.
The proposed boundaries of the buffer zones are based on the legal provisions of the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (Amendment and Validation 2010), which provides for a prohibited area (100 metres wide) and regulated area (200 metres beyond the prohibited area).

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated area of the Channakeshava Temple complex should be expanded to include the Vishnusamudra Tank and the Kere Beedi (Tank Road).

ICOMOS notes that in some cases the boundaries of the buffer zones cross over land plots, roads, and houses, which may cause legal complications and management issues. In addition, there is no explanation of the underlying rationale for the delineation the boundaries of the buffer zones. ICOMOS requested additional information from the State Party regarding these concerns in October 2022. In November 2022, the State Party advised that the boundaries of the buffer zones have been delineated according to the legal requirement, taking into consideration the visual quality and functional links. It also clarified that in cases where a plot is partially within a prohibited area and partially within a regulated area, the proponent is asked to remain outside the prohibited area’s 100-metre limit for any construction. In its response in February 2023 to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the State Party further elaborated on the ways in which the potential legal complications caused by the demarcation of the boundaries are treated by citing a number of relevant legal provisions. ICOMOS considers that the demarcation of the buffer zone is large enough to include all the supporting and functionally linked elements with adequate legal provisions and management mechanisms.

### Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies the consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. The nominated property meets criteria (i), (ii) and (iv). The authenticity of the whole series as well as the authenticity of each of the component parts has been demonstrated. The conditions of integrity of the whole series are justified, and the conditions of integrity of the Channakeshava Temple will be met when the Vishnusamudra Tank and the Kere Beedi (Tank Road) will be integrated in the nominated area.

## 4 Conservation measures and monitoring

### Documentation

Most documentation is held at the local branches of the Archaeological Survey of India. Over the past century, records of the conservation interventions carried out on the nominated property have been suitably archived, and have been used to inform the conservation and management of the nominated property. Baseline documentation such as detailed measured drawings has been made to a high standard and has been used for monitoring, conservation, and site management.

### Conservation measures

The conservation measures in place are a combination of daily maintenance and occasional conservation campaigns. The daily maintenance includes cleaning the temple complexes, fixing the infrastructure, and monitoring the conditions of the property. Due to the stable nature of the stone buildings, the daily maintenance activities are minimal. Conservation campaigns are undertaken only occasionally, and follow internationally accepted principles when addressing major problems.

### Monitoring

A monitoring table provided in both the nomination dossier and Site Management Plan shows the monitoring indicators, periodicity of monitoring, and location of records. However, the indicators in this table are actually the categories to be monitored. In October 2022, ICOMOS requested additional information about the monitoring system from the State Party, which responded in November 2022 with a detailed table of monitoring indicators together with their periodicity and the responsible institutions.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring indicators provided by the State Party in November 2022 are adequate and practical. However, for the monitoring to inform decisions, a set of actions responding to the monitoring indicators and a triggering mechanism linking the actions to the monitoring indicators should be developed. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS raised this issue. The State Party confirmed in its response in February 2023 that the links between the monitoring indicators and responsive actions are in place, and supplemented it with a detailed table indicating the attributes to be monitored, the monitoring indicators, the periodicity of monitoring, the responsible agency, the threshold, and associated actions. ICOMOS considers that the current monitoring system is adequate.

ICOMOS considers that the documentation is good, and the conservation measures in place are effective. ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

## 5 Protection and management

### Legal protection

The nominated property is legally protected at the national, state, and local levels. At the national level, the monuments in all three component parts have been declared of national importance under the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (Amendment and Validation 2010). The proposed boundaries of the nominated property and its buffer zones are based on the legal provisions of this Act. The buffer zone of each component part comprises two concentric rings surrounding the nominated property. The inner ring is a 100-metre wide prohibited area in which no construction
of any kind is permitted. The outer ring is a 200-metre wide regulated area in which construction activities are regulated by the competent authorities. In addition, the National Conservation Policy of 2014 lays out the principles governing interventions, the use of traditional craftsmanship and materials, and the acceptable practices to be used in the conservation processes. The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act of 1972 prevents smuggling and the illegal trade of the temple sculptures.

At the state and local levels, the Karnataka Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1961, provides legal protection of monuments and sites other than those of national importance. In addition, the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961, the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993, Amendment Bill, 2014, the Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Act, 1997, the Karnataka Irrigation Act, 1965, and the Karnataka Tourism Policy 2020-2025 set requirements for managing the nominated property at the state and local levels.

Management system
The Archaeological Survey of India is the key institution responsible for managing the nominated property. The buffer zones are jointly managed by the National Monument Authority, the Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage, the Government of Karnataka with its relevant departments, local authorities and private owners.

The overall management of the nominated property is undertaken by the Apex Committee, which is chaired by the Chief Secretary of the State Government and supported by the Director General, and the Additional Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, the Regional Director and the Regional Commissioner, the heads of relevant State Government departments including the Department of Tourism, Department of Urban Development, Revenue Department, and the Department of Town and Country Planning, as well as the Commissioner of the Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department. The Apex Committee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing management issues and policies, coordinating and implementing the Site Management Plan, reviewing conservation interventions, and securing relevant funds. The committee meets monthly. A nodal officer for the proposed World Heritage Site will be appointed to coordinate and implement the decisions of the Apex Committee.

At the individual component part level, the temple complexes are owned and managed by the Archaeological Survey of India. The religious activities at Channakeshava Temple are managed by the Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department of the state government. The buffer zones are managed by two district-level committees under the Apex Committee: the Hassan District Committee for Channakeshava Temple and Hoyalesvara Temple; and the Mysuru District Committee for Keshava Temple. These district committees are the local management bodies that guide the local authorities in managing the buffer zones.

The Site Management Plan, developed jointly by the primary authorities in consultation with stakeholders, is the guiding document of the management system. It sets out the vision and lays out six objectives in terms of monument conservation; guidelines and policies for development; continuity of artistic and cultural tradition; sustainable tourism management; cultural, environmental, mobility and social impact assessment; and education, outreach and awareness. Seven site-level strategies have been developed under these objectives. A detailed table of regulations under these strategies serves as the development guidelines for the buffer zones. An action plan of eleven actions to be implemented in the short, medium, and long term is provided. Heritage Impact Assessment and risk preparedness measures are embedded in the management plan.

The implementation of the Site Management Plan is periodically monitored and evaluated by the Apex Committee at the regional level and two local-level committees. The plan is updated as often as necessary to maintain its validity and is legally required to be revised every five years.

The Archaeological Survey of India has regular staff in the temple complexes for daily maintenance, monitoring, and management. There is technical expertise for maintenance of the physical elements.

The funds for conservation and monument-related works are largely from the governmental budget and are adequate, while religious activities are funded mainly by donations from devotees, as well as the annual budget of the Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department of the state government. Other revenues are from tickets, rents from footwear stands, bookshops, parking, and other services and donations.

The legal provisions for both the nominated property and the buffer zones, the management system, and the powers and responsibilities are understood by all the relevant parties.

Visitor management
Visitor management facilities for the nominated property are limited, but include public toilets, drinking water facilities, footwear stands, signage, information boards, parking lots, CCTV cameras, and security metal detectors. Street vendors scattered around the three component parts provide food and beverages to visitors. There are several accommodations and restaurants in the vicinity of the component parts, but these are insufficient. Most of the facilities and amenities are in good condition, though the parking lots, toilets, and restaurants need to be improved. Trained and licensed tour guides can provide visitors with basic information, but the number of guides is limited.
ICOMOS considers that the carrying capacity of the nominated component parts should be established as the baseline for visitor management, since tourism is encouraged in the Site Management Plan. In view of the potential World Heritage listing, there is often a surge in the number of visitors. In order for the nominated property to be ready for future tourism management, in its Interim Report ICOMOS requested the State Party to provide the timeline for establishing the carrying capacity. The State Party responded in February 2023 that, except during the annual religious festival at the Channakeshava Temple, the number of visitors visiting the property is well under control. The State Party further expressed that if it is so required, a carrying capacity study will be taken up in consultation with the Apex Committee.

The interpretation and presentation of the values of the nominated property, both as a whole and as individual component parts, can be improved. ICOMOS raised this issue in its Interim Report. The State Party replied in February 2023 that each component temple has an interpretation centre that provides information about the key aspects of the Hoysala temple art and architecture, the regional context, and a brief historical background for these temples. ICOMOS considers that a holistic interpretation and presentation plan should be developed and implemented, so that the values of the individual temples and series as a whole can be better communicated to the visitors.

Community involvement
The local communities are involved in the nominated property in four main ways: as members of the local level committees for management of the sites, as employees in the conservation works, as participants in business activities relating to tourism, and as volunteers at the Channakeshava Temple during religious festivals.

The Site Management Plan mentions a series of interactions and consultations with government authorities, local stakeholders, and community members when a vision statement was being developed, and notes that community and stakeholder participation at the grass root level is of utmost importance for sustainable tourism.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the current legal framework provides adequate protection for the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The current management system is effective, and Heritage Impact Assessment and risk management mechanisms are in place. ICOMOS considers that the carrying capacity for the nominated property should be established, and that a holistic interpretation and presentation plan should be developed.

6 Conclusion
The Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas is a serial nomination of the three most representative Hoysala style temple complexes in southern India dating from the 12th to 13th centuries. The Hoysala style is a creative combination of features selected from contemporary neighbouring kingdoms and earlier examples. It contributes significantly to the diversity of the temple styles of India and has exerted a lasting influence on temples of later periods, both in the region and beyond. The excellence of the sculptural art of the temple complexes, as well their architecture, siting, planning and use, underpin the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

The comparative analysis justifies the consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. The nominated property meets criteria (i), (ii) and (iv), and the condition of authenticity. The temple complexes are in good condition, and the factors affecting the nominated property are under control. The current legal framework and management system provide adequate protection, conservation, and management of the nominated property. Heritage Impact Assessment and risk management mechanisms are embedded in the management system.

Recommendations are made to modify the boundaries of the nominated property, establish its carrying capacity, develop and implement an interpretation and presentation plan, and address the condition of the historical remains and the important views in the buffer zone of the Channakeshava Temple component part.

7 Recommendations

ICOMOS recommends with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas, India, be referred back to the State Party to allow it to:

- Expand the property area of the Channakeshava Temple to include the Vishnusamudra Tank and the Kere Beedi (Tank Road);
- Improve the conditions of the historical remains and significant views in the buffer zone of the Channakeshava Temple component part;
- Develop and implement a holistic interpretation and presentation plan, including an enhanced contextualised interpretation at all component parts, improved tourism facilities, an increased number of qualified tour guides and interpretative materials, and develop a diversified presentation of the lost temple structures and enclosure walls;
- Establish the carrying capacity for the nominated property to use it as the baseline for tourist management.
Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Monitoring the impacts of the increasing air pollution on the sculptures and develop mitigation measures,

b) Encouraging community involvement in the conservation and management of the nominated property;
The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta (Indonesia)  
No 1671

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks

Location
City of Yogyakarta and Regency of Bantul  
Special Region of Yogyakarta
Indonesia

Brief description
The central axis of Yogyakarta was established in the 18th century by Sultan Mangkubumi and has continued from that time as a centre of government and Javanese cultural traditions. The six kilometre north-south axis is positioned to link Mount Merapi and the Indian Ocean, with the Kraton (palace) at its centre, with key cultural monuments and landmarks lining the axis to the north and south that are connected through rituals. It embodies key beliefs about the cosmos in Javanese culture, including the marking of the cycles of life. These beliefs have a longer history and are drawn from diverse religious and cultural influences. The axis is managed in part through the traditional system known as Tata Rakiting Wewangunan overseen by the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a group of buildings.

Included in the Tentative List
14 March 2017 as ‘Historical City Centre of Yogyakarta’

Background
This is a new nomination.

Note: This nomination was submitted as a serial nomination of two component parts, namely the urban axis of Yogyakarta and a section of the Royal Tombs at Imogiri. Based on the dialogue with ICOMOS, the State Party advised in the additional information received in February 2023 that the Royal Tombs component part had been withdrawn from the nomination, and some changes were made to the justification of criteria. A revised nomination dossier, maps and management plan were provided to implement this decision. This evaluation report therefore considers the revised scope of the nomination presented by the State Party.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 22 to 28 August 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the mapping of the boundaries, legal protection, planned and approved development projects, the moratorium on hotel development, informal settlements, documentation, and monitoring.

In August 2022 the Director of the World Heritage Centre forwarded information to ICOMOS that had been received from a non-governmental organisation expressing concern about the rights to land ownership for non-Indonesian citizens in Yogyakarta. The letter sent by ICOMOS in October 2022 requested clarification from the State Party on the implications for the nominated property and its buffer zone.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 3 November 2022. A number of the provided documents are English translations of documents referred to in the nomination dossier concerning the legal protection and management of the nominated property.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the title of the property, justification for Outstanding Universal Value, boundaries, inclusion of the Royal Tombs, the process for removing informal settlements, land ownership in the urban axis, and the implementation of the Historic Urban Landscape approach.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The establishment of the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat occurred in the 18th century following a split in
the Mataram Kingdom. Although constructed from the 18th century, the Sultanate is traced back to earlier periods including the Mataram Kingdoms of Java, and the cultural concepts identified by the State Party have a deeper history for the Javanese people. They developed through centuries of interactions between people of different cultures and beliefs, including Animism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sufi Islamic teachings.

The location for the Kraton and the axis was selected by the Sultan Mangkubumi in 1755, and is laid out to represent Javanese cosmological beliefs. The capital is therefore understood as a miniature representation of the cosmos, according to Javanese Hindu-Buddhist beliefs.

The physical attributes are deeply imbued with intangible cultural heritage practices associated with the life cycle, venerating ancestors, coronations, funerals, Islamic days, and daily offerings. These practices are the responsibility of the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat through the traditional management system known as Tata Rakiting Wewangunan. Wider Javanese intangible cultural heritage elements such as Gamelan musical performances, Wayang puppet theatre, making of Batik cloth and Keris daggers are practiced in Yogyakarta.

Following Indonesian independence, Yogyakarta became a Special Region and the Sultan its Governor. The royal family still lives in the nominated property and continues to play a key role in the practice of many living Javanese culture and art forms. Despite immense growth of the city since its establishment, the central axis has remained the focus and buildings of different periods line the northern and southern sections. The reign of the current Sultan began in 1988 and the city has undergone major changes in tourism and urban development since then. The Malioboro Street area has increasingly become a tourist area, and the Governor has responded by establishing new planning mechanisms, conservation areas and a halt to hotel development. In 2006, a severe earthquake affected Yogyakarta with many lives lost and considerable damage to the nominated property.

The nominated property has an area of 42.22 ha, and a buffer zone of 291.17 ha.

This central part of Yogyakarta was consciously sited between Mount Merapi in the north, and the Indian Ocean in the south, with rivers at either side, demonstrating Javanese spatial philosophies. The central axis of the city is 6 km in length north-south and includes 144 specific elements (attributes) grouped within five complexes located in Yogyakarta City and the Bantul Regency. The town plan comprises the Tugu Monument situated at the northernmost point of the axis with the Malioboro Street as the communication route. Moving along the axis, the Kepatihan Complex and Beringharjo Market are found, leading to the Northern Square of the Kraton (Palace), and the Great Mosque Complex. The Kraton Complex is a fortified walled area which connects to the Inner Complex of the Palace and the Taman Sari Royal Garden Complex. From the southern gate of the Kraton, Ali Maksum Street axis leads to the Panggung Krupyak Monument, the landmark which indicates the southern border of the town. All of these buildings and landmarks are joined together by the axis itself, and by associated rituals, ceremonies and festivals. A number of the attributes were rebuilt or substantially repaired following a serious earthquake in 1867. In the wider setting, there are many other buildings that demonstrate the diverse cultural influences that have formed the inner city of Yogyakarta.

State of conservation

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of most of the proposed attributes is good.

Earthquakes in 1867 and 2006 have damaged a number of key attributes, and approaches of repair and reconstruction have varied. The State Party acknowledges issues with the state of conservation and integrity to some elements such as the Palace Outer Walls, Gates and Fortifications and the Taman Sari Royal Garden Complex arising from buildings that obscure some of the most significant elements.

Factors affecting the nominated property

The loss of heritage structures and replacement with new buildings (particularly in the Northern Axis) is a prominent factor, which has been moderated to an extent by the creation of cultural heritage areas, a range of incentives for private owners, and a moratorium on hotel development.

The State Party has provided a systematic account of the factors affecting the nominated property. Based on this information and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are loss of historic buildings, infrastructure projects and inappropriate urban development; and natural disasters (earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, floods, and land slides). The State Party also considers informal settlements to be a factor affecting the property.

The immediate surroundings of the Kraton to the north and south still remain relatively undisturbed. The Malioboro Street area (Northern Axis) has been developed for tourism, and is made up of shop houses, restaurants, department stores, and hotels. There are high-rise hotel buildings of various styles and dates, most of which can be seen from the road and the Beringharjo Market. There has been some loss of visual integrity in this area through the construction of high-rise buildings.

The ongoing construction of new buildings is a key factor affecting the nominated property. While many are of an appropriate height and scale, there are ongoing instances of loss of historic buildings and inappropriate developments that encroach on or even visually obscure important elements. Examples of the most affected elements are the walls and moat which act as the boundary of the Kraton but are visually hidden by
commercial buildings and houses. Only the gateway and corner fortresses are still visible, which can be used as reference points of the area. Much of this development in the Tamansari Royal Garden Complex occurred following the great earthquake in 1867. The Sultan allowed people who suffered from the incident to move in the area and to build houses inside the walls of the Kraton. All these houses belong to families of court officials and are located in the buffer zone area. The visual integrity of the nominated property is also impacted by smaller elements of the urban area, such as unsympathetic signage and overhead power lines, traffic and pollution.

The implementation of the Integrated Tourism Management Plan (ITMP) will include significant infrastructure projects for improved sewerage and drainage, and moving the power cables underground. These will be subject to heritage impact assessment. In the additional information received in November 2022, the State Party has listed ten currently planned and approved development projects within the nominated property. While some of these are relatively straightforward, others may more directly impact on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, such as the rehabilitation and revitalisation of Beteng Kraton, the restoration of the northern square/Karaton Ngayogyakarta Complex and several adaptive reuse proposals. ICOMOS notes that these are subject to heritage impact assessment and should be forwarded to the World Heritage Centre for review. The State Party acknowledges that training in heritage impact assessment is needed.

Yogyakarta is located in close proximity to the active volcano of Mount Merapi, which had its last major eruption in 2010, which created ash rain and flooding in the city. This part of Java is also well-known to be at high risk for earthquakes. Seven severe earthquakes have occurred there since 1840, two of them followed by tsunami; and especially severe damage occurred to the city in 1867 and 2006. The area is also vulnerable to flooding of the two rivers running alongside the two sides of the urban axis. ICOMOS notes that works to consolidate the river banks have occurred to manage flooding. The Yogyakarta Regional Government has strategies in place for disaster risk preparedness and mitigation, and a number of specific studies are currently being prepared as a basis for a full Disaster Risk Management Plan.

Tourism is a significant factor affecting Yogyakarta. The city is the access point for the famous monuments of Borobudur and Prambanan, and is a tourism centre for accommodation and shopping. High-rise hotels have been constructed in a commercial area to the north of the main access, near the road in the Malioboro area. There are buildings on both sides of the road within the Northern Axis where advertising and other signs have obscured their architectural features.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is generally good, and that factors affecting the nominated property are continuing pressures from urban development, tourism infrastructure development and natural disasters.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The cosmological axis is an exceptional testimony to Javanese civilisation, and is associated with important continuing cultural traditions, works of art and literature.
- The placement of landmark structures along the axis manifests in physical form Javanese philosophical thoughts on the cycle of human life (Sangkan Paraning Dumadi), the ideal harmonious life ('Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana'), the connection between human beings and the creator (Manunggaling Kawula Gusti), and the connections between the micro- and macro-cosmic worlds.
- The axis creates a physical and cosmological link between Mount Merapi (the abode of Guardian Spirits) and the Indian Ocean (home of the Queen of the Southern Sea), symbolised by the forms of the landmarks at each end of the axis.
- The nominated property is closely associated with Javanese intangible cultural heritage practices for marking the cycle of life, venerating ancestors, coronations, funerals, Islamic days, and daily offerings. These practices are the responsibility of the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat through the traditional management system known as Tata Rakiting Wewangunan.

The State Party has specifically identified 144 tangible attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. These are grouped into five clusters or complexes. The State Party has also itemised a number of specific intangible cultural heritage practices that are also attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, including rituals and ceremonies, arts and crafts, performing arts and traditional modes of transportation.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has considered relevant urban areas and traditional palace sites within Indonesia, southeast Asia and other part of Asia. It has examined properties on the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists, as well as several national heritage properties in Indonesia which share some of the values of the nominated property. The compared sites are: Kasepuhan Palace, West Java; Surakarta Hadiningrat Palace, Central Java; Borobudur Temple Compounds (Indonesia, 1991, (i), (ii), (vi)); the Cultural Landscape of Bali Province (Indonesia, 2012, (ii), (iii), (v), (vi)); Complex of Hué Monuments (Viet Nam, 1993, (iv)); Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape (Lao People’s Democratic Republic,
2001, (iii), (iv), (vi)); Monuments, Sites and Cultural Landscape of Chiang Mai (Thailand, (i), (ii), (iii), (vi), Tentative List); Shwedagon Pagoda on Singuttara Hill (Myanmar, (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi), Tentative List); Hiraizumi – Temples, Gardens and Archaeological Sites Representing the Buddhist Pure Land (Japan, 2011, (ii), (vi)); the Central Axis of Beijing (China, (i), (ii), (iv), (vi), (v), Tentative List); Historic Centre of Macao (China, 2005, (ii) (iii), (iv), (v), (vi)); Historic Ensemble of Potala Palace, Lhasa (China, 1994, (i), (iv), (vi)); Jaipur City, Rajasthan, (India, 2019, (ii), (iv), (vi)); Historic City of Ahmadabad (India, 2017, (ii), (v)); Sheikh Safi al-din Khânegâh and Shrine Ensemble in Ardabil (Iran, 2010, (i), (ii), (iv)).

These are compared with the nominated property in terms of whether they are a town planning masterpiece; a representation of the cosmology and concept of government; reflection of the after-life in spatial planning; overlapping systems of belief; symbolic portrayal of the human life cycle; an embodiment of Javanese ideology; and/or a cultural ensemble within a strong town planning framework. The authenticity and integrity of each example has also been included.

ICOMOS considers that the two Javanese examples are the most pertinent for comparison, and that Surakarta is the closest example in terms of Javanese urban planning and cultural cosmologies. It was also built in the 18th century following the division in the Mataram Kingdoms, and there are a number of similar characteristics. The royal courts of Yogyakarta and Surakarta are both considered cradles of Javanese culture. The two cities have a shared history, shared cosmological basis, and similar architectural styles, including the layout of the palace. Both cities are based on a central axis, a basic morphology for shaping urban patterns. The primary differences between them relate to the integrity and authenticity. A catastrophic fire destroyed significant buildings, documents and collections in Surakarta. The State Party’s view is that Yogyakarta was designed more strongly in relation to Javanese-Hindu planning ideals, and can more effectively represent these cultural traditions.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis is sufficient for the purposes of highlighting both similarities and differences between the nominated property and other ancient capitals in the Asian region.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iii) and (vi).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the underlying philosophies are drawn from multiple cultural and spiritual systems of belief including Javanese animism and ancestor worship along with Hindu, Buddhist, and Sufi Islam beliefs, and western influences. All of these were integrated into the beliefs and culture of the Mataram Kingdoms over several centuries. The State Party considers that the nominated property demonstrates these influences through its architecture and town planning and through aspects of the intangible cultural heritage practices.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property demonstrates the influences and interactions between different ideas and beliefs with different origins, reflecting the diversity of exchanges between Mataram Java and other cultures involved in maritime trade. On this basis, ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property bears an exceptional testimony to Javanese civilisation and cultural traditions. These are traced from the 16th century, although the nominated property was developed from the 18th century to the present. The Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat is today the centre for Javanese civilisation which is sustained through cultural practices of governance, law, arts, literature, festivals, ceremonies and rituals. The concept of Tata Rakiting Wewangunan underpins these traditions, and is reflected in aspects of the tangible elements of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property can be understood as an exceptional testimony to Javanese civilisation and living traditions. In addition to creating a tangible expression of Javanese cosmology, the nominated property is associated with Javanese rituals relating to the cycle of life, venerating ancestors, coronations and royal occasions, Islamic days, and connection with the forces of nature. Traditional management through the Tata Rakiting Wewangunan concept is also an element in the ability of the nominated property to demonstrate this criterion. On this basis, ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the living Javenese cultural traditions that are practiced in and demonstrated by the nominated property. These can be traced from the 16th century to the present. Key rituals include life cycle observances, veneration of ancestors, coronations and royal occasions, Islamic days, and connections with the forces of nature and with the cosmology. These are all considered by the State Party to be attributes of the nominated property.
Through the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, the nominated property is associated with the traditions of making of Batik cloth and Keris daggers, as well as the performance of Gamelan music and Wayang puppet theatre. The State Party refers to the inclusion of a number of these art forms in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage). In addition, the literary work 'Babad Diponegoro' has been included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

ICOMOS acknowledges the importance of intangible cultural heritage attributes of the nominated property, although considers that the values they expressed are better reflected in relation to the justification for criterion (iii). ICOMOS considers that criterion (vi) has not been demonstrated.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (ii) and (iii) have been met, but that criterion (vi) has not been demonstrated.

**Integrity and authenticity**

**Integrity**

The integrity of the nominated property rests on the adequacy of the boundary to contain all attributes necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, the intactness of the attributes, and the management of major pressures.

Although various losses and damages have occurred within the nominated property due to inappropriate development, natural disasters and wars, the nominated attributes have generally been maintained in good condition apart from the outer wall of the Kraton which has been impacted by informal settlements. The Tamansari Royal Garden Complex was damaged by the 1867 earthquake and has been left partly unrepaired, other than the pool. Elements in this area are mostly ruins and houses of the descendants of people who were impacted by the earthquake and courtiers. One bastion and portions of the eastern wall to the Kraton were destroyed in an attack by the British in 1812. The State Party has outlined strategies for managing the most significant pressures, particularly the pressures of urban development in the northern section of the axis. A program of relocating informal settlements is also in progress.

ICOMOS notes that the property boundary is tightly drawn around the key attributes, creating a significant reliance on the provisions for the buffer zone to ensure adequate protection. However, the attributes necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are included within the property’s boundaries and intact.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.

**Authenticity**

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of the proposed attributes to convey their value.

The proposed attributes have been in continuing use, and some changes have occurred to their functions and materials over time, such as the introduction of concrete and steel. The attributes of the axis are in their original locations, and many retain their original architectural forms. As noted above, Yogyakarta has been severely damaged by earthquakes and war in the past, with extensive damage to some elements within the nominated property. Repairs have included the introduction of new materials, such as concrete floors. Some structures were reconstructed to the same design, such as the recent reconstruction of the northeast corner fortress to the Palace Complex; others were substantially changed, such as the Art Deco Beringharjo Market, which has otherwise retained its function and location; and still others were left as ruins. Some features of the Kraton have been lost over time.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated property is satisfactory, and that the State Party’s approach to maintenance and conservation are appropriate to sustain its authenticity. Greater care with the use of non-traditional materials is recommended. The traditional management in place is an added support to sustaining the authenticity.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met. The integrity and authenticity of the nominated property are vulnerable and are dependent on careful consideration of materials in the repair and restoration of the proposed attributes, management of development pressures, and on the continuing intangible cultural traditions.

**Boundaries**

The boundary contains the key attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS notes that all the other buildings lining the axis are within the buffer zone. In the additional information received in February 2023, the State Party explained that this is because they are not part of the spiritual corridor that is the focus of the nomination, and that few of these buildings have been identified on any heritage registers. However, strict planning controls apply to these buildings due to their location within the buffer zone.

ICOMOS also observes that the boundary is very tightly drawn for some attributes, increasing their potential vulnerability to development pressures. For example, the boundary for the Beringharjo Market includes only the Art Deco structures and excludes more modern market structures; and some adjacent buildings at the Great Mosque Complex are similarly excluded from the boundary. Within the Kraton, only some elements are delineated, such as the north and south courtyards, walls, corner fortresses, gateways, and the Chariots Museum. Other areas within the Kraton such as the residences of court officials and their descendants are excluded from...
the nominated property boundary and are demarcated as buffer zone.

A buffer zone has been established around and between the selected attributes and is protected within the larger National Cultural Property Area. In both the northern and southern sections of the axis, the buffer zone extends 100-200 metres to the east and west and is delineated on the basis of small roads; and in the central section, the buffer zone extends twenty-five metres from the fortifications, gates and walls.

Following dialogue with ICOMOS about the importance of the rivers to the east and west of the nominated property in terms of the cosmological lay-out of the urban axis, the State Party has revised the maps to more clearly show that the wider setting includes relevant sections of the rivers. These changes are reflected in the revised maps provided in the additional information received in February 2023.

The State Party also confirmed in the additional information received in February 2023 that the establishment of the wider setting corresponds to the area protected under the Governor’s Decree Number 75 of 2017 on Regional Cultural Heritage Areas. This area is also subject to regional and city planning laws, and is managed through the Joint Secretariat for the Management of the Sultanate Strategic Areas which includes various stakeholders and local governments.

In the additional information received in November 2022, the State Party has explained that the rationale for providing a delineation of the wider setting accords with the State Party has explained that the rationale for providing a delineation of the wider setting accords with the implementation of the holistic requirements of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach and takes into account the larger urban heritage of the city. This area contains many sites and buildings of local heritage significance, including vernacular architecture, shophouses, and modern heritage, as well as many intangible heritage elements. The State Party has clarified that these are not considered to be attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, but instead play a role in providing context to the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property boundary and buffer zone are adequate in relation to the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, although they are vulnerable, particularly to urban development pressures. ICOMOS considers that the nominated property boundary and buffer zone are adequate to protect the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, although they could be further extended in future through minor boundary modification requests to enhance the protection of the nominated property from urban development and other pressures.

### 4 Conservation measures and monitoring

#### Documentation

Detailed photographs and drawings were submitted with the nomination dossier. The management plan sets out the requirements for ongoing documentation, recording and information management. The State Party has indicated in November 2022 that the creation of an integrated data system for all the information related to the nominated property and wider setting will be completed in 2024-2025.

In the additional information received in November 2022, the State Party outlined its program of documentation. To date, documentation of 129 buildings has been completed (building data, photographs, sketches, videos and technical conservation studies). Restoration of facades for these buildings will occur in 2023-2025. Further mapping and documentation of the wider setting will be done in 2023-2028.

#### Conservation measures

Most of the attributes are maintained by the Office of the Kraton and the Special Region of Yogyakarta which are under the administration of the Sultan.

Following the 2006 earthquake, a number of conservation projects were initiated to repair the extensive damage. More recently, a number of attributes were restored including Siti Hinggil (restored, 2016); Bangsal Kencana and Gedhong Prabayeksa (repaired, 2017); and Tugu Monument (restored, 2018). These projects involved archaeological and architectural investigations, the use of traditional craftsmanship, and the conduct of rituals and offerings according to Javanese beliefs.

The approaches to conservation appear sound, and use traditional building craft techniques arising from the traditional management system of the Kraton. Several current conservation projects were able to be visited by the ICOMOS mission expert (eg. Royal Chariots Museum). These projects are based on scientific conservation standards, traditional methods and detailed documentation.

#### Monitoring

Monitoring is the responsibility of the Management Unit that has been established for the nominated property. The nomination dossier provides a list of indicators for monitoring, the data source, periodicity and main agencies involved. These are grouped according to the types of...
pressures or factors affecting the nominated property: development pressures, environmental pressures, natural disaster and risk preparedness, and community.

ICOMOS considers that the indicators provided in the nomination dossier are well-planned and are oriented around the identified factors affecting the property, but there are few direct measures of the state of conservation. In the additional information received in November 2022, the State Party agreed that the monitoring indicators could be augmented to better measure the state of conservation, and committed to update them in by April 2023.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring indicators are well planned and suitable for integration into the Periodic Reporting Questionnaire. The monitoring system should be further expanded to include direct indicators of the state of conservation of the proposed attributes, both tangible and intangible.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The nominated property is protected by national and regional laws, as well as traditional management systems. The nominated property is protected by the National Cultural Heritage Law (No. 11 of 2010). Based on this law, the Kraton and surrounding area was designated as a National Cultural Property in 2018. It has also been designated as a Provincial Cultural Heritage Area by the Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. A regional law and guidelines on heritage impact assessment that apply to the nominated property and buffer zones were adopted in 2022.

Legal protection for the buffer zone is provided through the same mechanisms because it is included within the boundaries of the larger National Cultural Property Area.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party has clarified the legal framework that establishes the authority of the Sultanate in managing the culture of Yogyakarta as national cultural heritage. These are the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 13 of 2012 Concerning the Specialty of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Article 5e), the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 11 of 2010 Concerning Cultural Conservations (Article 97.3), and Government Regulation No. 1 of 2022 Concerning National Registers and Conservation of Cultural Conservations (Article 146). In practice, the State Party considers that there is a good coordination between the relevant national and Yogyakarta laws that apply to this nominated property.

Management system

The Sultanate and Provincial Government own all the proposed attributes within the nominated property and are responsible for the supervision and control of conservation, construction, and other activities that may affect the cultural heritage values. A budget has been allocated for supporting the repair, restoration, or correction works based on the master plan. The Sultan, the royal family, and the Office of the Kraton are the responsible persons in these matters in cooperation with the Directorate of Cultural Protection, Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in the supervision of the areas of Yogyakarta and the Bantul Regency. The Royal Court is responsible for the conservation and continuity of all royal traditions.

Decision making at the policy level is the responsibility of the Joint Secretariat for the Management of the Sultanate which is chaired by the Governor (Sultan), and includes all key government agencies as well as the planning section within the Sultanate and the Director of the Office of Culture for Yogyakarta. Management of the nominated property is coordinated by the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta Management Unit which was established in 2021. The Unit has a dedicated staff and budget and is responsible for the implementation of the management plan, including the coordination of the Community Working Groups. The Management Unit has an office in the Northern Axis area.

A Management Plan has been developed with actions proposed for the period 2022-2025. The responsible body is the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The management of the nominated property is informed by the traditional system of 'Tata Rakiting Wewangunan' which guides the care of the Kraton. There is an administrative structure for this called 'Tata Rakiting Papentahan', which is led by the Sultan and royal courtiers.

In the additional information received in November 2022, the State Party provided a detailed overview of its approach to managing urban development pressures. This includes a wide range of strategies including implementation of the Historic Urban Landscape approach in the Detailed City Spatial Plan; development of a Conservation Management Plan for each major element; use of heritage impact assessments; capacity building for the Cultural Heritage Preservation Advisory Council and the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta Management Unit; active engagement with government agencies and local communities; traffic management; tourism carrying capacity studies; and education and training to support conservation. Additional information received in February 2023 further elaborates on the ways in which the State Party is implementing the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach, although ICOMOS considers that this is still highly generalised and requires further development in order to be a useful adjunct to the management of the nominated property.

Heritage impact assessment has been established for Yogyakarta through the Special Region of Yogyakarta's Regulation on Heritage Impact Assessment (2022) which was based on the earlier guideline prepared by ICOMOS. All projects that could impact on the nominated property are subject to heritage impact assessment.
Prior to 2011, the city experienced an increase in hotel developments that have impacted on the inner city of Yogyakarta. In the additional information received in November 2022, the State Party explained that a moratorium on hotel development was formally established by the Mayor of Yogyakarta City. It is valid for one year, but has been extended every year since 2011. The moratorium was implemented following the outcomes of a study that found negative impacts on the city overall from an excess number of hotels.

The Government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta is working to strengthen the moratorium by preparing a caring capacity study and a special regulation that will permanently ban the establishment of high-rise hotels within the nominated property. It is expected that this will occur by 2024. In the interim, the municipal government has guaranteed that the moratorium will be maintained. The mechanism for the moratorium is the provision for the Mayor to make Regulations for the city. The One Stop Integrated Licensing Service Office of Yogyakarta City is able to stop applications for new high-rise hotel establishment permits within the nominated property. The use of existing older buildings for accommodation is permitted. The purpose of the moratorium was to stop the development of high-rise hotels that could impact the axis of the city, especially the northern section. Aside from the direct heritage impacts of such developments, there are also problems with declining ground water due to exploitation by hotel operators, creating fresh water shortages for the local communities.

Visitor management

Yogyakarta is a major tourism destination, receiving 5.68 million visitors in 2018. Provision of hotels and tourism infrastructures are therefore a significant management issue, although the State Party does not expect a significant increase if the nominated property is inscribed on the World Heritage List. Some areas are considered to be more at risk from over-tourism than others (such as the the Kraton and the Tamansari Royal Garden Complex).

An Integrated Tourism Master Plan (ITMP) has been established, together with five-year and twenty-five-year investment plans. Many initiatives to enhance access and visitor amenity are included, as well as improved sewerage and drainage, and moving power cables underground.

A range of initiatives have been taken to support visitor experiences. There are five museums in the nominated property, and information boards have been installed in Indonesian and English. Because traffic congestion is an issue for the city, the Management Unit provides small tourist buses for sightseeing within the town for students and visitors free of charge. Some visitors opt to experience the area from horse drawn carriages.

The interpretation strategy is currently being revised. In the additional information received in November 2022, the State Party provided information about a tourism carrying capacity study conducted in 2022 which includes consideration of carrying capacity from physical, social and infrastructure perspectives.

Community involvement

In 2019, the estimated population within the nominated property was 2,470, and there were 95,819 inhabitants in the buffer zone. Due to the inseparable character of the tangible and intangible aspects of the nominated property, the local communities are considered by the State Party to be critical for transmitting its values. Extensive community consultation has occurred during the preparation of the nomination dossier.

Community-based management working groups have been established since 2020, including forty-five representatives from seven sub-districts/villages. It is anticipated that these working groups will assist the Management Unit in monitoring, tourism initiatives, and with festivals and performances.

There are two types of informal settlements within the nominated property. The first is the settlement provided long ago by the Kraton to palace courtiers and people affected by the 1867 earthquake; and the second are more recent settlements that have grown around parts of the Palace Complex over the past twenty to thirty years due to the growth of the city, encroaching on some areas of the outer walls, gates and fortifications.

The older informal settlements are considered by the State Party to be part of the concept of Manunggaling Kawula Gusti through which the Sultan provides assistance to people in trouble, including during the struggle for Indonesian independence. These people have proof of residence permits issued by the Karaton Ngayogyakarta and are considered to be part of its history.

The more recent settlements are viewed as illegal occupants by the State Party, and because of their location, they are seen as detracting from the integrity and state of conservation of the nominated property. The Sultanate and Government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta wish to recover these areas and have initiated a voluntary relocation program, taking into account the socio-economic needs of the affected communities. The process outlined in the additional information received in February 2023 stresses the voluntary nature of this process and recognises the need to ensure that the rights of disadvantaged communities are safeguarded. The State Party hopes to complete these relocations by 2025, although ICOMOS considers that it could take longer to finalise.

In August 2022 the World Heritage Centre received correspondence from a non-governmental organisation concerning land ownership rights in Yogyakarta, and the Director of the World Heritage Centre wrote to the State Party seeking advice. The State Party provided its response in the additional information received in November 2022, and the list of property ownership provided in the additional information received in
February 2023 confirms that there is no private ownership within the nominated property, although 70% of the land within the buffer zone is private property.

**Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property**

In summary, ICOMOS observes that the legal protection and management system are adequate for the nominated property. Through a moratorium on new hotel development and new policy development, the State Party is actively addressing the pressures of urban development, although continued efforts are needed.

6 Conclusion

This nomination proposes for inscription on the World Heritage List an area within the centre of Yogyakarta of importance in Javanese culture. This six-kilometre alignment of key sites is oriented from north to south aligned to link Mount Merapi and the Indian Ocean with the Kraton (palace) at its centre.

The nominated property is associated with Yogyakarta’s Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat from the 18th century, although its cultural traditions date to much earlier periods. The tangible attributes are linked by continuing cultural traditions overseen by the Sultan according to the traditional management system of Tata Rakiting Wewangunan and embody beliefs about the life cycle and the cosmos in Javanese culture, drawn from diverse religious and cultural influences. ICOMOS considers that the nominated property provides an outstanding testimony of Javanese cultural life.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iii), and the requirements for integrity and authenticity have been adequately addressed. Although there are important intangible heritage attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, the values they are reflecting are more clearly associated with the justification presented for criterion (iii), and ICOMOS considers that criterion (vi) has not been justified. ICOMOS observes that the legal protection and management system are adequate for the nominated property. Through a moratorium on new hotel development and new policy development, the State Party is actively addressing the pressures of urban development, although continued efforts are needed.

A number of past pressures have impacted on the nominated property such as natural disasters, wars and inappropriate urban development. Urban development, natural disasters and tourism infrastructure remain as key factors for the long-term conservation of the nominated property. The State Party has taken actions to address these. Because the boundaries are tightly drawn around the monuments, landmarks and complex walls, the nominated property is dependent on consistent management and protection of the buffer zone, and the State Party might wish to consider extending them in the future through minor boundary modification requests to aid the effectiveness of the management system.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets the requirements for inscription on the World Heritage List, and has provided some additional recommendations to strengthen its resilience and state of conservation.

7 Recommendations

**Recommendations with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks, Indonesia, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iii).

**Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

**Brief synthesis**

The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks include the Kraton (Palace) Complex and a series of linked landmarks, monuments and spaces located along a six-kilometre-long south-north axis in central Yogyakarta. The property is an exceptional testimony to Javanese civilisation and culture, and exhibits an important interchange between diverse belief systems and values.

The orientation of the axis and the placement of the landmarks along its length were designed to manifest in physical form the Javanese philosophical thoughts on human life, especially the cycle of life (Sangkana Paraning Dumadi), ideal harmonious life (Hamemayu Hayuning Bawana), the connection between human beings and the Creator (Manunggaling Kawula Gusti), and the microcosmic and macrocosmic worlds. The landmarks are connected spatially, in their design, through rituals, and by the traditional management system of the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat known as Tata Rakiting Wewangunan. The axis is aligned between Mount Merapi, considered the abode of Guardian Spirits, and the Indian Ocean, regarded as the home of the Queen of the Southern Sea, reflected in the shape and meaning of the northernmost and southernmost monuments that define the axis.

The location of the Kraton and the city were chosen by the Sultan Mangkubumi in 1755 to conform to Javanese cosmological beliefs, where the capital of the Kingdom is considered to be a miniature of the universe following the Hindu-Buddhist concepts of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual universes. These concepts pre-date the property itself, shaped through the history of Java since before the 1st century CE.

The attributes of the property have been identified and include both tangible and intangible aspects. The latter include cultural heritage practices relating to the cycle of
life (birth, marriage and death), venerating ancestors, coronations, funerals, Islamic days, the connection of the natural and macrocosmic microcosmic worlds, and day to day offerings.

Criterion (ii): The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks exhibits an important interchange of human values and ideas between different belief systems related to Javanese animism and ancestor worship, Hinduism and Buddhism from India, Sufi Islam from either India or the Middle East, and Western influences, which were adapted and integrated into the beliefs and culture of the Mataram Kingdoms over hundreds of years. This important and complex interchange of values is demonstrated by the tangible and intangible attributes of the cultural ensemble evident in the property’s spatial planning, architecture and monuments, as well as ceremonies and festivals.

Criterion (iii): The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks bears an exceptional testimony to Javanese civilization and living cultural traditions after the 16th century. The Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat remains the centre for Javanese civilization and its maintenance and development through the cultural traditions and practices including governance, customary law (paugeran), arts, literature, festivals, and ceremonies. The property is associated with Javanese rituals relating to the cycle of life, venerating ancestors, coronations and royal occasions, Islamic days, and connection with the forces of nature. The Tata Rakiting Wewangunan concept has its origins in Mataram Royal courts since the 16th century and refers to the holistic management of the tangible and intangible aspects of the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, including the uses of space along the axis and in the Kraton Complex.

Integrity
The property includes all of the tangible and intangible attributes necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value. Most of the attributes are in a good state of conservation, and actions have been implemented to address continuing pressures including urban development and tourism infrastructure. In the past, damage has occurred through earthquakes, wars and inappropriate urban development, particularly high-rise buildings, including hotels along the Northern Axis. Informal settlements along parts of the Kraton outer walls have also impacted on the condition of the property, and a voluntary scheme to support relocation of the residents has been established.

Authenticity
The authenticity of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the property is satisfactory through their form and design, materials, uses, traditions and management system, location and setting, intangible heritage, and spirit and feeling. Many repairs and modifications have occurred through time, and some reconstructions have occurred in response to damage caused by the 1867 and 2006 earthquakes, and the Beringharjo Market was rebuilt as an Art Deco concrete structure in the 1920s. The approach to maintenance and conservation are appropriate to sustain the authenticity, although greater caution with the use of non-traditional materials is needed. The traditional management in place for this property is an added support to sustaining the authenticity.

Protection and management requirements
The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks is protected at the national level according to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Property. Based on this law, the Ministry of Education and Culture has designated the Kraton and its surrounding area as a National Cultural Property Area (Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 117 of 2018) and as National Cultural Property.

At the regional level, the Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta has designated the property, buffer zone and wider setting as a Provincial Cultural Heritage Area. A heritage impact assessment mechanism has operated at the property since 2012 and has been further strengthened through the regional law and guidelines on heritage impact assessments which was legally adopted in 2022. The Special Provincial Regulation No. 5 of 2019 concerning Spatial Land-use Plan for 2019-2039 provides additional protection for the property, and regulates the height, location, and density of buildings.

The property is also protected through traditional and modern management systems, under the overall coordination of the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta Management Unit. The Management Unit has a dedicated staff and budget and is responsible for the implementation of the Management Plan. The Unit also coordinates all stakeholders including the local Community Working Groups.

The Joint Secretariat for the Management of the Sultanate is chaired by the Governor (the Sultan of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat) and is responsible for the overall strategic management of the property. All key government agencies responsible for the management of the property are included.

The Sultanate of the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat implements the Tata Rakiting Wewangunan traditional management system though an administrative structure called Tata Rakiting Paprentahan. This is led by the Sultan and consists of units run by the Abdi Dalem (Royal Courtiers). The Kraton is managed under this system.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Elaborating in more detail the implementation of the Historic Urban Landscape approach to the management of urban development pressures in Yogyakarta,
b) Augmenting the indicators for monitoring to include direct measures of the state of conservation of the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value,

c) Maintaining the moratorium on hotel development and ensuring its implementation within the buffer zone while completing the carrying capacity studies and creating a special regulation that will permanently prevent high rise development,

d) Continuing to implement the process for voluntary relocation of informal settlements within the property ensuring that the rights and needs of the communities are safeguarded,

e) Considering the possibilities for extending the boundary and buffer zone in some parts of the property in the future through minor boundary modification requests in order to aid the effectiveness of the management of urban development pressures,

f) Continuing the development of a Disaster Risk Management Plan for the property, including training for risk reduction and disaster responses,

g) Implementing the recently finalised heritage impact assessment guidelines, and ensuring that all major urban development, tourism and infrastructure projects that could impact on the property are communicated to the World Heritage Centre in line with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention;
Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (February 2023)
The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh (Islamic Republic of Iran)
No 1690

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh

Location
Guilan Province
Zanjan Province
Ardabil Province
Islamic Republic of Iran

Brief description
Located in northern Iran, in the Alborz Mountains, in the transitional zone between the humid, deciduous broad-leaved Hyrcanian Forests and the arid highlands, The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh is a bowl-shaped area that extends around the historic city of Masouleh. The landscape has been shaped by millennia-long nomadic and then semi-nomadic pastoralism, as well as by ancient mining, smelting and blacksmithing activities. The strategic location of Masouleh along important communication routes, yet protected by the steep terrain, turned the area into a refuge for populations from different regions in the plains and into a trading centre. Two living traditions, the semi-nomadic Taleshi herdsmen and sedentary craftsmen and tradesmen, coexist in the historic city of Masouleh, which features a compact urban and architectural fabric organised in tiers following the curving contours around the bazaar area.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021) paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

Included in the Tentative List
9 August 2007 as “The Historical City of Masouleh”

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

Comments on the natural attributes of this nominated property, their conservation and their management were received from IUCN on 8 December 2022 and have been incorporated into the relevant sections of this report.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 28 September to 4 October 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the description of the nominated property, the maps, the rationale for boundaries of the nominated property and the buffer zone, the comparative analysis, protection and management, and the involvement of local communities.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 6 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the narrative and potential justification for Outstanding Universal Value, the boundaries, the involvement of the local communities and the herding communities.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh is located in northern Iran, on the north-facing slopes of the western part of the Alborz range, in the transitional region between the arid highland ecosystem, featuring thorny shrubs and pastures, and the temperate Hyrcanian ecoregion, characterised by deciduous broad-leaved forests.

The altitude of the nominated property ranges from 400 metres above sea level to the 3,096 metres of Shah Moallem Mountain Peak. This also influences the climate of the nominated property: its western higher slopes are colder, drier and windier, whilst the eastern lower side is warmer, more humid and wetter. The nominated area is shaped by the deep valley of the Masouleh-Roudkhan River, flowing from west to east; it includes in its upper
reaches the Shah Moallem Peak and the slopes of smaller valleys carved by several permanent or seasonal water streams.

The nominated property revolves around the historic town of Masouleh, which is located almost at the centre of the nominated landscape on a steep, south-facing slope.

Until the Ilkhanid period, the economic base of the region was shepherding and mining, practiced by the native population; with the arrival of the Mongols, peoples from Azerbaijan, Ardabil, Zanjan, Khorasan and other regions fled to the Guilan mountains and diversified the ethnic and social base of the area.

The location along trade routes between Azerbaijan and the Guilan province is considered to have made the fortune of Masouleh as a trading and economic hub, especially after the modernisation of the road network during the Safavid period (16th-18th centuries CE).

Masouleh reflects in its urban structure its trade-based economy. The bazaar lies at the centre of the town, surrounded by five neighbourhoods housing residential and public-service functions. The density decreases from the centre towards the outer parts of the town, where livestock sheds, cemeteries and gardens can be found. The built fabric is compact; the network of streets and passageways utilises the steepness of the slopes: houses are interlinked with each other, and rooftops are part of the public spaces and used to move around the town. The built fabric is laid out in tiers following the curving contours; the bazaar includes six levels of singular or double shop rows. Houses in Masouleh may have up to two floors; the ground floor is not used for habitation but for storage and services. They are not inward-looking but outward-looking; windows may vary in size and are usually decorated with intricate wooden frames; doors can be large to allow the passage of large domestic animals and are often finished with an ogival arched frame fronting the upper part of the door. Mosques exhibit almost the same building typology as houses and are integrated into the urban fabric.

Water supply was guaranteed by various sources, which served the different parts of the city through conduits and clay pipes; an advanced sewerage system was developed, exploiting the slope of the terrain.

A relic settlement, Kohneh Masouleh, located some ten kilometres from Masouleh, was discovered in 1995; archaeological investigations have revealed that it was a settlement specialising in blacksmithing, which remained in operation between the 11th and the 14th centuries. The settlement was then abandoned, and the inhabitants likely resettled in the historic town of Masouleh. Different hypotheses exist about the possible reasons for the abandonment of Kohneh Masouleh. The building construction techniques used in Kohneh Masouleh continued to be employed and further developed in Masouleh town.

Blacksmithing and metalwork flourished in Masouleh and remained the economic basis of the central town, at least until the 19th century, along with wool and dairy production. Traces of ore mining, metal extraction and metalwork detected through archaeological surveys suggest that groups of miners and blacksmiths had been active, probably in the Iron Age and subsequent periods. Nowadays, blacksmithing is no longer practiced on a large scale in Masouleh.

The cultural landscape surrounding Masouleh bears witness to widespread usage by semi-nomadic herders, mainly from the Taleshi, Tut (or Taat) and Azeri tribes. In spring, they move their flocks from the wintering places in the plains to semi-permanent settlements in semi-forested middle belts for about a month (June), before moving to the highlands. Due to challenging climatic conditions in the highlands, herders tend to move their flocks constantly between the middle and upper pastures. In autumn, flocks are moved back to the middle belts and then, in November, they go back to the plains.

Herders raise native breeds well suited to the local mountainous environment and climate: Taleshi sheep, goats and cattle. Taleshi sheep are small-sized and appreciated for their long wool fibres, meat and their ability to traverse steep slopes. Taleshi goats, medium-sized with long hair, are kept for their milk. Caspian horses, an ancient and small-sized breed native to the wider Caspian region, are also used for transport during long-distance seasonal journeys.

The social fabric of the nominated cultural landscape is made up of two distinct ethnic groups and lifestyles: permanent residents are essentially based in Masouleh and are engaged in trade and handicrafts, whilst semi-nomadic herders stay in the plains in winter and move to the hills in spring and summer, occupying houses in the outskirts of Masouleh and temporary settlements in the middle-belt pastures during the spring and summer months. They usually spend one month (June) in the middle-belt pastures and then move to the highlands. Building typologies of temporary settlements include small lodges for people, oval-shaped fenced spaces to protect lambs, and fodder-storage areas.

Key products from animal husbandry include meat, milk and wool and added-value products obtained from the transformation of raw materials, such as wool fabrics and garments, and dairy products, particularly cheese. These are sold mostly at the bazaar in Masouleh and cities in the plains, such as Fooman.

The life of herders is permeated by traditional knowledge, beliefs and myths shaped by their way of life. The Talish language, which has been included in the UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger since 2015, is still spoken in the nominated property. However, the area where the Talish language is still spoken extends further into Iran to the south and Azerbaijan to the north.
ICOMOS requested further additional information on the Taleshi people and their ethnic and socio-economic base in the Interim Report.

The State Party has provided an account of the purported origin of the Taleshi, their language, and the geographic distribution of these people, across a region which came to be divided between Russia and Persia. Taleshi people today include mountain dwellers, who carry on a semi-nomadic lifestyle, and those living in the plains, who live on rice cultivation and other complementary farming activities. No clarification is provided, however, on how this distinction has emerged and what are the ties between the Taleshi living in Masouleh and those in other mountainous regions or in the plains themselves.

The nominated property is said to have been well connected via mountain routes with neighbouring civilisations. Archaeological investigations indicate that the region witnessed early human occupation or frequentation, probably since the Palaeolithic. The presence of cemeteries following different burial practices suggests that the region has been inhabited by human groups from different cultures: in the highlands, kurgan-type burials have been discovered, possibly dating from the Iron Age; at lower altitudes, cemeteries dating from the historic and Islamic era have also been found and researched.

The nomination dossier maintains that the Taleshi people who today inhabit the nominated property and the region are descendants of the ancient Cadusii, nomadic herders and warriors, on the implicit grounds that the Taleshi occupy more or less the same area as was attributed to the Cadusii by narrative sources. ICOMOS observes that occupation of the same area at very distantly separated time periods represents a weak indicator for linking these populations.

Archaeological evidence suggests that, in the Iron Age, the region saw the flourishing of ore mining and smelting and the development of an iron ingot trade along ancient trade routes. Mining and blacksmithing seem to have continued and developed well into historic eras to become one of the main economic bases of Masouleh.

Since the mid-19th century onwards, modernisation steps have been undertaken in Masouleh, including the establishment of public services and the development of communication facilities.

The nominated property has an area of 10,449 ha and a buffer zone of 11,802 ha. The boundaries are punctiliously described, but the rationale for their delineation is not clear, nor has it been clarified by the additional information provided by the State Party.

Additional cartographic material for the whole nominated property was requested by ICOMOS, but the provided maps are too small to show the necessary level of detail to be informative about the potential attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested further information about the pastoral traditions practiced in Masouleh. The State Party reported briefly on the Taleshi, the Azeri and the Taat, who, for different reasons, all came to settle in this region, and on how their customs were cross-fertilised by this contact. Apparently, each group occupies a specific area of the nominated property; however, it is not explained whether this distinction is tangibly reflected by the landscape and whether it has generated functional interdependencies between the groups. As all these groups extend well beyond the boundaries of the nominated cultural landscape, none of them is specifically connected only with the nominated property. The importance of cultural interaction between urban dwellers and livestock breeders is stated but not explained.

The description of the nominated property and the additional information provide some information about the features of the historic town of Masouleh, its surrounding landscape, and the different historic phases witnessed by this region. However, all these elements do not provide a clear and cohesive image of the nominated property, its formation and of the attributes supporting its potential outstanding significance.

State of conservation
Documents attest that the first attention to landscape conservation dates back to 1914, when the inhabitants set out measures to prevent the degradation of trees and flora. In 1963, forests, pastures, native shrub, and woodlands were nationalised, and an ad-hoc organisation was created to manage and protect these resources.

Mostly, the management of forests has been carried out according to traditional rural methods due to the steepness of the slopes, the difficult topography and the vulnerability to erosion. Active protection, seeding and replanting continue to be practiced and monitored to regenerate the forest cover and prevent erosion. In the highlands, gabion walls contribute to slowing down erosion.

In 1975, the Historical City of Masouleh was included in the Iranian National Heritage Register. In 1977, the first construction regulations were adopted as protection measures. An earthquake in 1990 led to rock stabilisation and earth consolidation, recovery, repair and conservation measures, with the active involvement of the local communities. Between 1999 and 2003, systematic documentation was carried out for several buildings in Masouleh, which were then listed as individual monuments in the National Heritage Register; emergency conservation was subsequently carried out at many buildings, thereby removing them from the national-in-danger list of monuments. In 2006, Kohneh Masouleh was inscribed in the National Register of Cultural Heritage. In 2011, a technical Memorandum of Understanding was signed, stating that traditional methods should be given priority in restoration within the cultural landscape and historic town of Masouleh, based
on expert assessments and respecting construction regulations.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is overall good and very good for the historic town of Masouleh.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are soil erosion, landslides, earthquakes, floods, fire, and tourism development. Active measures have been implemented to reduce soil erosion and landslides, which can also reduce negative impacts from earthquakes. Measures are identified and planned to prevent fires and to raise awareness and capacity within the local communities and visitors to contribute to protection against this threat.

ICOMOS observes that pressure from tourism is already evident at the nominated property, at least in Masouleh, and it is likely to increase due to the nomination. Whilst mass tourism is unlikely in the short term, serious consideration should be given to address in advance the shortcomings of this recent source of income for the local inhabitants. In the short term, some reorganisation of the parking places, currently in plain view from the town, is recommended to avoid visual disturbance. However, further consideration should be given to ensuring that tourism does not negatively affect the shepherding tradition. A tourism management plan is under preparation; it needs to develop strategies and mechanisms that enable tourism to sustain the herding tradition and local socio-economic processes.

IUCN has noted that pressures on the natural values of the nominated property include encroachment, agriculture, pollution, climate change and desertification, in addition to the above-mentioned natural threats.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property, and particularly of the town of Masouleh, is overall good. Factors affecting the nominated property include landslides and tourism development. Whilst prevention of landslides has been addressed, the potential negative impacts of tourism on the traditional way of life and on the shepherding tradition do not seem to be fully appraised and addressed.

Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh is located in the transitional zone between arid highlands and the Hyrcanian Forests, which constitute important remnants of primary deciduous broad-leaved forests.
- It served as a gateway to this isolated region, which became a refuge for relic plants, animals as well as human groups, who settled in caves and rock shelters from Palaeolithic times onwards.
- The area was home to the Cadusii people, nomadic herdsmen ancestors of the Taleshi people; they made the region an unrivalled example of a pastoral system based on native sheep, goats, and cattle breeds.
- It includes sites demonstrating the early development of early mining and smelting industries that have shaped the economy of the region for millennia.
- The cultural exchanges between the native peoples and Khorasanis and Azeris who fled other, more accessible areas during the Mongol invasion produced the historic town of Masouleh, with a unique urban and architectural layout that utilises the steep slopes on which it has grown up.

ICOMOS observes that the proposed justification for inscription is more like a description of certain aspects of the nominated property than like arguments supporting claims for a possible Outstanding Universal Value to be demonstrated.

The additional information provided in February 2023 suggests a refocus of the narrative around the Masouleh region as a gateway and a refuge in the Alborz Mountains between the coastal plains to the north and the Central Iranian Plateau, and a place for trade with cultural transfer and inter-ethnic exchange. The justification for inscription has been then re-centred around the cultural interchange which would be manifested in the intangible aspects, in the adoption of the Talysh language and, tangibly, in the urban design and architectural pattern of Masouleh which borrows from other regions of Iran but would reach a higher and more sophisticated level. However, the additional information provided does not suggest that the shift in the justification for inscription can be justified.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed on the grounds of the following parameters: eco-geographical conditions, lifestyle and landscape features. It has examined properties located in areas characterised by the Temperate Broadleaf and Mixed Forests biome within Iran and the European region inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The comparative analysis of cultural landscapes in Iran concludes that the nominated property differs from the
other examples regarding cultural traditions, source of livelihood, climatic and geographical conditions, landscape use and structure. The comparison outside Iran has been limited to seven World Heritage cultural landscapes from Europe and could not be considered adequate, because some of the selected comparators are not relevant for the nominated property.

ICOMOS noted that the comparative analysis was too limited and asked the State Party to expand it by deepening the comparison with the selected Iranian cultural landscapes and considering other examples from relevant regions and sub-regions, especially in the Caucasus.

The additional comparative exercise prepared by the State Party, however, is insufficient as it examines only three additional cultural landscapes in the Tentative Lists of Georgia and Azerbaijan, focusing not on the characteristics and development of the landscapes but only on the main settlements.

The limited comparison with two other World Heritage cultural landscapes in Iran, namely The Cultural Landscape of Maymand (2015, (v)) and the Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramat (2021, (iii) and (v)), has unequivocally confirmed their Outstanding Universal Value and their exceptional specificity.

The first is characterised by a “specific regional variation of agro-pastoralism that reflects a dry desert environment, and a three-phase transhumance with farmers moving [rather than cattle] to three defined settlement areas that include fortified cave dwellings.”

The second “is an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition of the semi-nomadic agropastoral way of life of the Hawrami people”, which “is manifested in the ancestral practices of transhumance, seasonal living in Havars, steep-slope terraced agriculture, soil and water management, traditional knowledge for planning and constructing steeply terraced villages, and a rich diversity of intangible heritage, all reflecting a harmonious co-existence with nature.” ICOMOS notes that the urban and built fabric of the village in Hawraman/Uramat presents similarities with Masouleh in the distribution of buildings along the slopes and in the flat roofs.

The additional comparative work has been directed to show the specificity of the cultural landscape of Masouleh. However, it has not succeeded in demonstrating that the nominated landscape stands out among those considered in the additional comparison and would deserve consideration for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

The State Party justifies this criterion on the grounds that the geographical conditions and the historic circumstances have made possible the development of a semi-nomadic culture based on a pastoral transhumance system and mining and smelting activities, further enriched by the contribution of other populations, which has shaped the landscape over millennia with its subsistence practices.

ICOMOS considers that the justification of this criterion is not supported by information in the description section or by the proposed arguments. Although the nomination dossier claims that exchanges of knowledge and intercultural relations developed in the historic city of Masouleh, there is a big gap in the narrative on the Bronze and Iron Age periods and on the later phase related to the Mongol invasion and the arrival of peoples from different regions. Furthermore, details on the exchanges and relations in the various chronological phases are lacking; the reference to ironworking technology from Anatolia and the use of kurgans (a type of burial mound) by Iron Age inhabitants does not suffice to demonstrate this criterion or the exchanges between different peoples in the historic periods. More recent exchanges between the different peoples living in the town and the landscape appear to be rather common and do not seem to testify to the proposed important interchanges reflected by the landscape, the urban structure or the architecture of Masouleh.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

The State Party justifies this criterion on the grounds that The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh bears witness to the evolution of the life of semi-nomadic herders that have inhabited the region since the Palaeolithic to the present day. Tangible and intangible attributes, such as the steep slopes, the transhumance routes, the pastures, permanent and temporary settlements, and traditional knowledge and beliefs, convey the long-lasting semi-nomadic pastoral tradition that has developed since the Cadusii occupied the region.

ICOMOS considers that the claims for the nominated cultural landscape to bear exceptional testimony to a traditional semi-nomadic pastoral way of life lack focus as this lifestyle is reflected by a number of other landscapes, as shown by the comparative analysis and by the several landscapes shaped by nomadic or semi-nomadic animal husbandry. The hint of the link between the Taleshi and the Cadusii is mentioned as a possible indicator of the long-lasting presence of the Taleshi in the region. However, no explanation is provided about whether and

ICOMOS does not consider that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.
how Taleshi culture would be a continuation of, or connected to, the ancient Cadusii. ICOMOS considers that the nomination dossier and the additional information have failed to illustrate the traits of the cultural traditions and how they shaped the nominated property in a way that could be seen as exceptional among its comparators. Furthermore, the area has been more recently occupied also by other groups, such as the Azeri, the Taat as well as the Taleshi, who are spread well beyond the boundaries of the nominated area. Hence, it is difficult to consider the nominated property as the cradle of the Taleshi culture and, if so, it would extend beyond the currently proposed boundaries. According to the additional information provided in February 2023, it seems that the transhumance system between the plains and the highlands has ceased, since, as suggested by the document, the Taleshi of the plains and those of the mountains now form two distinct groups.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

The State Party justifies this criterion on the grounds that The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh illustrates significant stages in the development of human habitation, from cave dwellings, shelters, and settlements, up to a terraced town. The nominated property is said to be an exceptional example of an architectural ensemble utilising steep slopes and locally available resources to create a highly complex and compact settlement, served by advanced infrastructure and exhibiting highly decorated architectural details in a mountainous environment.

ICOMOS observes that the justification for this criterion addresses the landscape and, separately, the historic town of Masouleh. It also does not clarify what could be the significant stages in human history related to the specific context of the nomination.

The part of the justification on the nominated cultural landscape suggests the development of human habitation from cave dwellings and shelters to more permanent settlements and the construction of a terraced town over a millennia-long timeframe. On the one hand, the description suggests but does not elaborate on the shift from a nomadic lifestyle to a semi-nomadic and sedentary one. On the other hand, the justification fails to demonstrate how the nominated property is an outstanding example of a landscape type and more exceptional than other ones where these shifts have occurred.

Concerning the vernacular architecture and townscape of Masouleh in a natural setting, ICOMOS does not consider that Masouleh could be seen as an outstanding example of an architectural and urban ensemble in a mountainous environment. The nomination dossier does not present robust arguments for justifying inscription under this criterion of either the landscape or the town.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

The State Party justifies this criterion on the grounds that the nominated property represents an outstanding example of a cultural landscape shaped by a millennia-long semi-nomadic pastoral system and by early mining and smelting industries, which harnessed the locally available ores and wood sustainably. ICOMOS considers that the justification for this criterion is consistent with its wording but too descriptive and does not explain what culture(s) the local land uses represent and how these characteristics and processes shape an outstanding example of a human settlement. The information provided on the development, evolution and shifts of human interaction with this environment and the uses of its resources has not clarified what culture(s) are reflected by the nominated cultural landscape and how their interaction with the environment could be seen as an outstanding example of traditional land use.

ICOMOS does not consider that any of the cultural criteria have been justified.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The nomination dossier considers that the nominated cultural landscape comprises all elements and attributes that reflect the pastoral lifestyle and the historical blacksmithing and still-living trade traditions. From a functional and visual perspective, the nominated property and the historic town of Masouleh have not experienced serious changes, and the social fabric and intangible aspects of the Taleshi culture are still present and lively.

ICOMOS also notes that several summer pasture places and stretches of migration routes are located in the buffer zone and not in the nominated property. Furthermore, the additional information clarifies that wintering stations are located in the plains, outside the nominated cultural landscape and the buffer zone. A question arises about whether the inclusion of only summer pasture sites could be seen as a complete representation of all processes underlying the semi-nomadic pastoral subsistence system of the Taleshi people. Furthermore, in the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party suggests that the nominated area offered in more recent times refuge to other groups, who settled in the area with their own cultural traditions, shifting the focus from the Taleshi culture.

ICOMOS considers that the justification for the potential inscription on the World Heritage List remains unclear and not supported by the description section or the additional information, which does not convey a cohesive image of the
nominated property and of the reasons for its potential outstanding global significance.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated and the attributes supporting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value cannot be identified, integrity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, cannot be confirmed.

Authenticity
The nomination dossier states that the authenticity of the nominated landscape is very high in terms of form and design, material and substance, usage and functions, location and setting, spirit and feeling, as well as intangible heritage traditions, languages, customs and lifestyle.

Livestock breeding, summer pastures migration and terraced urban fabric and architecture in Masouleh, combined with the continuation of the traditional economic activities and intangible cultural expressions, credibly convey the linkages of the inhabitants with their cultural landscape.

The description section of the nomination dossier, the comparative analysis, the proposed justification for the criteria and the additional information received so far do not provide a cohesive narrative on the nominated property. The focus on what could form the basis for a possible justification for inscription has been shifting between the nomination dossier and the additional information; therefore, ICOMOS considers that it is difficult to understand what attributes can credibly support different justifications for inscription.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated, it is not clear what attributes might credibly support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, therefore authenticity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, cannot be confirmed.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have not been met.

Boundaries
The nomination dossier does not explain the rationale underlying the proposed delineation of the boundaries, apart from the fact that these boundaries correspond to different levels of national protection mechanisms covering the area comprised of the nominated property and the buffer zone.

ICOMOS requested clarification on this point in its letter seeking additional information in October 2022. The State Party has provided only a brief explanation of how the boundaries have been delineated: the nominated property includes the bowl-shaped landscape surrounding the historic town of Masouleh, the prominent natural features, as well as prehistoric and historic relevant sites, pastures and sections of migration routes. The buffer zone has been established to guarantee adequate protection for the nominated landscape and includes mountain ranges, routes reaching the nominated property and sections of protected forest.

Despite this explanation, ICOMOS considers that the rationale for the boundary delineation is not robustly related to the proposed justification for inscription or the distribution of attributes, the latter not having been presented in the nomination dossier. A small-scale map indicating some of these attributes has been prepared upon ICOMOS’ request: it suggests that the boundaries of the pastoral landscape could have been drawn differently to encompass further pastures and transhumance routes.

Since the additional information provided by the State Party in November 2022 was insufficient to understand the rationale for the delineation of the boundaries, further queries were included in the Interim Report. In its reply, the State Party reiterated points put forward in the nomination dossier; the further arguments provided suggest that the rationale is based on the current distribution of communities that are associated or not with Masouleh. The additional information provided in February 2023 confirms that transhumance routes have not been considered in the delineation of the boundaries of the nominated property.

There are estimated to be 993 inhabitants living in the nominated property, whilst, in the buffer zone, only 234 are recorded in the census carried out in 2016. Masouleh is the major residential centre, but there are seven additional settlements housing only a few families permanently.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription
In summary, ICOMOS observes that the focus of the nomination is not clear, as it presents several themes that remain separate from one another and do not seem to coalesce in one consistent narrative that could be tangibly and outstandingly reflected by the nominated property. This lack of focus persists in the additional information provided and seems to have influenced also the delineation of the boundaries, the rationale of which is not clear in relation to the proposed values but seems to be determined by the protection status. The currently provided information and the proposed justification for inscription propose disparate arguments and do not clarify what could be the outstanding universal significance of the nominated property.

The comparative analysis has been built around parameters that are not all relevant to the analysis and have drastically reduced the number of comparators while, at the same time, leaving out key comparators from relevant geo-cultural regions. The additional comparative exercise has been insufficient to prove that the nominated property stands out among its comparators and does not suggest that it can be seen as the best representation of the Taleshi semi-nomadic pastoral tradition, of the
tradition of any of the other ethnic groups living in the area or that their traditions have coalesced into one original tradition that can be reflected tangibly by attributes of the nominated property. Unlike other similar cultural landscapes in Iran that are already inscribed on the World Heritage List and which clearly and undoubtedly demonstrate their outstanding specificity at an international level, the nominated property does not suggest that its heritage values and tangible and intangible features can be seen as exceptional beyond the national threshold.

None of the proposed criteria have been demonstrated and the additional information provided by the State Party does not suggest a potential for a different approach to the nomination of this property. Since the criteria have not been demonstrated, integrity and authenticity as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention have not been met. The boundaries of the nominated property have been drawn with a rationale that does not seem related to the proposed justification for inscription and supporting attributes; in particular, the transhumance routes of the Taleshi and other shepherding groups are not included in the boundaries.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
The archives of the Cultural Landscape Masouleh Heritage Base, under the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage Tourism and Handicrafts (IMCHTH), conserve documentation dating from before 1978 and includes records, photographs and surveys of the buildings in Masouleh; recently, a 3D digital model has been developed of the whole town. Much less documentation seems available on the overall cultural landscape, particularly on the features and heritage resources related to the semi-nomadic pastoral system. Although the nomination dossier and the additional information submitted throughout the evaluation procedure provide some information on the intangible dimensions of the cultural traditions of herders, it is not clear to what extent these are recorded and documented. The most recent maps of the settlements, and movements of the shepherding groups, are mapped only within the nominated property, and are rather schematic and embryonic. Further study would certainly assist in documenting and sustaining these traditions.

Conservation measures
Landscape conservation was initiated in the 1960s and has focused on forest management and reducing soil erosion and landslide vulnerability. To preserve forest cover, other energy sources have been supplied to the communities to reduce tree-cutting for household consumption, thus contributing to the regeneration of forests.

Conservation of natural resources has recently seen more efforts to increase the involvement of local communities through awareness-raising, training and participatory programmes for patrolling.

Conservation measures currently apply essentially to the built heritage in Masouleh. Conservation is planned ahead and implemented based on identified priorities and available financial, technical and human resources. A supply chain for traditional building materials has been set up, with areas earmarked for the controlled sourcing of specific types of wood and the earth needed for the earthen bricks. A conservation manual has been prepared by the Heritage Base and distributed to the residents to support them in the maintenance and repair of their houses. These activities are usually carried out before Nowruz, and such practices have contributed to preserving the built fabric in Masouleh. The Heritage Base also sustains traditional practices by handing out awards to those who best conserve or restore their historic built assets.

Monitoring
Monitoring is carried out both on natural and cultural resources. Indicators concerning environmental parameters have been identified and are monitored through different methods and at different timeframes. Socio-economic aspects are also monitored through questionnaires. Similarly, indicators concerning the cultural aspects of the nominated property have been mentioned in the nomination dossier. Monitoring is the responsibility of the Heritage Base, which cooperates with other organisations based at the township level. The periodical reports on the activities implemented at the site level are prepared quarterly and every six months at the provincial level.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system established by the State Party for the natural and cultural resources of the nominated property is a good basis for developing a monitoring programme. In this regard, ICOMOS notes that indicators for measuring the state of conservation and trends of attributes supporting the significance of the semi-nomadic pastoral system are not clearly set out.

ICOMOS considers that the documentation on the cultural landscape and of the tangible features of the shepherding traditions would need to be expanded, in order to better understand and support them through management actions. Conservation measures for the landscape are focused on reforestation and reduction of soil erosion; more recently these actions have seen the involvement of local communities. The active conservation of the historic town responds to planning and prioritisation; a conservation manual has been distributed among the villagers to support and guide their conservation efforts. Monitoring is carried out by the Heritage Base and seems adequate for the historic town. However, the monitoring of the agro-pastoral system would benefit from further development, based on the outcomes of further research.
5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh was designated in 1975 as an area of national importance. The nationally protected area is said to cover 35,000 ha; hence it is larger than the nominated property and buffer zone. The designation enabled protection under a complex set of laws and regulations concerning cultural heritage and landscape, environmental resources, territorial management, and product protection. Environmental strategies and plans include measures for managing climate change and environmental threats, developing a green economy, water resource management, and strengthening research and environmental awareness. Similarly, the National Strategy Document on Revitalizing, Upgrading, Renovating and Enabling Deteriorated and Underutilized Urban Fabric was adopted in 2012, covering key action areas to support the conservation, rehabilitation and revitalisation of the historic architectural and urban fabric.

The designation as a protected heritage is complemented by protection zones for the historic city of Masouleh (zone A), the site of Kohnneh Masouleh and other ancient and historical sites (zone B), and the natural landscape and all related elements comprising summer pastures and historical routes (zone C). Specific sets of regulations have been established to protect the significance of the heritage included in the different zones and the buffer zone.

The legal framework is complemented by customary laws that regulate how inhabitants are expected to maintain and repair their houses; thus, protection institutions are supported by local inhabitants in fulfilling their tasks.

Key institutions responsible for the implementation of heritage protection and conservation at the national level include the Supreme Council for Environmental Protection, the Higher Council for Architecture and Urban Planning, and the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage Tourism and Handicrafts (IMCHTH), with its network of Heritage Bases, devolved offices of IMCHTH, tasked with the enforcement of the cultural heritage protection legislation, conservation and technical advice in heritage conservation as well as with coordination and cooperation with other governmental entities. Many protection and conservation responsibilities and coordination with other relevant sectors rest with the IMCHTH. Other relevant institutions include the Islamic Councils of City and Village, and Municipalities.

At the nominated property level, relevant institutions include the Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization (FRWO) and its internal and territorial structure, which is responsible for managing the nationally owned lands and natural resources; the Ministry of Jihad Agriculture; and the Cultural Landscape Masouleh Heritage Base. Grazing is regulated through licences as per the Forest Nationalisation Act (1963) and its implementation regulations; they are issued on a seasonal basis and related to the grazing capacity and number of animals that will be using the land plots.

Management system

A cross-sectoral Steering Committee has been established to ensure coordination among the various levels of government and institutions bearing responsibilities over the nominated property. Members of this committee are the Head of the Guilan Provincial Office of the IMCHTH, the director of the Heritage Base, the Mayor of Masouleh, one representative of the Environment Department, one representative of the Waqf, one representative of Fooman, and one representative of FRWO. The Steering Committee is responsible for overarching decision-making about the nominated cultural landscape, and it is supported by a Technical Committee established within the Heritage Base.

Several plans cover the nominated cultural landscape, including the protection plan (1984), the Ajan consulting plan (1997), the Management Plan for the Sustainable Development of rural areas (1999), the Management Plan of Masouleh Forest Park (2000), the “Organizing tourism in Masouleh” plan (2008), the Guilan Province Tourism Planning Strategic Document (2010), and the Master plan of Masouleh City (2016). These plans are reported to contain relevant provisions that support the conservation and sustainable development of Masouleh and its landscape.

Management planning is achieved through long- (ten to fifteen years), medium- (five to ten years) and short-term (zero to five years) programmes (or action plans) which include sets of activities organised according to three main themes: research and documentation; conservation and restoration; tourism management, know-how and education.

State, provincial and municipal budgets sustain the action programmes and consider subsidies for private owners of protected buildings.

The Iranian Government allocates separate budgets for managing World Heritage properties, in addition to ordinary budget streams for maintenance, conservation, and research.

Visitor management

Iran has developed plans and strategic documents to develop tourism at the national, provincial and municipal levels. The Guilan Province Tourism Planning Strategic Document (2010) focuses on the organisation of tourism in Masouleh. In recent years, tourism has grown in Masouleh, essentially in the summer months. Tourism infrastructure seems adequate for the current volume of visitors; hotels exist in the region, and residential houses have been turned into eco-lodges in Masouleh. Information gathered during the mission suggests that about ten percent of the housing stock has been transformed into eco-lodges. Standards for services dictate what houses could be adapted to become guesthouses, and the Heritage Base monitors these transformations to avoid the loss of historic character.

The Guilan Provincial Office of the IMCHTH is developing a tourism strategy, which will be integrated into the management plan once completed and approved by the
Steering Committee. An effort to diversify the offer and the possible activities for visitors has been deployed to expand the tourist season throughout the whole year.

ICOMOS notes that there is much emphasis on tourism development for Masouleh and, although there is an awareness about the need to balance tourism with other economic activities, it is not clear what socio-economic development strategy is being pursued to ensure that tourism does not erode the current socio-economic fabric of the nominated property.

**Community involvement**

Local communities are involved in decision-making in the historic city of Masouleh via the representatives of the neighbourhood boards, among which the city council members are chosen; the council appoints the mayor. The board members should be permanent residents; they are either selected or inherit their position from forebears but need the approval of the inhabitants.

Representatives of herders are included in the Physical Protection Unit and the Technical, Architectural & Fabric Supervision Affairs embedded in the Heritage Base.

According to the additional information provided by the State Party in November 2022, local communities, including herdsmen, have contributed to the development of the nomination dossier by sharing their knowledge about attributes of the cultural landscape, raising awareness about the nomination among the inhabitants, by contributing to the improvement of the appearance of the nominated property, particularly the city of Masouleh.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested clarification on the involvement of the herding communities in the nomination and management planning process. The State Party reiterated the information previously provided and further reported that the local communities of herders have given their consent to the nomination process, for the administrative support offered to sustain the traditional way of life in Masouleh.

ICOMOS observes that the involvement of herders seems to have been limited to providing information for the nomination dossier, rather than being involved in its preparation or in the management planning. IUCN recommends that local communities should be continuously supported in the regeneration of degraded forests and grassland areas and more directly involved in the monitoring, sustainable management, conservation, and decision-making regarding the preservation of natural values for the benefits of local livelihoods.

**Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property**

In summary, ICOMOS observes that the nominated property is protected for its natural significance and the architectural urban significance of Masouleh and archaeological sites, but it is not clear what protection measures are in place to ensure that the traditional semi-nomadic pastoral system continues to thrive. The protection in place seems to be effectively implemented, as attested to by the activities supported in the town of Masouleh. No comprehensive management plan is in place yet, although various sectoral plans are in place, in some cases for several years. ICOMOS notes that there is much emphasis on tourism development for the nominated property and it is not clear what measures will be put in place to ensure that tourism does not erode the cultural traditions, particularly of the herding communities, which would be the most exposed to the impact of this form of economy. Participation in the decision-making of local inhabitants and particularly of the herding communities should be enhanced by including their representatives in the Technical Committee and in envisaging specific actions in the management programme that support their livelihoods.

**6 Conclusion**

The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh extends around the picturesque town of Masouleh, built on the slopes of the hillsides and surrounded by a mountainous landscape, in which people of different ethnic origins practice semi-nomadic pastoralism as well as other sedentary occupations, such as trade, and seem to co-exist peacefully in this landscape.

The focus of the nomination is unclear: it swings between a cultural landscape shaped over millennia by a nomadic, then semi-nomadic pastoral tradition and by a mining and smelting industry of ancient origin, and a historic trading town that has developed along important communication routes since the arrival of refugees from the nearby regions following the western advance of the Seljuks.

Ancient traces of iron smelting and working have been found in the landscape; this activity grew in the Iron Age and became a key economic base for Masouleh, but it gradually declined and lost its economic role. The pastoralism tradition also seems to have changed and it is not clear whether transhumance is still practiced by the Taleshi and other ethnic groups present in the area.

The three narrative threads proposed in the nomination dossier and the additional information remain separate and do not coalesce to form one cohesive picture of the nominated property and of what could be its potential Outstanding Universal Value.

This ambiguity permeates the whole nomination and is reflected also by the unclear delineation of the boundaries, which do not seem related to the proposed justification for inscription and supporting attributes.

The comparative analysis did not succeed in proving that the nominated property stands out among its comparators and was unable to demonstrate that it can be seen as the best representation of the Taleshi semi-nomadic pastoral tradition, of the tradition of any of the other ethnic groups, or that a new original cultural tradition has emerged from
the interchanges among these groups. In fact, they seem to co-exist in separate spaces within the nominated area.

Unlike other similar cultural landscapes in Iran that are already inscribed on the World Heritage List, and which clearly and undoubtedly demonstrate their outstanding specificity at an international level, the nominated property suggests that its heritage values and tangible and intangible features bear exceptional national importance.

None of the proposed criteria have been demonstrated and the additional information provided by the State Party does not support the potential for a different approach to the nomination of this property. Since the criteria have not been demonstrated, integrity and authenticity, as defined in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, have not been demonstrated either.

Protection seems adequate and effective for the urban and architectural value represented by the historic town of Masouleh, and for the archaeological remains at Kohneh Masouleh as well as for the natural values. However, it is not clear how the agro-pastoral semi-nomadic system is protected and sustained. A management system is in place; however herding communities are not involved in the decision-making body. The management system is focused on the urban and architectural heritage, with effective measures and campaigns to carry out maintenance and conservation with the involvement of the locals, and on nature conservation. No management measures seem to have been taken to support the agro-pastoral system, whereas tourism and its development in the nominated area are strongly encouraged. Although tourism can bring economic benefits to the inhabitants of the town of Masouleh, it will be necessary to assess its impacts on the socio-cultural system, particularly that of the herding communities.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh, Islamic Republic of Iran, should not be inscribed on the World Heritage List.
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (November 2022)
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
The Ancient Town of Si Thep

Location
Phetchabun Province
Si Thep District
Thailand

Brief description
The Ancient Town of Si Thep is a serial property of three component parts that represent Dvaravati culture from the 6th to the 10th centuries, and important phases in the history of Southeast Asia. These are a distinctive twin-town site, featuring an Inner and Outer Town surrounded by moats, the massive Khao Klang Nok ancient monument, and the Khao Thamorrat Cave ancient monument. Together these sites represent the architecture, artistic traditions and religious diversity of the Dvaravati Empire that thrived in Central Thailand from the 6th to the 10th centuries, demonstrating the influences from India including Hinduism, and Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. The local adaptation of these traditions resulted in a distinctive artistic tradition known as the Si Thep School of Art which later influenced other civilisations in Southeast Asia.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is serial nomination of three sites.

Included in the Tentative List
11 April 2019

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 12 to 17 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the boundaries, restoration plans, the management system, and planned and approved development projects.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 October 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the importance of the Dvaravati period, the name of the nominated property, Si Thep boundary/buffer zone (component part 001), Khao Klang Nok boundary (component part 002), access to the cave monastery (component part 003), community engagement, Heritage Impact Assessment, Indigenous peoples, the area of the component parts and buffer zones, and the implementation of the management plan.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 23 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
Three component parts associated with the ancient town of Si Thep are nominated as representative of the Dvaravati culture in Central Thailand which thrived from the 6th to 10th centuries.

The human history of this part of Thailand is dated to at least 3,000-4,000 years ago. Religious cultures from India were brought to Si Thep between the 1st and 5th centuries, and both Hinduism and Buddhism were established here during the 5th and 6th centuries, marking the beginning of Dvaravati culture. Si Thep is known as one of the oldest and largest of the ancient Dvaravati towns. The distinctive qualities of Dvaravati sculptures found here have been given the name of Si Thep School of Art, which emerged between the 6th and 8th centuries.

Hindu scriptures and more than 112 significant monasteries for Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism and Hinduism have been discovered at Si Thep. The sculptures and figures demonstrate diverse cultural influences, and some forms are unique within Thailand, such as a sculpture with a Tribhanga body posture and the dwarf stucco figures found at the Khao Klang Nai ancient monument. Excavations at Si Thep have revealed many layers of habitation and ornamentation.
Dvaravati culture began to decline between the 10th and the 11th centuries as Khmer political power grew in lower northeastern and central Thailand. The importance of Si Thep waned following the founding of the Sukhothai Kingdom in 1238, and the town was abandoned in the mid-12th century.

The area of the three component parts totals 866.471 ha, with buffer zones totalling 3,824.148 ha.

Component part 001: the Ancient Town of Si Thep

The Ancient Town of Si Thep is a large archaeological site (474.008 ha). It has a unique twin-town layout with an Inner Town and an Outer Town with shared moats. The Inner Town, known as Muang Nai is round in shape, and the Outer Town, Muang Nok, is oblong shaped. The moats, town walls and gates are evident. Pagoda ruins are located mostly in the Inner Town, and the large Khao Klang Nai monastery is located in the centre of the town. The Inner Town is an Historical Park which has been extensively researched by archaeologists. The Outer Town has not been excavated and is currently used for farming. A small temple in contemporary community use is located within the Inner Town of component part 001, and an annual festival is celebrated at this location.

Component part 002: Khao Klang Nok ancient monument

Khao Klang Nok ancient monument is a smaller site of 10.144 ha. Component parts 001 and 002 share a common buffer zone. This is the largest Dvaravati pagoda in Thailand, square in plan, seventy metres by seventy metres with a large central pagoda on top. Each side is surrounded by smaller subordinating pagodas. These features represent beliefs in the centre of the universe. Dvaravati features have been established through archaeological excavations, including the base structure in the indented corner, the Bua Valai base and the decorative replica Prasats, demonstrating Southern Indian and Central Java influences. This impressive monument represents an important phase within Dvaravati period. There is a symbolic relationship and physical alignment between this monument and the mountain cave (component part 003).

Component part 003: Khao Thamorrat Cave ancient monument

Khao Thamorrat Cave ancient monument is a monastery with Dvaravati sculptures (382.319 ha), located within a sacred mountain, accessible via a steep path. The mountain is undeveloped. This is the only cave monastery in Thailand or Southeast Asia with evidence of Mahayana Buddhism. It is located approximately fifteen kilometres west of the other two component parts and is aligned on the same axis as Khao Klang Nok. The cave contains evidence of Dharmachakra, Bodhisattva and other Buddha statues. The steep path to reach the cave is part of the belief system of local people that worship here. Some sculptures have been removed from the cave and are in the care of the Phra Nakhon National Museum in Bangkok.

The three component parts are set within a landscape of mountains, valleys, forests, settlements and agricultural land. Five farming villages occur in the buffer zone.

State of conservation

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the three component parts is very good. The Inner Town (component part 001) is managed as an Historical Park, and the elements are well-maintained. The Outer Town remains unexcavated, and the current farming activities are not considered to have an impact on the state of conservation. The potential loss of community support could increase the vulnerability for the nominated property.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are natural deterioration and occasional flooding due to extreme weather events.

Few planned developments occur within or near the nominated property. In the additional information received in November 2022, the only development planned in the next five years is the improvement of the gravel road in the Outer Town (component part 001). Planned developments in the buffer zones include removal and reconstruction of the Si Thep Historical Park Office, information centre and service area, and officer houses; and improvement of the road to Khao Klang Nok. All planned developments will be included in the updated management plan in 2023.

Some past factors that have affected the property are acknowledged by the State Party, including past unlawful excavations. ICOMOS notes that there is an oil drilling rig located in the vicinity of component parts 001 and 002. The State Party has indicated that this project has been cancelled. ICOMOS requested additional information about whether this could be resumed in the future and the potential impacts it could have on the nominated component parts, and whether oil drilling is strictly prohibited in the nominated component parts and buffer zones.

There is a sugar mill located to the west of the buffer zone for component parts 001 and 002 that has created local pollution problems. An Environmental Impact Monitoring Committee has been established and an Environmental Impact Assessment was done. Improvements to the emissions control by the sugar mill have been implemented.

The Pa Sak River Valley Development Project was completed in 2005 and has the potential to have a significant impact on water systems in the nominated property through depletion of ground water levels and ground stability. ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system must account for these potential risks.
The nominated property is periodically affected by flooding, including a serious flooding event in September 2021. The State Party has monitoring and mitigation systems in place in relation to flooding, as well as some safeguarding measures in relation to seismic risk.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is good. Unlawful excavations and past and cancelled development pressures have posed threats to the property. There are few factors affecting the nominated property at present, although it is vulnerable to climate impacts, extreme weather events and the potential loss of community support. ICOMOS recommends that the impacts of changes in ground water levels be regularly monitored.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The nominated property demonstrates the important characteristics of Dvaravati settlement, art, architecture and culture.
- The lay-out of the ancient town is intact and distinctive.
- The nominated property contains more than 112 monasteries and Hindu sculptures from the 6th to the 8th centuries. Of particular note are the figures in the standing Tribhanga posture that depict bodily movement.
- The Khao Klang Nok ancient monument is the largest monument of Dvaravati art in Thailand, with a number of unique features.
- Khao Thamorrat Cave is the only cave monastery in Southeast Asia that demonstrates shared beliefs in Mahayana Buddhism and is a sacred natural mountain.
- The artistic elements convey distinctive cosmological beliefs which are both distinctive and drawn from other Southeast Asian cultures.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information provided by the State Party, the key attributes of the nominated property are the archaeological and artistic features and materials associated with the Dvaravati periods.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed in response to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The State Party has considered other Dvaravati sites in Thailand. Six sites within Thailand that contain Dvaravati art were selected for comparison: U Thong (Suphan Buri Province), Nakhon Pathom (Nakhon Pathom Province), Khu Bua (Ratchaburi Province), Lopburi (Lopburi Province), Sri Mahosot (Prachin Buri Province) and Sema (Nakhon Ratchasima Province). The conclusion of this analysis is that, although these other sites have important features that demonstrate Dvaravati town design and arts, Si Thep is the most complete ancient town with walls and moats in good condition, as well as its distinctive twin-town layout which is not found elsewhere. Dvaravati art at Si Thep was influenced by Indian traditions, but was further developed into a distinctive artistic style, called the Si Thep School of Art that is not found elsewhere, but later influenced other cultures in Thailand.

The State Party also selected properties from the World Heritage List that demonstrate several relevant characteristics such as ancient towns from a similar period located on ancient routes between India and China, sites influenced by Indian culture, and Hindu and Buddhist monasteries from similar periods. Five World Heritage properties were selected: Pyu Ancient Cities (Myanmar, (ii), (iii), (iv), 2014), Temple Zone of Sambor Prei Kuk, Archaeological Site of Ancient Ishanapura (Cambodia, (ii), (iii), (vi), 2017), Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape (Laos People’s Democratic Republic, (ii), (iv), (vi), 2001), My Son Sanctuary (Viet Nam, (ii), (iii), 1999), and Borobudur Temple Compounds (Indonesia, (i), (ii), (vi), 1991). A discussion comparing various attributes between each of these and Si Thep has been provided. The analysis concludes that Si Thep is distinctive because of the diversity of religious beliefs demonstrated in the town plan, and the design of key monuments, sculptures and artefacts.

The comparative analysis also considers several sacred mountains, including: the Hindu sacred mountain, Mount Kailash, and the sacred Buddhist mountain, Mount Wutai (China, (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi), 2009). While other sites could be considered, ICOMOS does not consider it useful to separate the component parts for the purposes of the comparative analysis in this manner.

ICOMOS considers that the most relevant comparisons have been made by the State Party, although there are several Cambodian properties in the World Heritage List and Tentative List that could be included to ensure completeness, including: Angkor (Cambodia, (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), 1992); and the properties of Koh Ker: Archeological site of Ancient Lingapura Or Chok Gargyar; Phnom Kulen: Archaeological Site/Ancient Site of Mahendraparvata; and The Site of Angkor Borei and Phnom Da which currently are on the Tentative List. However, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis is sufficient to justify the consideration of this property for inscription in the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.
Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii) and (iii).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property demonstrates interactions between Dvaravati and Indian cultures between the 6th and the 10th centuries. Through these interactions, the town developed a distinctive identity expressed in its artistic and architectural traditions. These subsequently influenced the art and architecture of other areas within Thailand. Together, the nominated component parts represent different belief communities within Dvaravati culture, including Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism and Hinduism.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property demonstrates the important interchanges of cultural and religious traditions that originated in India and were adapted by the Dvaravati Empire. The cohabitation of Buddhist and Hindu beliefs is a distinctive characteristic of Dvaravati architecture, town planning and art, and these are demonstrated by the nominated component parts. ICOMOS also acknowledges that the artistic traditions of Si Thep had an influence on other parts of Southeast Asia (including the later centres of Lopburi and Ayutthaya). The justification of criterion (ii) could be further deepened through research to demonstrate how the layout of the Dvaravati town and structures were specifically influenced by Buddhist/Hindu cosmologies. However, ICOMOS considers that this criterion is sufficiently demonstrated at this stage.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property bears an exceptional testimony to Dvaravati culture and civilisation which flourished in this location until the 10th century. Known at the time as the Dvaravati Empire, the architectural and artistic forms of Si Thep are not found elsewhere.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property portrays the Dvaravati culture that flourished in Central Thailand between the 6th and the 10th centuries and represents its artistic and cultural complexity in terms of urban planning, religious architecture and monasticism. Additional research could further elaborate the characteristics of the Dvaravati culture and civilisation, demonstrating the ways in which the surviving physical characteristics reflect different phases of the rise and decline of the Dvaravati Empire during this period. However, ICOMOS considers that this criterion is sufficiently demonstrated at this stage.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iii).

Integrity and authenticity
Integrity
The integrity of the nominated property is based on the rationale for the serial approach, the need for the nominated component parts to contain all the attributes necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, the intactness of the attributes and the management of major pressures on their conservation.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified and that the property presents a comprehensive understanding of the layout, planning, water infrastructure, various layers of inhabitation and evidence of the Dvaravati city and associated monuments. ICOMOS observes that there is minimal development pressure. There is a current road that facilitates movement within the Inner Town (component part 001) and local access to an actively used temple/shrine; and the Outer Town is used for farming. These current uses do not represent threats to the integrity of this component part.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series as well as the integrity of each of the component parts have been demonstrated, although this could be further strengthened through a future extension to the boundary of component part 002 to fully encompass elements of the monument.

Authenticity
The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of the attributes to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole series as well as the authenticity of each of the component parts have been demonstrated. The Dvaravati town and associated monuments are archaeological sites that are intact and legible. Repairs and other conservation interventions have been sensitively completed, and any new materials (such as replicas created for interpretative purposes) are clearly indicated as such.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met.

Boundaries
There are no inhabitants inside the boundaries of the component part, and nearly 10,000 inhabitants living in the five villages in the buffer zones (2020 figures).

The State Party has explained that the boundaries of the component parts align with their designation as ancient monuments within the national legal framework. In the additional information received in February 2023, the State Party confirmed that the boundary of component part 001
is more tightly drawn around the moat than the legal designation because the extent of the Dvaravati mounds and moat is considered to provide a stronger rationale for the town. ICOMOS concurs with this judgement but has concerns about the potential for confusion about the extent of the component part for local communities. The boundary of component part 001 is otherwise clearly delineated. It is marked by concrete posts and contains the two ancient towns and their features.

The boundary of component part 002 is based on the extent of the monument that is legally protected but does not correspond to existing land parcels, and important elements of the monument have been identified on private land located beyond the current square-shaped boundary. Mapping by the Fine Arts Department suggests a larger future extent, which depends on additional land acquisition. The process for land acquisition was outlined by the State Party in the additional information received in February 2023, and the Fine Arts Department has submitted the relevant budget proposal for the fiscal year of 2024. ICOMOS acknowledges the importance of taking the time needed to carefully negotiate and implement these changes. At this stage, the boundary is considered adequate for the protection of the monument and it should be extended through the procedure of minor boundary modification in future once the land acquisition can be successfully negotiated with the surrounding private owners.

The boundary of component part 003 is drawn around the base of the mountain. The pathway leading to the mountain traverses the buffer zone and the wider setting.

Delineation of the buffer zones has taken into account various natural boundaries (such as waterways) as well as existing roads. ICOMOS notes that there are some elements associated with the Dvaravati history of Si Thep located in the buffer zone for component parts 001 and 002, including water structures and a monastery. Implementation of the legal protection and management systems will need to ensure that these features are protected. ICOMOS notes that the delineation of the buffer zone on its northern edge is based on a road alignment that passes through a village. The additional information provided by the State Party in February 2023 has satisfactorily explained the rationale for this delineation.

A distance of approximately ten kilometres separates the two buffer zones. This area contributes to the significance of the wider setting of the nominated property, including the visual links and alignment between component parts 002 and 003, and the pathway to reach the steep climb to the cave site in component part 003. The current designation of this land for environmental protection is therefore an important contributor to the integrity of the nominated property and should be maintained.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property are clearly delineated and contain all the features necessary to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. As part of the ongoing engagement with local communities, it is recommended that the boundaries of the component parts and their buffer zones are clearly explained. A future extension of the boundary of component part 002 once the needed land acquisition has been completed is recommended through the procedure of minor boundary modification as a means of further strengthening the integrity of the nominated property.

### Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for inscription on the World Heritage List, and that criteria (ii) and (iii) have been met. The conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been demonstrated. The boundaries of the component parts and buffer zones are considered to be adequate, although a future extension to the boundary of component part 002 through the procedure of minor boundary modification is recommended following consultations with neighbouring landowners regarding the acquisition of land with important elements associated with the monument.

### 4 Conservation measures and monitoring

#### Documentation

Detailed baseline documentation is an essential element of the management, conservation, monitoring and protection of World Heritage properties. In addition to the drawings and photographs presented with the nomination dossier, the State Party provided documentation examples in the additional information received in November 2022. The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission observed that there is a detailed inventory for each of the elements and structures within the nominated property (including drawings, models and sketches), but that more efficient means of storing, archiving and retrieving this data is needed.

The management plan aims to build a complete knowledge base for the nominated property, and various databases are envisaged.

#### Conservation measures

Research at Si Thep was first published at the beginning of the 20th century, and the designation of Si Thep as a national ancient monument occurred in 1935-1937. Conservation of the sites has been undertaken by the Fine Arts Department for the decades since the establishment of the Si Thep Historical Park in 1984, and includes site surveys, archaeological excavations, repair and stabilisation of structures (including anastylosis). Some materials were removed from the Khao Thamorrat Cave ancient monument and are held and exhibited by the Phra Nakhon National Museum in Bangkok. Conservation decisions are guided by the principles established by ICOMOS Thailand.

The Dvaravati features of the three component parts are well-maintained and systems are in place for regular maintenance, repointing, removal of invasive vegetation,
replacement of dislodged fabric, repairs using historic bricks and stones, and interventions such as metal ties or straps to ensure structural stability. These works are undertaken by skilled and experienced practitioners.

The State Party has advised that there are intentions for conservation and presentation of a number of excavated features. In the additional information received in November 2022, the State Party explained that six archaeological excavations were initiated in 2022, and that associated works are planned in 2023, including temporary roofing, detailed ground laser survey to make a 3D model, and preparation of detailed plans for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, following the standards established by the Fine Arts Department.

The State Party has long-term plans to install Buddha and Bodhisattva replicas in Khao Thamorrat Cave ancient monument, for the restoration of the original irrigation systems of the town, and additional archaeological research in partnership with universities.

**Monitoring**

The nomination dossier set out a monitoring plan for the nominated property, including the key indicators that will be used and the storage of records. An explanation of how monitoring is conducted, particularly in relation to construction and development projects, management of weeds and natural vegetation, riverbank erosion, industrial waste and pollution and natural hazards, was provided in the additional information received in November 2022.

ICOMOS considers that the indicators are usefully oriented toward the identified factors and processes that could affect the property, but that there are few direct measures of trends in the state of conservation over time.

**Management system**

The three component parts are in government ownership. For component part 001, the Fine Arts Department (Ministry of Culture) and the Treasury Department (Ministry of Finance) are the custodians. Areas around component part 003 are under the custodianship of the Royal Forest Department (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment) and the Agricultural Land Reform Office (Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives), and the cave site is under the custodianship of the Fine Arts Department. Component part 002 is surrounded by privately-owned land, and the Fine Arts Department is currently negotiating further land acquisitions.

The day-to-day management of the nominated property is the responsibility of the Si Thep Historical Park Office, which has eighty-two employees. The functions of the Office are organised according to archaeological, academic and educational services; ancient monument conservation; administration and finance; maintenance, cleaning and landscaping; and security. The Si Thep Historical Park Office is further supported by the professional expertise of the Fine Arts Department and of the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP).

ONEP is responsible for the preparation of the management plan. The draft Management Plan for the Conservation and Development of the Ancient Town of Si Thep 2020-2022 was submitted as part of the nomination dossier. It identifies seven priority areas: Academic studies and research support; Archaeology and conservation of ancient monuments; Land utilisation; Public utility and public facilities development; Promotion of learning, tourism and public relations; Community engagement; Natural disaster risk management. Detailed programs have been

Activities within 2,000 metres of the ancient monuments are restricted and there are height controls on new buildings.

The buffer zones are protected through the implementation of several national laws including the National Reserved Forest Act, B.E.2507 (1964), the Agricultural Land Reform Act, B.E.2518 (1975) and the Ministerial Regulation regarding the Enforcement of Unitary Town Plan of Phetchabun Province, B.E.2560 (2017). A Memorandum of Understanding on cultural heritage preservation of the ancient town of Si Thep has been agreed by the government agencies implementing these laws.

The wider setting of the three component parts is considered important, especially given the symbolic connection and physical alignment between component parts 002 and 003. This area currently includes a transport route, the Khok Sa-ard Sub-district Municipality, waterways and small hills. The laws applying to the buffer zone also apply to this wider setting, and its visual integrity is not considered to be vulnerable.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection for the nominated property is adequate and well-coordinated.

**5 Protection and management**

**Legal protection**

The nominated component parts have been registered as ancient monuments in accordance with the Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums, B.E.2504 (1961), and the Amended Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums (Issue No.2), B.E.2535 (1992). For component part 003, only the cave site is protected through this mechanism. The remaining area within the boundary of the component part is protected by the National Reserved Forest Act, B.E.2507 (1964). These designations ensure the legal protection of the component parts at the national level.
developed for each of these areas. The programming outlined in the management plan covers the period 2020-2022, and the updated status of the actions was provided in the additional information received in November 2022, and an updated timeframe and process for finalising the draft management plan was provided in the additional information received in February 2023. According to this timeline, the draft management plan will be finalised in December 2023. A draft archaeological research plan was also provided in the additional information received in February 2023.

ICOMOS considers that some aspects of the planned work are key parts of the management system, such as fully developed plans for risk management and sustainable tourism. In addition, there are no formal processes for Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in the management system at present. In the additional information received in February 2023, the State Party acknowledges this gap, indicating that the recently released Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context will be reviewed in consultation with ICOMOS Thailand. ICOMOS recommends that formal processes for HIA be developed and implemented to assist future development processes, including the relocation of the visitor centre and museum.

Visitor management
The three component parts pose different levels of access and readiness for increased visitation. Component part 001 has an existing visitor centre/museum within the Inner Town and other visitor facilities. There are future plans to establish a museum within the buffer zone. On-site interpretation is provided by the staff of the Si Thep Historical Park.

Component part 002 has a temporary visitor centre and a plan for more extensive visitation and visitor facilities has been prepared. However, implementation of this proposal will require community agreement and the acquisition of privately-owned land.

In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party confirmed that there are no plans for visitation to component part 003 beyond the current community access, although some safety improvements to the access path could be envisaged.

The Phetchabun Tourism and Sports Centre received approximately two million tourists annually (including about 25,000 international visitors) prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Phetchabun Province plans to promote visitation to Si Thep by connecting it with other World Heritage properties in Thailand and Laos.

While a section of the draft management plan that addresses tourism and visitation to Si Thep has been included in tourism planning at the national level (2017-2021), ICOMOS considers that a structured engagement with the tourism industry does not seem in place at present. Work toward a deepened strategy for tourism should also address traffic and transport/circulation within and between component parts 001 and 002; the possible need for visitor accommodation in the wider area; other infrastructure implications of increased visitation; monitoring of safety issues; and community benefits from tourism.

ICOMOS considers that visitation to component parts 001 and 002 of the nominated property are currently well managed.

Community involvement
Communities with direct interests and associations with the nominated property include villagers living in the buffer zone of component part 001 and the wider setting, landless farmers from the Si Thep Noi village that use the land within the Outer Town (component part 001), neighbouring landowners (component part 002), and people with spiritual associations and ongoing ritual practices associated within the nominated areas.

The State Party consulted with these communities in the preparation of the nomination, and there appears to be strong community support for the nomination.

As noted, ICOMOS has observed some potential confusion concerning the boundary of component part 001 in relation to the adjacent village, and there are potentially sensitive issues for the landless farming community about future archaeological research of the Outer Town (which will displace the livelihoods of 288 people). There are other issues concerning the rights of neighbouring landowners in relation to the future extension of the boundary to component part 002. Component part 003 is used by local people for spiritual practices, and it was communicated to ICOMOS that communities would not support any future plans to provide access to it by other visitors.

ICOMOS notes that the State Party is aware of the community issues, and that strategies and actions for community engagement are included in the draft management plan. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreed by the government agencies will support the participation of local communities in the protection and presentation of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that community involvement is a primary issue for the effective future management of the nominated property and recommends that the strategies outlined in the draft management plan for ensuring community involvement are pursued as a high priority. Local communities could be involved in the daily management of the nominated property and current and future tourism plans. ICOMOS also considers that the actions identified in the draft management plan could be further enhanced to include community representation in the management structures.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection and management of the nominated property are in place, and sufficiently resourced. The draft management plan contains an effective framework for action, including the
needed engagement with local communities. It should be finalised in priority.

6 Conclusion

The Ancient Town of Si Thep represents the Dvaravati culture from the 6th to the 10th centuries, which is an important phase in the history of Southeast Asia. Together, the site of the Ancient Town of Si Thep, the Khao Klang Nok ancient monument, and the Khao Thamorrat Cave ancient monument represent Dvaravati architecture and artistic traditions, demonstrating influences from Hinduism and Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iii), and has made some recommendations about several areas of continuing research that will assist with the further understanding of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, such as research on how the interplay of Hindu and Buddhist influences have shaped the lay-out and architecture of the ancient town. The requirements for authenticity and integrity are satisfied, although it is recommended to extend the boundary of component part 002 through the procedure of minor boundary modification to further enhance the integrity of the serial property. Several recommendations have been suggested to further strengthen the management of the property, including the primary importance of community engagement.

ICOMOS suggests reconsideration of the name of the nominated property to better reflect the significance of the three component parts and to highlight the Dvaravati culture, although the State Party has indicated its preference to retain the original name of the property.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that The Ancient Town of Si Thep, Thailand, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iii).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Ancient Town of Si Thep is a serial property of three component parts that represent Dvaravati culture from the 6th to the 10th centuries, an important phase in the history of Southeast Asia. The component parts are the unique twin-town lay-out of the Ancient Town of Si Thep (component part 001), featuring Muang Nai (Inner Town) and Muang Nok (Outer Town) surrounded by moats; Khao Klang Nok ancient monument (component part 002), the largest surviving Dvaravati monument; and, the Khao Thamorrat Cave ancient monument (component part 003), a unique Mahayana Buddhist cave monastery that contains important examples of Dvaravati art and sculpture.

More than 112 significant monastery sites have been identified at Si Thep, and the local adaptation of Hindu artistic traditions resulted in a distinctive artistic tradition known as the Si Thep School of Art which later influenced other civilisations in Southeast Asia. The round-relief sculpture without a back-support arch in the standing Tribhanga posture, depicting body movement, is especially distinctive.

Together these sites represent the architecture, artistic traditions and religious diversity of the Dvaravati Empire that thrived in Central Thailand from the 6th to the 10th centuries, demonstrating the influences from India including Hinduism, and Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

Criterion (ii): The Ancient Town of Si Thep demonstrates important interchanges of cultural and religious traditions that originated in India and were adapted by the Dvaravati Empire between the 6th and 10th centuries. Through these interactions, the town developed a distinctive identity expressed in its artistic and architectural traditions. The Si Thep School of Art subsequently influenced the art and architecture of other areas in Thailand. The cohabitation of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism and Hinduism is a distinctive characteristic of Dvaravati architecture, town planning and art, and these are demonstrated by the three component parts.

Criterion (iii): The Ancient Town of Si Thep, the Khao Klang Nok ancient monument and the Khao Thamorrat Cave ancient monument bear an exceptional testimony to the Dvaravati culture and civilisation. Together, these sites demonstrate the complexity and the specific artistic and cultural characteristics of the Dvaravati period in terms of urban planning, religious architecture, and monasticism. The architectural and artistic forms of Si Thep are not found elsewhere, particularly the unique twin-town lay-out, and distinctive Dvaravati forms of sculpture such as the standing Tribhanga posture depicting body movement. The Khao Klang Nok ancient monument is the largest monument of Dvaravati art, influenced by South Indian and Indonesian artistic traditions; and the Khao Thamorrat Cave ancient monument is located in a sacred mountain and the only known cave monastery in Mahayana Buddhism in Southeast Asia.

Integrity

The three component parts contain all the attributes necessary to convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. The serial approach is justified, and the property presents a comprehensive understanding of the layout, planning, water infrastructure, various layers of inhabitation and evidence of the Dvaravati city and associated monuments. The attributes of the serial property have a good state of conservation and there are few pressures impacting on the sites and their wider setting.

Authenticity

The authenticity of The Ancient Town of Si Thep is demonstrated by the richness of its archaeological
Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Finalising as a priority the Management Plan for the Conservation and Development of the Ancient Town of Si Thep, including fully developed plans for risk management and sustainable tourism, the archaeological research strategy, and more detailed policies and actions for each of the three component parts,

b) Implementing, as a high priority, co-designed strategies for community engagement which are inclusive, transparent, ongoing, and well-resourced, and ensuring that the boundaries of the component parts are clearly explained to the local communities,

c) Continuing the negotiations with private landowners regarding the future extension to the boundary of component part 002 to incorporate all key elements of the monument through the procedure of minor boundary modification,

d) Enhancing the documentation of the attributes of the property using a digital platform that could facilitate more efficient means of storing and retrieving data,

e) Implementing planned research to more fully understand the layout and history of the property, particularly in relation to the non-invasive archaeological exploration of the Outer Town (component part 001), and research to determine the full extent and spatial layout of component part 002,

f) Establishing future research projects to deepen the understanding of how Buddhist and Hindu traditions have influenced the residential patterns, street alignments, location of official buildings in the town, as well as a stronger sense of how the attributes demonstrate the founding, rise, and decline of the Dvaravati period,

g) Enhancing the monitoring system by introducing measures of the state of the conservation of the attributes, ensuring that the impacts of changes in ground water levels on the attributes of Si Thep are regularly monitored, and adapting the monitoring system for easy integration of the outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire,

h) Developing formal processes for Heritage Impact Assessment utilising the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context prepared by the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre,

i) Ensuring that all new developments, including the plans for a visitor centre for component part 002, and a future museum in the buffer zone of component parts 001 and 002 are the subject of a full Heritage Impact Assessment,

j) Ensuring that new oil drilling projects are strictly prohibited in the property and its buffer zones, and in the wider setting, particularly the area that lies between the buffer zones,

k) Ensuring that the future uses and developments within the wider setting take into account the symbolic connection and physical alignment between component parts 002 and 003,

l) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session;
ICOMOS further recommends that the name of the property be changed to: The Ancient Town of Si Thep and its Associated Dvaravati Monuments.
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
III  Cultural properties

A  Africa
   Extension

B  Arab States
   New nominations

C  Asia – Pacific
   New nominations

D  Europe – North America
   New nominations
   Extension
   Nomination deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

E  Latin America and the Caribbean
   New nomination
The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and “Köç Yolu” Transhumance Route
(Azerbaijan)
No 1696

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and “Köç Yolu” Transhumance Route

Location
Guba District, Gusar District, Shamakhi District, Gobustan District, Absheron District, and Hajigabul District Azerbaijan

Brief description
The nominated property is a continuing cultural landscape comprised of the high-mountain Khinalig village in the Guba District of northern Azerbaijan, high-altitude summer pastures and agricultural terraces in the Greater Caucasus Mountains, winter pastures in the lowland plains in central Azerbaijan, and the connecting 200-kilometre-long seasonal transhumance route called Köç Yolu (“Migration Route”). The village of Khinalig is home to the semi-nomadic Khinalig people, whose culture and lifestyle are defined by the seasonal vertical migration between summer and winter pastures, and who retain the ancient way of long-distance vertical transhumance. The organically evolved network of ancient routes, land-use features, temporary pastures and camping sites, irrigation systems, springs and wells, mausoleums, mosques, cemeteries, bridges, and infrastructure for animal husbandry illustrate a sustainable eco-social system adapted to extreme and diverse environmental conditions that has served to build and retain transhumance as the dominant economy.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021), paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

Included in the Tentative List
15 June 2020 as “Khinalig – medieval mountainous village”

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

Comments on the natural attributes of this nominated property, their conservation, and their management were received from IUCN on 8 December 2022 and have been incorporated into relevant sections of this report.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 21 to 29 August 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the description of the nominated property, comparative analysis, factors affecting the nominated property, protection, and management.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 7 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report, including the comparative analysis, documentation, boundaries, management, legal protection, and conservation.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The nominated property is a continuing cultural landscape associated with the semi-nomadic Khinalig people. It embraces three key areas: the mountain village of Khinalig and high-altitude summer pastures (yaylaqs) in the Greater Caucasus Mountains; winter pastures (qishlaqs) in the lowland plains of central Azerbaijan; and the connecting transhumance route, called Köç Yolu (“Migration Route”).

The culture, language, belief system, and lifestyle of the Khinalig people are closely tied to and defined by their living environment. This is manifested through their deeply embedded local transhumant customs and traditions, their
micro-toponyms and division of pastures, and their profound knowledge of natural resources.

Animal husbandry has historically been the main economic activity of the Khinaliq people. The traditional model of Khinaliq transhumance involves four to six families forming a small production unit and together herding their flocks within the defined borders of ancestral pasture plots. Summer pastures (yaylaqs) occupy 8,783 hectares of alpine and subalpine meadows, in addition to communal pastures surrounding the village of Khinalig. When at these pastures, the shepherds and their families live in temporary tents (alaçaq) organised around an animal resting area (arxaq) at the core of each pasture. The winter pastures occupy more than 22,000 hectares across the districts of Hajigabul and Absheron in central Azerbaijan. Here, the shepherd families live from autumn to spring in partially underground qazma houses and organise production in yataqs, areas within winter pastures where the residential and supporting buildings of various purposes are concentrated.

The 200-kilometre-long Köç Yolu route connects the summer and winter pastures. Notable for its climatic and ecosystem diversity, the route crosses the administrative districts of Guba, Shamakhi, Gobustan, Absheron, and Hajigabul. The width of the path varies from several hundred metres to about fifty metres, depending on the geographical features. There are numerous cultural monuments along the route, including ancient cemeteries, shrines, caravanserais, bridges, and mosques, as well as natural features, some of which are considered sacred. Together, they illustrate the uses of the territory by these semi-nomadic people and the traditional knowledge associated with movement and the route, all of which are deeply embedded in their ethnocultural identity. As the main pathway used by the transhumant people of Azerbaijan today, Köç Yolu brings together shepherds and flocks from Khinalig as well as neighbouring villages, and bears great significance for the transmission of knowledge, values, and social norms, in addition to material goods.

Agricultural activities such as growing crops on the terraced mountain slopes (about 160 hectares) had once also played a vital role in the Khinalig subsistence economy. Modernisation has enabled access to imported agricultural products and has rendered this labour-intensive local agriculture obsolete, leading to new uses for the traditional agricultural terraces such as growing fodder and beekeeping. However, the terraces as well as the gravity-fed irrigation systems for pastures and hayfields remain important evidence of adaptation to the local natural conditions.

The village of Khinalig is the main architectural component of the nominated property. Erected on steep terrain, the layout of the village, planning, and tiered architecture are well-adapted to extreme slopes. The morphology of the medieval village represents the efficient use of scarce local resources. The traditional Khinalig houses are built with local stone; the flat roofs, covered with a layer of earth, are used as social spaces. Characteristic of the residential houses are wooden verandas, which once were open but have been enclosed over time with modern glass windows. The interiors are simple and functional, with niches in the walls for storage, small openings (muroqs) in the roof for light and ventilation, handmade carpets for decoration, and clay and straw plastering being the traditional elements.

The village remains the core of Khinalig social and cultural organisation and a vital cultural space for the survival of their ethnocultural identity, the transmission of the Khinalig language, as well as the ancient knowledge of transhumance. The Council of Elders, an informal decision-making body representing the ancient way of collective self-governance, still plays an important part in organising community affairs. Its role is particularly important in determining the fair use of communal pastures, planning and organising the seasonal process of transhumance, organising shared access to winter pastures, and managing village affairs.

The original boundaries of the nominated property as proposed in the nomination dossier had an area of 40,443.255 ha, and a buffer zone of 100,491.845 ha.

The Khinalig people, who speak a unique language, Khinalig, comprise a small but distinct group within the rich ethnocultural and linguistic diversity of the Caucasus. There are various hypotheses as to when the Khinalig people settled in the area. The structure of settling different clans in separate neighbourhoods (məhəllə) of the same village, local legends, and linguistic specificities suggest that the Khinalig people, who refer to themselves as Kəttid, once resettled here from their original (unknown) habitat. There is no information, however, on whether the village of Khinalig had been founded, named, and inhabited by a different ethnocultural group prior to the arrival of Khinalig people.

Archaeological excavations reveal that the area of the village has been occupied since the Early Bronze Age. The typology of burial places and discovered artefacts at archaeological sites near the village of Khinalig are characteristic of this period. One of these sites is considered to be the first kurgan burial mound and settlement types discovered in this part of the Greater Caucasus, and thus they are important testimonies to the cultural and socio-political links with the wider region. The network of mountain paths used by the transhumant herders today also illustrates the historical connections of the village of Khinalig to other parts of the Greater Caucasus Mountains.

Under this name, written sources first mention the village of Khinalig in the 13th century. They point to its important role as a centre of Islamic education and literacy in the region. Throughout the political and administrative transformations in the Middle Ages, the Khinalig people maintained relative social and political autonomy, thanks to their remote highland location. At the same time, they had to negotiate with different political powers to maintain access to winter pastures. The changing political and socio-economic situation as well as the sedentarisation policies imposed by
the Russian Empire in the 19th century forced many peoples in Azerbaijan to abandon their traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle. The Khinalig people are one of the few ethnocultural groups in the region to have maintained the ancient semi-nomadic way of life and still practice transhumance today.

State of conservation
The nominated property suffers from the negative effects of development and neglect. Many of the key architectural, infrastructural, and landscape elements of the nominated property are in a poor state of conservation. The buildings, morphology, street network, and public spaces in the village of Khinalig are in severe need of maintenance, conservation, and restoration. State-funded restoration actions have been implemented in Khinalig village in recent years, but they are not considered suitable for traditional masonry structures since these interventions are based on the use of reinforced concrete and other inappropriate modern materials.

Interventions with modern materials, additions to buildings, and changes to roofs are common throughout the village to improve austere living conditions. A modern development in the valley immediately below the medieval village stands out through its contrasting morphological, architectural, and design character.

The infrastructural and architectural elements along the Köç Yolu route require restoration and conservation, including springs and wells, cemeteries, mausoleums, camping places, places for washing and vaccinating animals, and drystone walls dividing grazing areas. The historical access routes, which have largely been replaced by modern roads, need careful documentation and marking. Landscape features such as water management systems, summer and winter pastures, and agricultural terraces also require comprehensive conservation measures to reduce or prevent land erosion caused by over-irrigation and overgrazing.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is fair and fragile, though it recognises and appreciates the ongoing efforts made by the State Party to improve this situation.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are climate change, natural hazards, and anthropogenic pressures. Floods, flash floods, and earthquakes are common in the area. The State Party acknowledges that the nominated property is vulnerable to and unprepared for natural disasters.

In terms of climate change, a lengthening dry season, declining water sources, land erosion, and desertification adversely affect both summer and winter pastures, which are vital elements for continuing transhumance by the Khinalig people. The output of the Khanjar spring that provides water to the village Khinalig has been gradually decreasing. Pirsaat River, which is the main water source for the winter pastures, has been drying up in summer during the last few years. Potable water in the wells is becoming saline or drying up. The Khinalig shepherds buy water for animals as well as for themselves during the drought season.

The deterioration of pastures is attributed to intensified animal husbandry and the neglect of traditional grazing techniques. Overgrazing and over-irrigation accelerate surface erosion, salinisation, the collapse of the soil layer, landslides, and desertification.

As confirmed by the State Party, the process of sedentarisation among the Khinalig community has been going on for years and continues today. Twelve Khinalig families are reported to have abandoned transhumance in 2021. Emigration is another trend reported by the State Party that impacts the community. The unlawful private cultivation of parts of the state-owned route adds difficulties to the seasonal migration and forces the transhumant shepherds to transport their flocks by truck over disputed segments of the route. Increased tourism may also adversely impact local culture and lifestyle.

In response to a request for additional information sent by ICOMOS in October 2022, the State Party provided clarifications in November on its plans to address some of these issues. Improving the legal framework is a key strategy to support communal semi-nomadic animal husbandry. Participatory land-use monitoring and planning measures are also being considered, as well as improvement of the water infrastructure, construction of a forty-five-kilometre-long water supply system in the winter pastures, provision of agrarian insurance and financial assistance for transhumant herders, and prevention of desertification of the pastures by planting drought-resistant fodder. Most of these actions remain at the initial stage of planning and would require comprehensive implementation mechanisms and multi-stakeholder commitments to be effective in the long run.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is fair and fragile, and that factors affecting the nominated property are significant.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

• The nominated property is an exceptional living testimony to a transhumance cultural tradition practised from medieval times to the present by the Khinalig semi-nomadic people, as demonstrated by
the medieval Khinalig village, the 200-kilometre-long Köç Yolu transhumance route, and winter and summer pastures with their temporary dwellings.

- The cultural landscape is an outstanding example of land use representing the continuous semi-nomadic Khinalig culture and its uninterrupted human interaction with the environment. It bears witness to a sustainable eco-social system and resilient economy adapted to extreme environmental conditions that have been developed through accumulated knowledge and insights about semi-nomadic animal husbandry as well as the geography of the landscape, vegetation, climate, and water resources.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property can be grouped as follows:

The village of Khinalig and the surrounding landscape of summer pastures and agricultural terraces; the socio-spatial organisation of the medieval village in neighbourhoods (mahalla), its steep-slope morphology, tiered architecture, and public spaces; land-use features such as patterns of division, sharing, and spatial organisation of pastures and related infrastructure (arxac, ağaçq, etc.); the network of ancient routes; traditional irrigation systems; places of worship and shrines; and archaeological sites.

The architectural and infrastructural elements of the Köç Yolu route, including springs and wells, temporary pastures and camping sites, cemeteries, mausoleums, bridges, and mosques.

The winter pastures and their infrastructure, including land-use features, the pattern of division of plots, and grazing areas with respective infrastructure for animal husbandry.

Important intangible attributes of the nominated property are the collective planning, organisation, and implementation of transhumance practices led by the Council of Elders, as manifested in the architectural, infrastructural, and landscape elements of the nominated property.

**Comparative analysis**

The comparative analysis has been developed on the grounds of traditional tiered architecture, roofs as shared public spaces and temporary stay areas; eco-social systems, including traditions ensuring optimal use of scarce land and water and adaptation to steep landscapes and extreme climates; transhumance as a living communal practice; living traditions, ethnographic and linguistic features; and profound knowledge of the territory, climate, and nature. It has examined properties within the country, the region, and throughout the world inscribed on the World Heritage List as well as other properties. The geo-cultural region is implied to be the Caucasus.

A brief examination of the area inhabited by the Shahdagh peoples, who include the Khinalig people, is followed by an analysis of transhumance sites in north, north-west, west, central, and south Azerbaijan. Four high-mountain Caucasian villages in the Republic of Dagestan are subjected to more detailed comparisons. The State Party concludes that the compared sites within the Caucasus region have been damaged to a greater extent than the nominated property and do not demonstrate an equivalent continuity and complexity.

An analysis is also undertaken of transhumance sites in Central Asia. Several key differences are described between them and sites in the Caucasus.

Seven properties inscribed on the World Heritage List are then compared: Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/ Uramanat (Islamic Republic of Iran, 2021, criteria (iii) and (v)); The Causses and the Cévennes, Mediterranean agro-pastoral Cultural Landscape (France, 2011, criteria (iii) and (v)); Cultural Landscape of the Serra de Tramuntana (Spain, 2011, criteria (ii), (iv) and (v)); Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley (Andorra, 2004, criterion (v)); Laponian Area (Sweden, 1996, criteria (iii), (v), (vii), (viii) and (ix)); Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape (Mongolia, 2004, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)); and Upper Svaneti (Georgia, 1996, criteria (iv) and (v)). None are considered by the State Party to have the combination of a complete and continuous communal transhumance practice, adaptation to harsh high-altitude natural conditions, traditional built heritage, continuity of eco-social system, and continuity of unique cultural traditions as in the nominated property.

ICOMOS observed in October 2022 that information from the Tentative Lists of other States Parties could possibly clarify ways in which the nominated property might stand out. In response, the State Party submitted a revised comparative analysis in November 2022 with additional cultural and mixed properties from the Tentative Lists: Apatani Cultural Landscape (India); Mardin Cultural Landscape (Türkiye); Mesta Livestock trails (Spain); Mtatsminda-Tusheti (Georgia); Shatili (Georgia); The Historical City of Masouleh (Islamic Republic of Iran); The Historical Village of Abyaneh (Islamic Republic of Iran); and Cultural Landscape of Ulytau (Kazakhstan).

In response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the State Party, in February 2023, submitted an extended comparative analysis that included similar surviving vertical transhumance systems located in Dagestan and Georgia. Focusing on aspects such as communal management, the role of shepherd families, and the mainly subsistence character of transhumance, as well as the degree of preservation of predominantly pastoral land use, the Khinalig transhumance culture and living landscape was shown to stand out.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.
Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (v).

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property bears exceptional living testimony to the long-distance vertical transhumance cultural tradition of the Khinalig people. The range of physical features across a great diversity of landscapes illustrates an adaptation to extreme climatic conditions and the resilience of semi-nomadic socio-economic structures based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property provides important evidence of the Khinalig cultural tradition of transhumance. A large number of physical elements have been transformed or altered or constructed over the last century. The traditional communal organisation of labour also changed during and after the Soviet period. The nominated property nevertheless demonstrates a significant degree of preservation of the ancestral semi-nomadic eco-social system and represents an exceptional living testimony to a cultural tradition of communal transhumance in the Caucasus geo-cultural region.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iii) has been demonstrated.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property represents an outstanding example of sustainable land use reflecting the continuous semi-nomadic Khinalig transhumance culture. Animal husbandry has been formed as the dominant, resilient economy of the Khinalig people through their adaptation to diverse and extreme natural conditions.

The morphology of the medieval Khinalig village and the agricultural terraces testify to the efficient use of scarce land and other natural resources. The regular alternation of grazing plots in the summer and winter pastures allows optimal use of fodder resources while keeping the environmental risk factors such as erosion and overgrazing largely under control. The ancient water management techniques have provided access to drinking water for people and livestock as well as efficient irrigation of pastures.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property exhibits significant evidence of the traditional semi-nomadic transhumance culture and lifestyle of the Khinalig people. The range of physical features across a great diversity of landscapes illustrates an adaptation to extreme environmental conditions and the resilience of semi-nomadic socio-economic structures based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (v) has thus been demonstrated.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (v).

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on landscapes and cultural spaces of vital importance for the traditional practice of transhumance by the Khinalig people, including the village of Khinalig and its surrounding landscape, the summer and winter pastures, and the Köç Yolu route, as well as the supporting transhumance infrastructure. These constitute all the attributes necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

There are several issues, however, that negatively affect the integrity of the nominated property, particularly the intactness of the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Recent developments, public buildings, and infrastructure projects in the nominated property and buffer zone have been designed and built without adequate consideration of the cultural values of the nominated property. Changes in traditional land use, encroachment of land for farming along the migration route, residential developments, and architectural interventions in the village of Khinalig using modern materials have an impact on the integrity of the nominated property. The nominated property has nevertheless maintained its overall integrity to an adequate degree, though ICOMOS considers that it is highly vulnerable.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the general organisation of the winter and summer pastures with their seasonal camps, their spatial relationship to the village of Khinalig, and the route of seasonal migration with its key infrastructural elements. These remain generally authentic in terms of their forms and designs, materials and substance, uses and functions, locations and settings, traditions and management systems, and language and other forms of intangible heritage. Some changes, however, have had an impact on the authenticity of the nominated property, including new building extensions and roofs of modern materials in the medieval village; modern residential and infrastructural developments; new uses for traditional agricultural
The provision of an improved access road in the 1960s and a new asphalt road in 2008 facilitated the widespread use of modern materials in all aspects of everyday life and seasonal transhumance. Modern means of transportation have also altered the role of women and related rituals along the migration route.

According to additional information sent in February 2023, in response to concerns raised by ICOMOS over the inappropriate restoration approach that has been adopted, the State Party launched an international cooperation project to develop and implement a model restoration project in 2023 following international best practices. It will serve as a local training opportunity and also guide planned legal amendments.

In additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party indicated that the present socio-spatial organisation of communal transhumance remains authentic despite the Soviet and post-Soviet era socio-economic reorganisation. Traditions of semi-nomadic communal life remain effective, and the Council of Elders continues to act as an informal self-governing body in charge of collective affairs such as the seasonal migration, turns for grazing, and shared use of water and pastures.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated property, though vulnerable, has been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met, though they are highly vulnerable.

**Boundaries**

The estimated population of the nominated property is 1,357, and the buffer zone is 17,054. These figures do not take into account the changes that the revised boundaries might have generated.

The proposed boundaries of the nominated property enclose all the key attributes and diverse landscapes of the semi-nomadic life and the seasonal transhumance of the Khinalig people, including the medieval Khinalig village, the summer and winter pastures, and the Köç Yolu route.

The boundaries of the buffer zone include the ethnically diverse mountain communities of Kryz, Haput, Alik, Jek, and Galaykhudat, as well as Adur, Qarkhun, Rük, Zeyid, and the Buduq Administrative Territorial Unit (comprised of Buduq, Daghustu, and Yalavaj), which were added by the State Party during the process of clarifying and extending the boundaries of the buffer zone in February 2023. All these villages share cultural values and practices with the Khinalig people and traditionally partner with them to migrate flocks to the winter pastures. Similar to the village of Khinalig, Kryz, Haput, Alik, Jek, Buduq, and Daghustu are each the ancient village of a single minority of semi-nomadic people with unique ethnocultural and linguistic characteristics, although transhumance is now practised by them in a relatively sporadic manner.

The buffer zone also includes the villages along the Köç Yolu route (Sohub, Gayadali, Yerfi, Nohurduzu, Gonagkend, Jimi, Garavulustu, Khaltan, Pirbayli, Khilmili, Garajuzlu, and Jeyrankechmaz) and around the winter pastures (Ranjbar, Gubalibaloghlan, Pirsaat, and Pirsaat). Most of these are ancient villages that have historically had a close socio-economic connection with the transhumant peoples, resulting in cultural exchanges of belief systems, gastronomy, design, and crafts.

The boundaries of the nominated property and the buffer zone logically follow the key geomorphological features of the landscape – watersheds, rivers, and valleys – and are presented on topographical maps with coordinates. Additional cadastral maps provided by the State Party in February 2023 have indicated that, in some cases, the boundaries are inconsistent with cadastral plots. Also, the boundaries are not marked on the ground. This generates conflicts over land use along the migration route. The effective enforcement of the boundaries remains an issue yet to be resolved.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List. The nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (v), and despite some specific concerns, overall the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

The inventory and documentation of the nominated property are partial. Only the buildings that have been selected for restoration are documented. Some information on the buildings in the village of Khinalig is documented on a map, submitted in the nomination dossier, that analyses their current condition.

There is no precise and detailed inventory and documentation of the attributes along the migration route and in the pastures, such as springs and wells, cemeteries, mausoleums, religious buildings, places for washing and vaccinating animals, overnight camping places, and dry-stone walls that divide grazing areas. Some of these attributes are presented on a general map, but only the most important are described in the nomination dossier.

In February 2023, the State Party presented additional documentation on ancient gravestone inscriptions and forty-three monuments within the nominated property and
buffer zone, although the documentation remains to be completed and updated for all the attributes.

The available inventory, records, and archives are held in Baku in the Reserves Management Center of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Conservation measures
The State Party has provided limited information on a comprehensive conservation strategy for the built heritage and landscape features of the nominated property. A Restoration and Conservation Action Plan submitted to ICOMOS in August 2022 demonstrates the intention of the State Party to improve the state of conservation of the buildings in the village of Khinalig and to inventory, legally protect, and conserve the built heritage of the nominated property. The first stage of rehabilitation work (2019-2024) aims to restore sixty houses in the village of Khinalig. Restoration of the sixteen most severely damaged houses has been completed and eleven others are being finalised. The thirty-three remaining first-stage houses will be restored in 2023-2024; the remaining houses are scheduled for restoration in subsequent stages by 2030. The plan also includes the restoration and provision of the water and sewage system, and the reorganisation of electricity lines, and beautification of the façades of the public buildings in the village of Khinalig in 2023-2025.

The conservation measures are funded by the State Party and carried out by external contractors following the Restoration Manual that was adopted in 2022, under the supervision of the Khinalig State Historical-Architectural and Ethnographic Reserve team.

ICOMOS observes that the approach adopted in the Restoration Manual does not fully comply with international scientific principles. It aims to reconstruct historic houses to their “original” appearance but relies heavily on the use of cement and reinforced concrete. The ongoing works also expose the village to new types of modernisation pressure by bringing in external contractor companies and demonstrating the use of inappropriate modern materials and techniques in restoration. Apart from the physical impact, such an approach, along with the State strategy for tourism promotion, may have adverse long-term effects on the seasonal transhumance as the dominant local economy.

According to additional information sent in February 2023, in response to ICOMOS’ observation, the State Party has launched an international partnership to design and implement a model restoration project in 2023 that will showcase international best practices in restoration and train local masters in suitable techniques.

The State Party indicated in additional information provided in February 2023 that conservation plans for each monument will be prepared, and that the Final Conservation Master Plan for the whole nominated property will be submitted in 2024. The State Party also intends to harmonise local standards with international restoration principles through a legislative amendment in 2023. Conservation recommendations will also address social, land use, and environmental issues.

The State Party further clarified the general conservation principles to be used for natural features and key landscape attributes of the nominated property, such as sacred forests, mud volcanoes, water sources, irrigation systems, and agricultural terraces. Reducing the number of sheep per hectare and improving the water management system are proposed to lessen overgrazing and its negative impact. IUCN considers that threatened species and freshwater biodiversity in the rivers along the transhumance route also need to be monitored.

And finally, the State Party noted that the transhumance landscape is ever-changing, and that the impermanence of individual structures constitutes a key characteristic which allows for the integration of visually suitable and sustainable modern materials into traditional uses.

Monitoring
Monitoring of the nominated property is the responsibility of the State Tourism Agency and its subordinate bodies. The Khinalig State Historical-Architectural and Ethnographic Reserve staff conduct periodic field inspections based on the Annual Work Plan and report to the Reserves Management Center of the State Tourism Agency.

The State Party plans to develop a more holistic approach to monitoring the nominated property. The monitoring indicators for different tangible and intangible features of the cultural landscape will include built heritage, archaeological sites, seasonal transhumance infrastructure, pastures, irrigation systems, forests, language, and craftsmanship. The indicators will include social and economic factors such as demography, employment, gender balance, transhumance, and tourism. The monitoring is planned to address all aspects: management, conservation and restoration, tourism and visitor management, risk management, education and awareness, and finance.

The majority of monitoring activities are planned to be implemented annually by the State Tourism Agency and the Reserves Management Center. The Khinalig State Historical-Architectural and Ethnographic Reserve will continue to be in charge of monitoring the conservation-restoration activities. The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources will be involved in monitoring the mixed and natural features of the nominated property, and the Ministry of Education will assist in monitoring the language component. A monitoring committee is proposed to be established within the new Reserve management structure based on the Khinalig State Historical-Architectural and Ethnographic Reserve. The members of Local Executive Authorities of the six administrative districts will form part of the monitoring system.
In additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party outlined its plan to improve community involvement in monitoring through the establishment of a Community Management Group that will assist in monitoring and managing land use and work closely with state institutions.

The proposed monitoring system may prove adequate for the complex features of the nominated property. However, there is limited information as to how the monitoring of various elements of the nominated property, apart from certain cultural heritage features, is currently taking place. A more detailed roadmap is needed to achieve the effective monitoring of the state of conservation of all the different cultural and natural attributes of the nominated property. In light of the complexity of the cultural landscape and the diversity of disciplines required for the monitoring process, the responsibilities and roles of the different contributing organisations should be determined and described in much more detail.

ICOMOS considers that the Restoration Manual adopted in 2022 requires revisions to make it fully compatible with international scientific principles and practices. The proposed monitoring system requires further elaboration, and needs to be supported by thorough documentation. It would be advisable as well that it encompasses all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and is conceived for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

Numerous laws, codes, and regulations cover the different parts of the nominated property and its buffer zone. At the highest level, the nominated property is protected under the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and its normative laws such as the Law on Culture, the Law on Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments, and the Law on the Veterinary Control (for animal herding). Presidential Decrees and Decisions by the Cabinet of Ministers also play a role in protecting cultural and natural heritage. Laws and codes related to land use, environment, and urban planning also come into play, as do regulations related to pastures and hayfields. Not all attributes of the nominated property benefit from the highest level of protection, as it is not listed as a single entity.

The main heritage features of the nominated property and the buffer zone are protected by the national cultural heritage legislation. The village of Khinalig is listed by the State Party as a cultural landscape of universal importance, and six architectural monuments in it are listed individually as monuments of local importance. A revised list showing the protection status of monuments was provided in February 2023 by the State Party.

The additional information and maps provided by the State Party at that time highlight that sectoral instruments ensure the continued use of the key attributes of the nominated property, namely the village of Khinalig, the summer and winter pastures, and the migration route. Additional information provided by the State Party in November 2022 confirms that the current legislative basis needs to be adapted to the cultural values of the semi-nomadic communal transhumance. ICOMOS considers that this shortcoming requires improvement to create favourable conditions for the continued practice of this long-standing tradition.

The key institutions responsible for the implementation of the legal framework are the State Tourism Agency and its subordinate Reserves Management Center, along with the Khinalig Reserve, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education, the State Service on Property Issues, and the Local Executive Authorities of the six administrative districts of Guba, Gusar, Shamakhi, Gobustan, Absheron, and Hajigabul.

The State Party plans to designate the entire nominated property as a single protected Reserve. A Presidential Order has been prepared in this regard and is currently under consideration. The additional information provided by the State Party in February 2023 confirms its intention to implement the proposed protected Reserve in 2023.

In addition to the legal protection instruments, traditional mechanisms for protecting and safeguarding the tangible and intangible aspects of the nominated property include the customs and traditions related to grazing, water management, and seasonal migration. These protection mechanisms enforced by the community as a whole are vital for the preservation of the Khinalig culture of transhumance and its cultural landscape.

Management system

The nominated property and its buffer zone are under the ownership of a diverse group of public and private entities. The village of Khinalig is composed of houses under private ownership and public buildings under municipal or State ownership. Public spaces, religious sites, cemeteries, intra-village roads, hayland, and some summer pastures are municipal properties. The majority of the summer pastures, all the winter pastures, and the Köç Yolu transhumance route are owned by the State.

The management system is centred on the cultural heritage authorities, namely the Ministry of Culture, the State Tourism Agency and its subordinate Reserves Management Center, and the Khinalig Reserve. The system also allows for coordination and collaboration across sectors and government tiers. Involved in the management of the territory within their fields of authority are the Local Executive Authorities of the six administrative districts where the nominated property is located, the State Service on Property Issues, as well as other sectoral institutions such as the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture.
The Ministry of Culture, the State Tourism Agency and its subordinate Reserves Management Center, and the Khinalig Reserve provide the framework for the management of cultural assets and elements within the boundaries of the nominated property, such as the Khinalig Reserve with all its elements (houses, mosques, museums, intangible heritage, archaeological sites, etc.) and the cultural monuments along the Köç Yolu route and in the winter pastures. According to the legislation, the State Tourism Agency is also responsible for granting permits for new construction within the Reserve.

A new management entity for the nominated property and its buffer zone is planned to be established in 2023, based on an enlargement of the boundaries of the Khinalig Reserve. It will incorporate relevant sectoral government agencies, local governments, and local communities within a single participatory, cross-sectoral management framework. It will also include a Coordination Committee and a Technical Committee. The conservation of the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property is intended to be the primary objective of this new structure, which also promises to provide the necessary human and financial resources and the skills base for the conservation of the nominated property.

A cross-sectoral Working Group was formed by the State Tourism Agency in 2022 to develop an action plan for the management of the nominated property. This is an interim solution until the new management structure and permanent coordination mechanisms are established.

The management plan submitted with the nomination dossier is proposed as the operational instrument for the future management entity. It has not yet been implemented. Its objectives and action plan are structured around the key aspects of the nominated property, namely the transhumance, land use, and intangible heritage. It outlines a set of actions to mitigate the factors affecting the nominated property, improve the state of conservation of the tangible attributes, support the continuity of traditional language and crafts, and develop sustainable cultural and ecotourism initiatives as an alternative source of income for the local people. Income diversification is an integral part of the new management concept, where income generation adds to the Reserve management tasks, as a means to a more efficient use of public funds.

The effective management of the nominated property is planned to be achieved by improving the management of conservation activities, development, land use, public infrastructure, and risks. The management plan provides schemes for coordination in each of these areas of action.

Additional information provided by the State Party in February 2023 included general land-use maps, although ICOMOS considers that the nominated property would benefit from further detailed spatial planning and decision-making tools such as local/regional land-use plans, Environmental Impact Assessment mechanisms, and Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms.

While the State Tourism Agency is assigned the responsibility of approving construction within the Reserve, authority for land-use management rests with the local governments. The informal communal management through the Council of Elders remains vital and is respected by the government authorities. It is planned to be integrated within the new management and coordination framework.

ICOMOS considers that an operating management system is required for the nominated property and its buffer zone. The principal focus should be on the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, and the principal aim should be to ensure that the value, authenticity, and integrity of the nominated property are sustained.

Visitor management
The State Party considers cultural tourism and ecotourism as ways to improve local livelihoods. Currently, visitor numbers are low, although there has been an upward trend since 2016.

Infrastructure for the interpretation and presentation of the nominated property is limited. The Khinalig Reserve manages a small ethnographic museum, and another museum in the village is privately-owned. They both present collections of traditional objects as well as archaeological finds and historic manuscripts. No information, signage, or interpretation exists for the migration route, pastures or temporary transhumance structures, although the management plan includes actions to fill this gap. A visitor management plan is being prepared.

Two small private eco-lodges in the village of Khinalig offer accommodation for visitors. Homestays are the preferred form of visitor accommodation and are encouraged by the management plan, as they offer direct interaction with the local culture as well as revenue for the local community.

Several State-sponsored programmes and projects support tourism development in the region, aiming to develop the village of Khinalig as a priority tourism destination.

ICOMOS considers that the emphasis on tourism development raises concerns about the possible increase in development pressures and their potentially negative impacts on the nominated property. ICOMOS further considers that the State Party should determine scientifically the carrying capacity of the nominated property to guide and manage the limits for tourism and to help sustain the livelihoods of the Khinalig people.

Community involvement
The Khinalig community is an essential element of the cultural landscape, as the bearer of the semi-nomadic transhumant culture. Nevertheless, its role in the preparation of the nomination dossier was limited to consultations with the Council of Elders and the
In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the protection and management of the nominated property as a whole will be enhanced by the adoption of an umbrella protection and integrated management through the establishment of a single protected Reserve in 2023. It will also activate the management plan. Information on land use and spatial planning is insufficient, and so is the infrastructure for interpretation and presentation. Community involvement, although planned to be enhanced in the future, has been limited to general consultations.

**6 Conclusion**

The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and “Köç Yolu” Transhumance Route, composed of the village of Khinalig, the summer and winter pastures, and the 200-kilometre-long Köç Yolu route, is notable for the diversity of its landscapes. The culture and lifestyle of the Khinalig people are closely tied to and defined by this continuing cultural landscape, as manifested by their long-standing transhumance customs and traditions. Planning and organising the seasonal process of transhumance is still undertaken by the Khinalig Council of Elders, who also organises shared access to winter pastures and manages village affairs.

ICOMOS appreciates the efforts made by the State Party in elaborating the nomination dossier for this large and complex cultural landscape, and also appreciates the work carried out by the State Party to produce additional information.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. Cultural criteria (iii) and (v) have been demonstrated, and the conditions of integrity and authenticity, although highly vulnerable, have been met. The boundaries of the nominated property enclose the full range of the diverse transhumance landscapes of the Khinalig people.

Nonetheless, ICOMOS observes that many of the key architectural, infrastructural, and landscape elements of the nominated property are in a fragile state of conservation, and notes that information on land use and spatial planning within this vast cultural landscape should be collected.

Umbrella protection and integrated management of the nominated property is to be achieved in 2023 through the establishment of a single protected Reserve by means of a Presidential Order. This will enhance the protection and management of the property as a whole.

The management plan will be activated with the establishment of the new Reserve administration and its Coordination Committee. The planned management actions will improve interpretation and presentation and facilitate community involvement. The State Party has also demonstrated its commitment to improving the legal framework, conservation planning, and skills base of the nominated property by pursuing international cooperation and expertise.

**7 Recommendations**

**Recommendations with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and “Köç Yolu” Transhumance Route, Azerbaijan, be inscribed, as a cultural landscape, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (v).

**Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

**Brief synthesis**

The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and “Köç Yolu” Transhumance Route is a continuing cultural landscape comprised of the high-mountain Khinalig village in northern Azerbaijan, high-altitude summer pastures and agricultural terraces in the Greater Caucasus Mountains, winter pastures in the lowland plains in central Azerbaijan, and the connecting 200-kilometre-long seasonal transhumance route called Köç Yolu (“Migration Route”). The village of Khinalig is home to the semi-nomadic Khinalig people, whose culture and lifestyle are defined by the seasonal vertical migration between summer (yaylaqs) and winter (qishlaqs) pastures, and who retain the ancient way of long-distance vertical transhumance. The organically evolved network of ancient routes, land-use features, temporary pastures and camping sites, irrigation systems, springs and wells, mausoleums, mosques, cemeteries, bridges, and infrastructure for animal husbandry illustrate a sustainable eco-social system adapted to extreme and diverse environmental conditions that has served to build and retain transhumance as the dominant economy.

**Criterion (iii):** The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and “Köç Yolu” Transhumance Route is an exceptional living testimony to the long-distance vertical transhumance cultural tradition of the Khinalig people, a tradition of communal transhumance in the Caucasus geo-cultural region. The property demonstrates a significant degree of...
transhumance practices, as manifested in architectural, collective planning, organisation, and implementation of infrastructure, and intangible attributes such as the Köç Yolu route, the winter pastures and their boundaries. These attributes include the village of Khinaliq, its surrounding landscape of summer pastures, agricultural terraces, and related infrastructure, and the network of ancient routes, traditional irrigation systems, places of worship, and archaeological sites. The attributes also include the architectural and infrastructural elements of the Köç Yolu route, the winter pastures and their infrastructure, and intangible attributes such as the collective planning, organisation, and implementation of transhumance practices, as manifested in architectural, infrastructural, and landscape elements, that are of vital importance for the practice of transhumance by the Khinaliq people. The property is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that convey its significance. It is highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of development and neglect.

Authenticity

The Cultural Landscape of Khinaliq People and “Köç Yolu” Transhumance Route is authentic in terms of its forms and designs, materials and substance, use and functions, locations and settings, traditions and management systems, and language and other forms of intangible heritage. While some changes have had an impact on the authenticity of the forms and designs, materials and substance, and uses and functions of some parts of the property, the key attributes are largely authentic and convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. The socio-spatial organisation of communal transhumance remains authentic despite a previous socio-economic reorganisation; traditions of semi-nomadic communal life remain effective, and the Council of Elders continues to act as an informal self-governing body in charge of collective affairs such as the seasonal migration, turns for grazing, and shared use of water and pastures.

Protection and management requirements

Most of the property is protected at the highest level under the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and its normative laws such as the Law on Culture, the Law on Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments, and the Law on the Veterinary Control (for animal herding). Presidential Decrees and Decisions by the Cabinet of Ministers also play a role in protecting the cultural and natural heritage. A protective designation for the entire property through a single protected Reserve is being achieved by means of a Presidential Order. In addition to the legal protection instruments, there are traditional mechanisms for protecting and safeguarding the tangible and intangible aspects of the property.

The property and its buffer zone are under the ownership of diverse public and private entities. The majority of the summer pastures, all the winter pastures, and the Köç Yolu transhumance route are owned by the State. The management system involves the Ministry of Culture, the State Tourism Agency and its subordinate Reserves Management Center, and the Khinaliq Reserve. A new management entity for the property and its buffer zone will incorporate relevant sectoral government agencies, local governments, and local communities within a single participatory, cross-sectoral management framework. The management plan needs to be implemented. Its objectives and action plan are structured around the key aspects of the property, including the transhumance, land use, and intangible heritage. The existing informal communal management by the Council of Elders is planned to be integrated within the new management and coordination framework.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Ensuring that all the key attributes of the entire property, including the cultural values of the semi-nomadic communal transhumance, benefit from the highest level of protection, through the implementation of the single protected Reserve,

b) Approving and making operational the new management entity planned for the property and its buffer zone, and refining, approving, and implementing the management plan,

c) Revising the Restoration Manual adopted in 2022 to ensure that it properly addresses the authenticity of forms and designs within the property and is fully compatible with international scientific principles and practices,

d) Completing the elaboration of the Conservation Master Plan for the property as a whole, and the conservation plans for each monument,

e) Ensuring that new developments and infrastructure projects in the property and buffer zone are designed and built with adequate consideration of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, on the basis of detailed spatial planning and decision-making tools such as local/regional land-use plans, Environmental
Impact Assessments, and Heritage Impact Assessments,

f) Determining scientifically the carrying capacity of the property in order to guide and manage the limits for tourism and to help sustain the traditional livelihoods of the Khinalig people,

g) Completing the cadastral information for the entire property and marking the boundaries on the ground,

h) Completing the inventory and documentation of the property,

i) Developing a monitoring system that includes adequate assessment of all the key attributes, acknowledgement of key threats, and delivery of outcomes that can inform management,

j) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session;
Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (February 2023)
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Alpine and pre-alpine meadows, pastures and wetlands in the Ammergau, the Lake Staffelsee Area and the Werdenfelser Land

Location
Administrative district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen
District of Upper Bavaria
Free State of Bavaria
Germany

Brief description
Located on the fringes of the Northern Alps and in the southernmost alpine foothills in the district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen (Upper Bavaria), the serial nominated property encompasses traditionally-cultivated grasslands of various types. Topography, soil composition, and climate make the area difficult to cultivate and of marginal revenue for arable use, favouring the development of grassland farming with livestock husbandry.

Extending over an altitude range between approximately 600 metres and 2,500 metres above sea-level, the fifty-four component parts are located in different natural units: the Wetterstein Mountains; the Karwendel Mountains; the Ammer Mountains; the Niederwerdenfelser Land; the Ester mountains (Kochler mountains); and the Ammer-Loisach hill country (alpine foothills). The nominated property reflects a wide range of traditional meadow and pasture uses, comprising private land and communal grazing areas. Dating back at least to the Middle Ages, communal use is based on a system of rightsholders in which entitled persons exercise precisely-defined usage on land belonging to someone else or on common land.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of fifty-four sites.

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021), paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

Included in the Tentative List
15 January 2015 as Alpine and pre-alpine meadow and marsh landscapes (historic anthropogenic landscapes in the area of “ Werdenfelser Land”, “Ammergau”, “Staffelseegebiet” and “Murnauer Moos”, district Garmisch-Partenkirchen)

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

Comments on the natural attributes of this nominated property, their conservation and their management were received from IUCN on 8 December 2022 and have been incorporated into the relevant sections of this report.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 12 to 17 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the identification of the nominated property as a cultural landscape, the description of the component parts, the boundaries, buffer zone, the comparative analysis and selection of the component parts, factors affecting the nominated property, governance arrangements, the legal protection, the management plan and resources.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 7 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: sub-type of cultural landscape, comparative analysis and selection of component parts, justification for inscription, governance arrangements, and legal protection.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 9 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
Grasslands are areas where the vegetation is dominated or co-dominated by graminoid and forb growth forms. Semi-natural grasslands are a result of human activity, by
mowing and livestock grazing. A distinction can be made between meadows (mowed) and pastures (grazed by domestic animals). The nominated property includes diverse types of meadows, pastures and wetlands.

Within meadows it is possible to distinguish between litter meadows – cultivated for the purpose of providing bedding for the winter stabling of cattle – and fodder meadows – used to cultivate food crops and winter fodder for the cattle.

Within the nominated property, litter meadows are usually mown from the beginning/middle of September. Whilst in the past the hay was piled up on site to form haystacks and left until winter, this is hardly ever done today.

Different sub-types of fodder meadows are identified: wet meadows; dry meadows; fertile meadows and intensely cultivated agricultural meadows. Wet meadows are usually mown only once, sometimes twice a year. Dry meadows are generally located far away from the settlements and on land that is either too dry, the soil too shallow, or too steep; therefore, they are only mown once, in midsummer. Fertile meadows are usually mown in June and September and are often grazed afterwards. More intensely cultivated meadows are also part of the nominated property. Often located directly adjacent to or closely interwoven with other types of uses, this type of meadow can be mown three to six times per year.

Two types of pastures are identified: single farm cattle pastures and common pastures. The former can be differentiated between valley pastures – usually in close proximity to villages and towns – and alpine pastures – temporary summer pastures, normally used for 120 days per year, reducing the pressure on the valley areas, which can then be used as meadows during that period. Common pastures are often located at the edge of bogs (moorland commons), at the foot of slopes (valley commons) or in valley floodplains (often in river gravel areas). The nominated property also contains areas of wooded pastures.

The nominated property is located in the district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, which belongs to two climate zones, namely The Alps and Upper Bavarian Alpine Foothills. Despite different climatic conditions, in both cases altitude, maximum precipitation in summer and short vegetation period favoured the development of grassland farming with animal husbandry.

Archaeological findings and pollen diagrams suggest that, in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, parts of the areas of Upper Bavaria at the edge of the alpine region were already comparatively densely populated. Whereas the first basic pattern of development was laid in Roman times, further development of the land in the early Middle Ages was primarily influenced by the founding of monasteries.

In the mountain landscapes that were cleared during the Middle Ages, the soil was sometimes too barren for arable farming or difficult to plough because of the slope. Therefore, countless herder farms (vaccariae) were established in the mountains, producing large quantities of cheese, the only durable product at the time. In the 12th and 13th centuries, increased settlement pressure led to the expansion of seasonally-farmed alpine pastures above alpine herder farms.

From the 14th century onwards, the old long-distance Venice-Augsburg route, which ran through the county of Werdenfels and the Ammertal Valley, became increasingly important as a trade route. In the 16th century and until the middle of the 17th century, strong population growth put pressure on cultivated land, particularly in the larger towns. With the consent of the authorities, further forest was cleared in the outer areas up to medium altitudes. Pure Alpine dairy farming was abandoned at the alpine herder farms; some of them evolved into hamlets.

Around 1750, a broad discussion on agricultural reform began. Criticism of the way in which farmers grazed their cattle on the extensive common land later led to the abolition of communal pasture for cattle and horses. Previously most cattle grazed daily from spring to late autumn on the various common pastures, and in the summer months on the mountain pastures. In the Alpine foothills between 1800 and 1850, people started to keep the animals for longer in their stalls, and, in the case of dairy cattle, in some places all year round. This triggered the demand for stable bedding; litter harvesting became more and more important and the use of litter meadows peaked at that time.

Common areas gradually became dispensable and were divided up and privatised. The new owners now fertilised their plots with the farm’s own manure, gradually transforming them into fertile fodder meadows. With the additional fodder harvested, the individual farm was able to bring more livestock through the winter than before. However, there was resistance to allotments from most cattle farmers (especially those with smaller properties and particularly in mountain regions), from the landlords (who regarded their grazing rights as having been restricted), but also from the municipalities, which in the meantime had developed into political communities. In areas with smaller farms (as is the case of the area of the nominated property), there was less incentive to split up common land, therefore forms of common grazing were partly maintained.

During the 19th century, the abolition of the feudal land system and the liberation of the peasants influenced agricultural conditions. Self-sufficiency farming (i.e., the combination of arable and livestock farming) was increasingly abandoned and specialisation in dairy farming and market orientation began. The cessation of arable farming and the expansion of meadow cultivation were promoted because of cheap grain imports, now made possible by the construction of the railways. From 1810 to 1854, the cattle population in the Werdenfelser Land increased from 3,476 to 8,700 animals.

The number of livestock on the farm determined the extent of the productive fodder areas. Due to these developments, arable farming had almost completely disappeared and
there was a decline in the proportion of pastureland by about 1950. Around this period, the availability of mineral fertilisers as well as tractors made it possible to further intensify meadow use, even in more remote areas. In parallel, population growth from the 1930s onwards led to settlement expansion and infrastructure development, requiring considerable amounts of land.

Within the nominated property these influences were less severe and far-reaching than in many other areas. The largest preserved wet meadow moor complex in Central Europe, the Murnau Moor, forms part of the nominated property.

The area of the fifty-four component parts totals 19,403.95 ha. A buffer zone has not been defined.

State of conservation
The State Party has nominated the property as an organically evolved living landscape, in which the evolutionary process is still in progress. Based on the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, there are two sub-types of organically evolved landscapes: relic (or fossil) landscapes and continuing landscapes. ICOMOS noted that the nomination dossier includes references to both sub-types. Therefore, in its request for additional information sent in October 2022, ICOMOS asked the State Party to clarify which sub-type of organically evolved landscape is the nominated property and, if both sub-types were considered, to submit a map identifying which areas correspond to each sub-type. This distinction is critical since the analysis of the state of conservation depends on the sub-type of cultural landscape that is proposed.

In the additional information, sent in November 2022, the State Party clarified that it considered the nominated property to be a continuing landscape, in which cultivation is critical. It added that some land plots may fall out of active cultivation temporarily (and sometimes for long periods of time) but can be brought back into cultivation. The State Party also submitted a map identifying the areas under continuing land use and areas currently uncultivated or cultivated only to a small extent. The latter seemed to constitute a significant portion of the nominated property. Therefore, in its Interim Report sent in December 2022, ICOMOS asked if the State Party could provide figures (in hectares) of the areas of the nominated property that are currently uncultivated. The State Party replied that this type of information could not be easily determined but considered that it would amount to a maximum of 2,900 hectares.

If meadow cultivation and animal grazing ceases, or when the land lies fallow for long periods of time, ecological succession, that is the gradual transformation of meadows into forest, occurs. This differs from temporary fallow, which was common practice. Likewise, changes in use could also occur but, based on the information included in the nomination dossier, in some cases, areas formerly used as meadows are now predominantly or exclusively used as pastures. Based on the information provided by the State Party in November 2022, since the 1980s, there has been no significant conversion of litter meadows, destruction of bogs, or intensification of dry grasslands.

Mechanisation produced considerable changes in the last century: the tractive power of oxen was replaced by tractors and areas that used to be mown with a scythe are now often mowed with a motor mower or tractor. However, because of the difficult terrain, a lot of manual labour is still required today. ICOMOS notes that there is hardly any scope to mechanise hay production any further because of the challenging terrain.

Many of the valley floor meadows have been reclaimed in the last few decades as well as some woodland areas.

In the past, the hay was piled up on site to form haystacks and stored until winter; only then was the hay transported by ox- or horse-drawn vehicles across the frozen moors to the farmsteads. That practice is rare today.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is adequate. However, ICOMOS notes that there is little historical information and data on past land use, including photographic and cartographic evidence supporting the historiography of the landscape (or what is sometimes called landscape biography). The information about the present state of conservation, namely the extent of the nominated property that is currently uncultivated, is also considered insufficient.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are abandonment of cultivation and fallow land, loss of traditional knowledge, dependency on subsidies, the return of large predators, invasive species, impacts of climate change (namely increases in temperature, leading to changes in vegetation), and natural disasters such as fires, floods, avalanches and mudslides.

In its request for additional information sent in October 2022, ICOMOS noted that the nomination dossier and the management plan refer to socio-economic change as one of the main factors affecting the nominated property. While this factor was defined broadly, the information provided referred in fact to several factors that ICOMOS felt deserved to be analysed in detail, namely the challenges of knowledge transfer; the changes in agricultural practices (including increased mechanisation over time, intensification of use, and the conversion of litter meadows, grazed moors and dry grassland meadows into fodder meadows and pastures and specialisation in dairy farming); the competitive pressure from other uses; the abandonment of land use, leading to areas lying fallow and developing into forest (ecological succession); and the dependency on subsidies to enable farmers to continue traditional land use and animal husbandry.
Traditional and local knowledge is passed down from generation to generation. Based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, the young generation seems committed to maintaining traditional agricultural practices. However, farming is a part-time occupation for most of the farmers and very few of them have enough livestock to live on farming exclusively.

Increased mechanisation in the past century and challenging geographic and topographic conditions leave limited scope for further significant changes in the future. Very steep slopes and hummock meadows can only be mown manually or with light machinery. The low-lying meadows are so wet that it limits the use of heavy machinery too. Flattening the hummock meadows is strictly forbidden.

Due to the limited capacity of the soil, increasing hay production can only happen with increased fertilisation. However, mineral fertilisation is strictly controlled under environmental protection measures. Changes in land use by ploughing, for example, are forbidden. For the moment, the climate still does not support arable farming. It cannot be excluded that the effects of climate change or shifts in agricultural policy could trigger land-use changes in the future; however, this would also require changes in related legislation. Increased specialisation in dairy farming is not expected. Most farmers have just enough meadow to feed their livestock through the winter. Since many low-lying pastures are still jointly owned by the farming communities and the meadows by the municipality, these lands cannot be bought to increase fodder production. In addition, the price of the land is so high that it is not viable to increase farm production.

In the additional information sent in November 2022, the State Party acknowledges that government subsidies are very important for maintaining the farming system. Currently, about 3.7 million Euros from contractual nature conservation, another 2.0 million Euros from other agri-environmental measures and 8.0 million Euros in European Union co-financed “single farm payments” and “compensatory allowances” flow annually to farms and grazing communities in the district; most of it in connection with the management of the nominated property. Based on information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, the likelihood that such subsidies are withdrawn or significantly reduced seems low. However, ICOMOS notes that the extent and condition of meadows and pastures seems to have deteriorated before the introduction of subsidies. Hence, if subsidies were to be reduced in the future, due to changes in public policy priorities, this could have severe repercussions for the protection of the nominated property.

The return of large predators and the presence of other species (referred to in the nomination dossier as “problem” or “nuisance species”) are considered by the State Party to have considerable negative effects on the nominated property. The unchecked spread and pack formation of wolves in particular is considered by the State Party as one of the main threats. Given the misconceptions often associated with this species, ICOMOS sought advice from IUCN in this regard. IUCN notes that wolves and other large predators are provided with a strict protection status under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (also known as the Bern Convention). IUCN also notes that the nominated property is presented as an example of the harmonious interaction between humans and the environment, which has developed over the course of many centuries. Wolves and other large predators were therefore once part of that environment and careful management and compensation measures can be adopted to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts.

The State Party considers that the threat posed by invasive species is low and that traditional cultivation prevents the uncontrolled spread of neophytes. ICOMOS is of the view that this threat is currently insufficiently considered and deserves greater attention. ICOMOS also notes that no buffer zone is proposed, even though it could help address external threats as well as promote ecological connectivity.

Regarding climate change, in the additional information sent in November 2022, the State Party considers that the nominated property has adapted to considerable climate fluctuations over the centuries. It added that expected temperature increases in the future would be equivalent to other areas in the Southern Alps and that the considerable altitude range within the nominated property offers opportunities for adaptation. Whilst ICOMOS acknowledges the rationale of some of the arguments presented by the State Party, it considers that the threats posed by climate change (which can also exacerbate other factors affecting the nominated property such as the spread of invasive species) should be further analysed.

Risk posed by fires, floods, avalanches and mudslides would also merit further consideration. The State Party considers that the current risk of forest fires is moderate and that of moorland fires is low. However, due to the effects of climate change, the risk of fire could increase in the future. ICOMOS considers that the effects of climate change (at present and in the future) could also increase the risk of landslides, avalanches and floods, even though the State Party considers that these natural hazards are part of the natural dynamics within the nominated property. ICOMOS notes that there is no risk preparedness plan specific to the nominated property and considers that such a plan is necessary to deal with the array of current and potential environmental pressures and natural disasters identified.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is adequate and that the main factors affecting the nominated property are abandonment of cultivation and fallow land, dependency on subsidies and potential impacts of climate change. ICOMOS notes that there is no risk preparedness plan specific to the nominated property and considers that such a plan is necessary to deal with the array of current and potential environmental pressures as well as socio-economic changes.
3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The nominated property represents the harmonious interaction of humans with the environment in a landscape on the fringes of the Northern Alps.
- This grassland farming system, which has been maintained for centuries, has created an exceptionally wide range of meadows and pastures on the most diverse of sites.

This is a serial nomination of fifty-four component parts, which together are said to represent a continuing landscape, where the evolutionary process is still in progress, and which exhibits significant material evidence of its evolution over time. In its request for additional information sent in October 2022, ICOMOS noted that different terms were used to refer to the nominated property, such as “cultural landscape”, “grassland farming system”, “landscapes”, and that those terms seem to be used interchangeably. ICOMOS observed that those terms have different meanings and therefore asked for clarification in this regard. ICOMOS also stressed that the fact that the nominated property is composed of fifty-four component parts does not contribute to reflecting the idea of an overall cultural landscape. Hence, ICOMOS asked the State Party to clarify how the nominated property, as defined through the delineated boundaries, reflects a cultural landscape, as a coherent entity.

In its response provided in November 2022, the State Party explained that the nominated property corresponds only to one landscape, and that expressions such as “grassland farming system with livestock”, “socio-economic system of agriculture” and “system of grassland management” are used synonymously. It added that the term “landscapes”, used in plural when describing the individual component parts, serves to express the great variety of cultural landscape manifestations and special features of the nominated property. The State Party also argued that the nomination dossier presents numerous examples of the functional relationships between the individual component parts.

ICOMOS notes that the term “landscapes” is used even in relation to individual components parts. ICOMOS considers that the use of the term “landscapes” in relation to the component parts contradicts the identity of the nominated property as a single, coherent, cultural landscape. It also considers that references made to the functional links between the individual components are relevant in relation to the definition of a serial nominated property but in themselves do not justify the rationale of a cultural landscape, as a whole. ICOMOS considers that the issue mainly arises both from the excessive fragmentation resulting from the large number of component parts, and from the small size of some of the component parts. The State Party also referred to examples of cultural landscapes inscribed on the World Heritage List as serial nominations. ICOMOS stresses that the examples given refer mainly to relic landscapes, in which the evolutionary process came to an end and therefore its former integrity may have been affected over time. ICOMOS also notes that those examples (and others included on the World Heritage List) do not show the same level of fragmentation that characterises the nominated property.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are the diversity of landscapes and forms of use shaped by agricultural use; the wide range of traditionally-cultivated altitude levels; the livestock diversity, typical of the Alps, and the herd mobility; the farming system, organisational and legal forms; and the agricultural constitution. ICOMOS notes that this identification of the attributes is used, with almost the same exact formulation, as “assessment levels” in the comparative analysis. Whilst the comparative analysis must be based on the understanding of the attributes of the nominated property, attributes and “assessment levels” represent different concepts.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed around five “assessment levels”. Four of them reflect almost the same exact formulation as the identified attributes of the nominated property. An additional assessment level is used and is defined as “archaeological and architectural heritage as well as other functional elements of the cultural landscape”. The State Party defines these elements vaguely as structures, infrastructures and the traditional land design adapted to the purpose of use (landforms, terracing, etc.). ICOMOS notes that except for the wooden or log barns, no other built elements, such as human settlements, farmhouses, etc., are referred to throughout the nomination dossier. Moreover, the delineation of the component parts excludes such elements from the nominated property.

The comparative analysis is structured in two parts. The first part focuses on grassland cultural landscapes outside the alpine region; and the second part on cultivated grasslands within the alpine region.

In the first part, the nominated property is compared to the following World Heritage properties: Fertő / Neusiedlersee Cultural Landscape (Austria/Hungary); Hortobágy National Park – The Puszta (Hungary); The Causses and the Cévennes, Mediterranean agro-pastoral Cultural Landscape(France); Pyrénées – Mont Perdu (France/Spain); Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley (Andorra); Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland (Sweden); and The English Lake District (United Kingdom). The following places included on Tentative Lists are also compared with the nominated property: Original Meadow- pastures Sites of Slovakia (Slovakia); Wooded meadows (Estonia); and The Burren (Ireland). In addition, the following places are considered: Rhön, Swabian Alb and the Black Forest (Biosphere Reserves located in Germany); White Carpathians (Biosphere Reserve in Czechia); and
Transylvania (Romania). This part concludes that meadow cultures play a subordinate role in most of the World Heritage properties identified as comparators and that other places have suffered considerable losses in grassland area and quality due to abandonment.

In the White Carpathians, located in the border region between Czechia and Slovakia, and the Transylvania Plateau in Romania, meadow cultures of dry and medium locations still exist in an excellent diversity of types, quality and extent. The State Party argues that both places lack the humid side of meadow cultures, which are best represented in the nominated property. In addition, integration of the meadow cultures with a corresponding mountain pastoral system are less pronounced.

The second part of the comparative analysis is based on the same assessment levels, which are then divided in sub-types/variants creating an extremely complex framework. For instance, there are twenty-five variants associated just with the first assessment level. Therefore, it’s request for additional information sent in October 2022. ICOMOS asked the State Party to provide a succinct descriptive conclusion as to why the nominated property stands out according to the values it expresses compared with the fourteen reference areas identified. ICOMOS also requested clarification on the process used to identify the component parts and specifically why other areas within the same territory were excluded. In addition, ICOMOS asked for a succinct and clear explanation of how each of the fifty-four component parts contributes substantially to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

Regarding the selection of component parts, the State Party explained, in the additional information provided in November 2022, that they all contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value; that close social, cultural and functional connections have existed between them for centuries; that the nominated property represents a geo-cultural region, namely the grassland cultural landscapes of the mountain zones of Central Europe and the Alpine region, due to its exceptional diversity and, in some cases, outstanding quality of cultural landscape elements; that sustainable land use has shaped the landscape in an outstanding way. What the comparative analysis has failed to do is to show how meadow landscapes shaped by mowing are widespread. What distinguishes the nominated property is the diversity of meadow and pasture types and the extent of the area still under cultivation. What the comparative analysis has failed to do is to show how meadow cultivation and mowing can be considered in itself outstanding, or how this type of land use has shaped the landscape in an outstanding way.

ICOMOS considers that some of these justifications are too broad and that some relate to the justification of the potential Outstanding Universal Value, rather than offering clear justifications as to how the component parts were selected. ICOMOS also observes similar shortcomings in the justifications given as to how each component part contributes to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. There is a lot of repetition in the justifications given and parts of it refer to the nominated property as a whole, rather than the way in which each of the component parts contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS noted that the second part of the comparative analysis is mainly based on a series of narrowly-defined parameters, which are analysed separately. As such, it considered that this approach detracts from the overall understanding of the relative significance of each of the fourteen reference areas identified when compared with the nominated property. Therefore, ICOMOS asked the State Party to provide succinct explanations in a narrative form as to how each of the fourteen areas compares with the nominated property.

Overall, ICOMOS considers that some aspects of the assessment levels are used in a narrow sense. In particular, the use of the sub-types/variants reflects an approach where the comparative analysis is tailored to fit the precise combination of elements the State Party wishes to make salient, and which of course cannot be found in any other heritage place. This is perhaps best exemplified by the focus on altitude range or on the diversity of livestock breeds. ICOMOS also notes that herd mobility is part of the assessment levels; however, there is almost no information about it in the nomination dossier.

ICOMOS considers that the rationale for choosing the component parts is largely related to the delineation of the boundaries of the component parts – and the choices made as to what to include (as well as exclude) from the nominated property – rather than on a clear understanding as to how each component part contributes to the potential Outstanding Universal Value, in a readily defined and discernible way as specified by paragraph 137 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

ICOMOS is also of the view that the focus of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value on the diversity of Alpine grassland types, limits the scope of the comparative analysis and the understanding of what is important about the different heritage places used as comparators. The comparative analysis shows that meadow landscapes shaped by mowing are widespread. What distinguishes the nominated property is the diversity of meadow and pasture types and the extent of the area still under cultivation. What the comparative analysis has failed to do is to show how meadow cultivation and mowing can be considered in itself outstanding, or how this type of land use has shaped the landscape in an outstanding way.

ICOMOS does not consider that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.
Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criterion (v).

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property reflects the harmonious interaction of man with the environment in a landscape shaped by the Ice Age on the fringes of the Northern Alps. The State Party adds that the grassland farming system, which has been maintained for centuries, has created an exceptionally wide range of meadows and pastures on the most diverse of sites.

The justification of this criterion depends on whether the nominated property can be seen as an outstanding example of a traditional land use, which is representative of the interaction of man with the environment. ICOMOS considers that the traditional land-use processes exemplified by the nominated property are widespread. The nomination dossier, and the additional information provided, have not sufficiently demonstrated how those processes have created specific manifestations on the landscape, which could be considered outstanding.

ICOMOS also notes that the justification provided by the State Party focuses on a grassland farming system that is based on many small family-based farms. However, the delineation of the component parts focuses almost exclusively on the meadows and pastures and on their variety (i.e., litter meadows, wet meadows, dry meadows, species-rich hay meadows, hummock meadows, common pastures, woodland pastures), which implies a typological approach. In terms of built heritage, only traditional meadow barns are included within the boundaries of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the justification is based largely upon the extent and variety of the grassland areas of the Garmisch-Partenkirchen district and not on evidence as to how the nominated property constitutes a farming system.

ICOMOS does not consider that criterion (v) has been demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the extent to which the nominated property includes the full representation of the critical elements that constitute the farming system and the functional links between them.

ICOMOS considers that what is included in the nominated property does not reflect a farming system but a collection of meadows, pastures and wetlands. The nominated property does not reflect other critical elements of the farming system such as human settlements or transhumance routes; woodlands are insufficiently included as well. Woodlands help ensure visual integrity and together with the alpine ridges are critical to the appearance of the landscape.

The State Party considers livestock diversity and herd mobility as one of the main attributes of the nominated property; however, little information is provided about the transhumance routes and drove roads in the nomination dossier. Therefore, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked the State Party to provide additional information on this aspect. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party replied that no written or graphic information existed about the grazing drives in the nominated property and, therefore, a survey had to be launched quickly to respond to ICOMOS’ request.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS also enquired about the rationale for excluding built areas from the nominated property. In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party indicated that farmsteads are of great importance for the agricultural system and, as such, are decisive elements for the preservation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. However, it added that in most cases farmsteads were excluded because they are mostly located within modern settlements and that many have been restructured and rebuilt on numerous occasions.

Integrity is also a measure of the wholeness of the nominated property and whether its size is adequate to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the significance of the nominated property. In its request for additional information sent in October 2022, ICOMOS noted that the fragmentation of the nominated property into fifty-four component parts does not reflect the idea of an overall cultural landscape.

ICOMOS considers that the rationale for nominating the area as a whole, and how the nominated property might be perceived as an entity, has not emerged clearly from the nomination dossier nor from the additional information that was provided. The delineation of the component parts seems to have been determined largely by considerations related to the typological approachfavoured in the nomination dossier and not in relation to the need to express the full representation of the agricultural system. ICOMOS recalls that the comparative analysis has not provided a clear rationale about the choice of the component parts and how they contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property as a whole, in a substantial and discernible way.

ICOMOS also notes that the areas of some component parts are extremely small (the smallest being 1.29 hectares). In its Interim Report, ICOMOS also asked for clarification about the enclaves in some of the component parts, which seemed to result from the exclusion of built
structures. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party explained that the excluded structures would not provide an essential contribution to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Only for one particular case – component part W5a - Alpine hummock meadows around the Kranzberg mountain and on the plateau – an explanation is offered for the exclusion; the State Party clarified that this was due to the explicit wishes of the plot owners and the municipality.

Assessing conditions of integrity requires also an analysis of the extent to which the nominated property suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect. As regards the size of the uncultivated areas, the State Party has replied that such information was difficult to determine but according to its calculations the areas total 2,900 hectares maximum.

Based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, although abandonment of agricultural fields and natural evolution have been successfully countered recently, there should be more attention paid to this factor. The technical evaluation mission also observed that some meadows, even now, lay fallow for many years.

Since the nominated property does not include all the necessary elements to represent a farming system with all its social, economic and functional dimensions, and cannot be considered to be of an adequate size, integrity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on whether the potential Outstanding Universal Value is truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes, namely through use and function, traditions and techniques.

ICOMOS notes that the nomination dossier provides little historical information, relying largely on ecological evidence to assert the authenticity of the landscape. Farming techniques have changed over time; especially since the 1950s, mechanisation has led to the replacement of some traditional practices. Nevertheless, because of the difficult terrain, a lot of manual labour is still required today. Based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, there are parts of the landscape that were heavily modified by flattening and manuring the meadows. This activity peaked during the interwar period, but the practice was discontinued from the 1940s. Such changes are irreversible and there are elements of the nominated property where these are dominant, although hummock meadows also survived alongside them.

Meadow cultivation and animal husbandry are still based on the annual cycle of the seasons. Common grazing rights go back centuries; the various rights and their developments that were applied to the forests of medieval landlords are well recorded and were maintained over the centuries almost without interruption to the present day, despite changes in land ownership.

Since the understanding of the attributes related to the completeness of the farming system is insufficient, authenticity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series, and of the individual component parts, have not been met.

Boundaries

In its request for additional information sent in October 2022, ICOMOS noted that the nomination dossier presents the serial property both in terms of “component parts” and “clusters”. Since the latter is not a term used in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention – and is not clearly defined in the nomination dossier either – ICOMOS considered that it creates confusion. In the additional information sent in November 2022, the State Party explained that the purpose of combining component parts into clusters was to make them visible as belonging together. ICOMOS considers that, as a serial nomination, it is the sum of all component parts that constitutes the whole nominated property, and therefore the term “cluster” should be avoided. The same applies to references to clusters contributing to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. ICOMOS stresses that each component part (and not the cluster) must contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property as a whole, in a substantial, scientific, readily defined and discernible way.

ICOMOS also asked the State Party to clarify the parameters used to delineate the component parts, other than the different views of the actors, and how those parameters are linked to a clear mapping of the attributes of the nominated property and the conditions of integrity of each individual component part. ICOMOS is of the view that the boundaries of several component parts are very intricate, with areas within some component parts only linked by a narrow strip of land whereas in other cases it is not clear why there is a division into different component parts.

The State Party explained that it followed a three-step process to define the boundaries of the nominated property. First, through cartographic overlay, by identifying a map of potential boundaries of the nominated property, taking into account traditionally managed areas, natural elements, areas with grazing rights and limits of active traditional cultivation; infrastructure and planning areas were cut out. Subsequently, the resulting map was presented to farmers and communities after review by the World Heritage Steering Group and approval by the County Council. This was followed by a long participatory process in collaboration with relevant actors, involving numerous meetings, which led to the final delineation of the boundaries as presented in the nomination dossier.
Based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, the district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen consists of twenty-two villages and only one of them was not invited to participate in the nomination process; this village is located in the northern extremity of the district where common grazing rights and traditional forms of pastures and meadows have not survived. Two further villages chose not to participate, but the remaining nineteen communities have all taken part in the process.

The boundaries of alpine pastures are aligned with the edge of the clearings, representing the current situation between clearings and woodlands. However, the situation in the past may have been different and might change in the future depending on the intensity of grazing in the woodlands and the effects of climate change. In addition, cattle climb and graze above the edge of the clearings, well into the woodland. Despite this obvious connection, most of the woodlands were excluded from the nominated property. ICOMOS also observed a certain reluctance to include all woodlands where common grazing rights exist but are not exercised. In some circumstances, even in participating villages, some hummock meadows on one side of the road are included in the nominated property but the ones on the other side of the road are not. There were also some concerns about including any farm buildings within the nominated property for fear of additional restrictions and building regulations. This was to some extent confirmed by the answers provided by the State Party in February 2023, in response to ICOMOS' requests about the enclaves in a few component parts.

ICOMOS considers that the fragmentation of the nominated property (coupled with the small size of some of the component parts) diminishes its overall coherence as a proposed cultural landscape. The intricate boundaries of some of the component parts add to the problem, raising overall issues of manageability of the property as a whole.

The State Party has not defined a buffer zone and argues that it is not needed since the main conservation measure needed is active cultivation. It also considers that buffer zones do not safeguard the nominated property from the factors that currently (or could potentially) affect it, such as the closing down of farms, changes in agricultural policy or climate change. The State Party also considers that visual relationships are irrelevant for the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

In its request for additional information sent in October 2022, ICOMOS asked the State Party to provide details as to why visual relationships are not relevant and why a buffer zone could not be used to give an added layer of protection to the nominated property in response to climate change effects. In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party reiterated its position regarding visual relationships, arguing that the values of the nominated property are primarily preserved by the agricultural work of numerous small farms and by grazing cooperatives. It added that the preservation of visual relationships has never played a role in the protection of the nominated property. Regarding the impacts of climate change, the State Party acknowledges that it expects some shifts in the range of species of grassland habitats but considers that buffer zones are not a suitable instrument to counteract this process.

ICOMOS disagrees with some of the arguments provided by the State Party and considers that visual relationships would be important to consider in relation to the understanding of the nominated property as an agricultural system. In addition to their purpose as an added layer of protection, buffer zones are also important to protect the setting, in cases when the setting is not integral to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of a nominated property. Buffer zones can also aid with the understanding of a serial property as a coherent entity. IUCN also notes that a buffer zone would contribute to ecological connectivity between the component parts and the integrity of the wider landscape overall.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the nomination dossier and the additional information provided do not clearly explain why the nominated property could be perceived as an entity, nor why it should be considered as a cultural landscape. The framework used to structure the comparative analysis is largely based on a combination of parameters that seems tailored to fit the precise combination of elements the State Party wishes to make salient such as the diversity of meadow types or the altitude range. However, those elements do not justify by themselves why the nominated property should be considered as an outstanding example of a traditional land use.

ICOMOS considers that the attributes that would convey the values of the nominated property as a potential outstanding farming system have not been clearly defined; what is included within the boundaries of the nominated property is only a part of that farming system and basically reflects a collection of meadows, pastures and wetlands. ICOMOS therefore considers that criterion (v) is not justified. Conditions of authenticity cannot be demonstrated without a clear understanding of all the attributes that would reflect how the traditional processes of meadow cultivation and mowing have created specific manifestations on the landscape, and that would reflect other social and functional aspects of the farming system such as the human settlements, the farmsteads and the transhumance routes.

Because of the excessive fragmentation of the component parts, the nominated property does not include all the necessary elements to express its proposed Outstanding Universal Value nor can it be considered to have an adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that would convey the significance of the nominated property as a farming system. Hence, the integrity of the nominated property is not demonstrated.

ICOMOS also considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and its fragmentation into fifty-four
component parts (some quite small) are inadequate to convey the understanding of the nominated property as a cultural landscape. ICOMOS considers furthermore that the arguments provided as to why a buffer zone is not needed are not convincing and that visual relationships and ecological connectivity should be given more consideration. A buffer zone could also help address threats such as invasive species. The threat posed by those species is not sufficiently appreciated. The same can be said about the potential impacts of climate change on the nominated property. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that the understanding of factors affecting the nominated property should be strengthened with a view to reinforcing its long-term resilience.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
ICOMOS already noted the lack of historical information and data about land use in the past, including photographic and cartographic evidence of the evolution of the landscape over time, in the nomination dossier. ICOMOS notes that the nomination process was the first time that the traditional grassland areas were identified and inventoried, or at least this was the first time that maps of these were produced.

Despite the efforts made by the State Party to provide additional information, there are still considerable documentation gaps. ICOMOS notes the difficulties of the State Party in responding to its requests about the total area of uncultivated or partly-cultivated plots as well as in relation to the transhumance routes and grazing drives. ICOMOS considers that a comprehensive landscape history (or landscape biography) of the area has yet to be developed. Future research could uncover more information on grazing and other rights, the exact extent of associated woodland areas, the dates and exact area of lost or modified pastures and meadows, and similar details, which could lead to a reassessment of the nominated property and the way in which it is currently delineated.

Ecological research about the region, on the other hand, is highly developed, and therefore the materiality of the landscape, at least when it comes to land cover and living organisms in general, is sufficiently recorded and disseminated.

Overall, ICOMOS considers that there is insufficient information about the evolution of the nominated property, about the tangible attributes that would reflect in a clear way the combined works of nature and of man, and about the built fabric of the nominated property.

Conservation measures
The conservation of the nominated property is, to a large extent, dependent on maintaining the continuity of traditional practices of meadow cultivation and mowing as well as animal husbandry. Meadows with steep humps and deep hollows must be mown with a scythe; meadows with flatter humps can be mown with small power mowers and other machines. Some of the meadows are so “unproductive” that they can only be mown every second year.

Economic incentives and governmental support are also critical to maintaining the nominated property since this is a region of marginal revenue for agriculture. Very few of the farmers have enough livestock to live on farming exclusively; for many, farming is a part-time occupation. The maintenance of agricultural use is supported or made possible by a number of government subsidies, namely the Contractual Nature Conservation Programme (in German, VNP); the Cultural Landscape Programme (in German, KULAP); direct European Union payments; and the compensatory allowance for less-favoured areas (LFAs). Based on the nomination dossier, the Contractual Nature Conservation Programme is at the heart of the agricultural support programmes. This financial mechanism supports and rewards the cultivation of meadows, pastures, fields and ponds in areas of ecological value. In return, farmers and other actors agree to manage the land for a period of five years in accordance with conservation guidelines, which are generally essentially based on traditional patterns of use.

The maps submitted by the State Party in response to the ICOMOS request to whether the nominated property was nominated as a relict landscape or a continuing landscape (or a combination of both) shows that large parts of the nominated property are currently uncultivated. For instance, some litter meadows in Murnau show the signs of years or decades of neglect. As such, ICOMOS considers that the possible abandonment of agricultural fields should be tackled through a combination of management responses, since, as clarified by the State Party, it is not possible to legislate against abandonment.

In addition, ICOMOS notes with concern that it is indicated in the nomination dossier that the sole condition for the preservation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property is the continuation of the centuries-old system of grassland farming and animal husbandry. It adds that the potential inscription of the nominated property on the World Heritage List does not imply any obligation on the part of the farmers to continue to cultivate the land (in any form whatsoever), nor does it lead to the introduction or designation of additional restrictions or protected areas.

Since the State Party confirmed that it nominated the property as a continuing landscape, and not as a relict landscape nor a combination of both, the continuation of the traditional agricultural processes is critical; without it the heritage significance of the nominated property would not be maintained.

Monitoring
ICOMOS considers that the choice of indicators and the frequency for their assessment are overall adequate. ICOMOS advises basing the monitoring programme in a well-established baseline, against which changes can be identified, as well as to identify indicator thresholds that clearly define when action is needed.
ICOMOS notes that a number of organisations are to be responsible for the monitoring of the different indicators and that the results of such monitoring processes are to be kept in different locations. ICOMOS considers that for the monitoring programme to be effective in detecting potential problems concerning the state of conservation of the nominated property and in informing preventive actions, it is necessary to have a data management system that would compile information from different sources.

ICOMOS considers that the documentation about the nominated property, both in terms of its history and development, and in terms of important elements of the farming system that would reflect in a clear way the combined works of nature and of man, is insufficient. The understanding of the natural features of the nominated property is deeper than that of the cultural ones. However, as a continuing landscape, and not as a relict landscape nor a combination of both, the understanding of the traditional agricultural processes is critical; without it the heritage significance of the nominated property would not be maintained.

ICOMOS is concerned about the fact that the potential inscription of the nominated property on the World Heritage List will not imply any obligation on the part of the farmers to continue to cultivate the land (in any form whatsoever), nor will it lead to the introduction or designation of additional restrictions or protected areas.

ICOMOS advises basing the monitoring programme in a well-established baseline, against which changes can be identified, as well as to identify indicator thresholds that clearly define when action is needed.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
There is no national (federal) law that protects the nominated property in its entirety because, in Germany, natural or cultural designations are delegated to the Länder. Nevertheless, there are forestry, planning and water protection legislations that include provisions that can affect the entirety of the nominated property.

In its request for additional information sent in October 2022, ICOMOS noted that the areas of some component parts seem to coincide with existing designations such as Natura 2000, and requested the State Party to submit maps identifying the overlaps between those designations (and other nature conservation-related designations) and the delimitation of the component parts. ICOMOS also noted that most of the instruments identified for the protection of the nominated property are nature conservation-related instruments, not cultural heritage specific ones. Therefore, ICOMOS asked for clarification about the legal protection of the nominated property, both in its entirety and/or for the individual component parts, as a cultural heritage property.

The maps submitted by the State Party in the additional information provided in November 2022 show that most of the component parts are part of protected areas which are legally protected by nature conservation laws, or are located within protected outskirt areas. ICOMOS notes that, in several component parts those protections do not cover the component parts in their entirety, whereas, in some cases both types of protection apply to the same component part.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked about the legal instruments that apply to the protected outskirt areas, since this term is not used in the nomination dossier nor in the management plan. ICOMOS also requested further information about the legal and regulatory measures that apply to settlement areas.

In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party replied that those areas are referred to in the nomination dossier. Upon verification, ICOMOS assumes that what the State Party refers to is the term “outdoor areas”. Most importantly, the State Party clarified that the outskirt areas, as well as the settlement areas, are subject to the Federal Building Code. It explained that paragraph 35 of this Code regulates a far-reaching building ban outside of any existing settlement areas and outside of areas that have already been permissibly over-planned.

Management system
The ownership of the nominated property is very complex. Around forty percent of the area of the nominated property is privately owned. Other areas are owned by the administrative district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, the Free State of Bavaria, the Federal government and the different municipalities.

Consequently, the governance arrangements are also extremely complex. In its request for additional information sent in October 2022, ICOMOS stressed the need to identify who is accountable, from a heritage perspective, for managing the nominated property, especially when considering its complexity and size. Of the actors identified in the management plan, ICOMOS notes that the World Heritage Steering Group seems to have a management role over the entirety of the nominated property but that the responsibilities of this Steering Group are insufficiently detailed. Therefore, ICOMOS also requested further details from the State Party on this aspect. In addition, ICOMOS asked for details about the role and responsibilities of the Lower nature conservation authority of the administrative district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen and the Ammergau Alps Nature Park in the protection and management of the nominated property; who holds (or would hold in the future) the primary responsibility for managing the nominated property, based on its proposed Outstanding Universal Value; and the institutional mandate of that primary manager and what instruments and powers are at its disposal to effectively assume this role.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party replied that the political responsibility does not fall to the World Heritage Steering Group, but to the district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The district (and the associated District Office) is the administrative level
responsible for all municipalities in the nominated area. It added that the people who will be responsible for the administration of the nominated property will work in the District Office and that it is the district that will provide the necessary funds for the administration of the nominated property in its budget.

ICOMOS also asked for clarification regarding the nature of the management plan included as part of the nomination dossier, in its request for additional information sent in October 2022. ICOMOS is of the view that what is proposed as the management plan seems to be what is usually called an overall management framework, intended as a coordination and strategic instrument for the property as a whole. ICOMOS also noted that the management plan is without binding effect for legal and natural persons. Therefore, ICOMOS asked for clarification on how the management plan is integrated with other planning instruments and, in the event of conflicts between the provisions included in them, how will the provisions of the management plan prevail, given that the management plan has no binding effect. In addition, given the high number of measures and actors included in the action plan incorporated in the management plan, ICOMOS asked for clarification as to how its implementation will be ensured.

In the additional information sent in November 2022, the State Party replied that the management plan took into consideration the provisions included in other existing plans and therefore any potential conflicts are excluded. Regarding the implementation of the plan, the State Party stated that priority measures are already being implemented. It added that the resources for the implementation of the measures will be scheduled annually in the county budgets.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked for some final clarifications about the role of the World Heritage Steering Group, since in the proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value included in the nomination dossier it is stated that the Steering Group will be the supreme body for decisions related to the nominated property. The State Party clarified, in the additional information of February 2023, that it is the District Council that bears the political and organisational responsibility for the nominated property. The Steering Group has been established during the nomination process to guarantee that the farmers and the municipalities are part of the governance arrangements. The State Party included a diagram that clarifies the governance arrangements and submitted a revision to the section on protection and management requirements of the proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value to reflect adequately the roles of the District Council and the Steering Group.

Visitor management
The high volume of visitors and traffic are reported by the State Party as one of the factors affecting the nominated property. In periods of high visitation, traffic jams can occur regularly on the roads and in the parking areas. Unofficial parking outside of designated parking spaces can also be a nuisance.

It is not possible to determine precise visitor numbers since the component parts are open areas. The District Office of Garmisch-Partenkirchen publishes the tourism figures for its individual municipalities every year; these are mainly based on accommodation figures and guest surveys. Visitation is highest in summer.

Visitors to the nominated property are primarily attracted by its aesthetic qualities, as well as the diverse opportunities for sporting activities. ICOMOS notes that tourism development opportunities are curtailed by natural and landscape protection restrictions; geomorphology also hinders certain types of developments.

There is no specific tourism strategy for the nominated property. Based on the information included in the nomination dossier, a traffic and visitor management concept of the brand Zugspitz-Region Garmisch-Partenkirchen is being developed.

At present, there is no museum or visitor centre within or in the immediate vicinity of the nominated property that is explicitly and specifically dedicated to it.

The management plan of the nominated property includes some provisions related to visitation and tourism, such as launching specific visitor research and periodic visitor surveys. However, these provisions are expected to be undertaken only if the nominated property was to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Community involvement
Based on the information provided in the nomination dossier, a very high number of people and institutions were involved with the nomination process. The State Party acknowledges that concerns over additional restrictions and obligations sometimes required compromises. The local population, particularly the agricultural community, was involved in the issues concerning the definition and demarcation of the nominated property in the form of a bottom-up and community right-based approach. The key documents constituting the nomination dossier, including the management plan, were made available for public discussion between 2019 and 2021.

In the area where the nominated property is located, communal grazing on common land based on ancestral customs has been preserved to a high degree up until today. The Rechtierwesen, or system of rightsholders, has proved to be a decisive factor in preserving the small-scale structure of agriculture in the area. In almost all villages, there are still rightsholder communities, sometimes several per village. Based on the information provided in the nomination dossier, out of the thirteen expected members of the UNESCO Steering Committee, seven will be farmers, including district farmers of the Alpine Pasture Farming Association of Upper Bavaria, and the district chairman of the Bavarian Farmers’ Association.
Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal framework is adequate for the nominated property as it is currently presented. As for the planning framework, ICOMOS notes the assurances of the State Party that the management plan is well integrated with other planning instruments and that no conflicts exist between the provisions of the different plans. ICOMOS is of the view that the management plan reflects what is normally called a management planning framework. This is considered appropriate given the large area of the nominated property and the high number of component parts. However, ICOMOS notes that the management plan has no binding effect and is to be implemented by a considerable number of actors. Ensuring its implementation will therefore prove challenging without strong collaboration between these actors as well as regular monitoring to track progress.

The governance arrangements are considered adequate after the clarifications provided by the State Party through the additional information sent.

6 Conclusion

The Alpine and pre-alpine meadows, pastures and wetlands in the Ammergau, the Lake Staffelsee Area and the Werdenfelser Land is presented as an outstanding example of the harmonious interaction of humans with the environment in a landscape shaped by the Ice Age on the fringes of the Northern Alps. Nominated as a continuing cultural landscape, the property is said to represent a grassland farming system, which has been maintained for centuries and has led to an exceptionally wide range of meadows, pastures, and wetlands.

ICOMOS considers that one of the most important aspects of the nominated property is the extent to which the communal grazing on common land, based on ancestral customs, has been preserved. ICOMOS acknowledges that the traditional processes of meadow cultivation and mowing, or the driving of livestock to pastures, are deeply anchored in the local cultural identity, and that local communities are dedicated to continuing the traditional agricultural practices.

ICOMOS appreciates the efforts made by the State Party to respond to its requests for clarification. However, despite all the additional information provided, ICOMOS considers that it has not been demonstrated that the nominated serial property, as currently delineated, constitutes a cultural landscape. In addition, ICOMOS considers that for the nominated property to represent a grassland farming system, the delineation of its boundaries would have needed to include other physical manifestations of such a system. Whilst the State Party described the nominated property as a socio-economic system of land and resource use that is based on many (mostly) small family-based farms, ICOMOS notes that no farmsteads are included within the proposed boundaries. The only built structures included are the traditional wooden barns. ICOMOS considers that the meadows, pastures, and wetlands do not exist in isolation from the other elements of the farming system.

The property is nominated as a cultural landscape – which represents the combined works of nature and of man – and is proposed as an example of the interaction of humans with the environment. Therefore, it was critical to identify how the traditional processes of meadow cultivation and mowing, as well as animal husbandry, have created specific manifestations on the landscape, which could be considered outstanding. ICOMOS considers that those manifestations have not been clearly identified. Diversity of meadows, pastures and wetlands is insufficient to justify exceptionality. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that criterion (v) has not been demonstrated.

ICOMOS also notes a lack of documentation about the evolution of the nominated property over time; the nomination dossier includes little historical information and data about land use in the past, including photographic and cartographic evidence of the evolution of the landscape over time. Whereas documentation on ecological aspects of the nominated property seems to be readily available, ICOMOS considers that there is insufficient documentation about important aspects of the farming system, namely in terms of the areas that are presently uncultivated or partly cultivated, and in relation to the transhumance routes and grazing drives.

The comparative analysis, despite its length and complexity, has been based on a series of parameters which in some cases are used in a narrow sense, such as the altitude range, and in others are related to elements for which there is insufficient information, such as the herd mobility, or which relate to features that are only marginally included within the nominated property, like the archaeological and architectural heritage.

ICOMOS considers that the framework used to develop the comparative analysis does not provide evidence that the nominated property would merit consideration to be included on the World Heritage List, especially given its lack of cohesion as an entity. ICOMOS also notes that the selection and delineation of the component parts is largely influenced by considerations other than the mapping of the attributes or the reasons why each component part contributes to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, in a readily defined and discernible way.

ICOMOS considers that the excessive fragmentation of the nominated property into fifty-four components parts, some quite small, is a particular weakness of this nomination. Consequently, since the nominated property does not include all the necessary elements to represent a farming system with all its social, economic and functional dimensions, and cannot be considered to have an adequate size, conditions of integrity are not met. Overall, the nominated property does not suffer from considerable adverse effects of development or neglect. However, ICOMOS notes the lack of precise information about the total area of the uncultivated or partially-cultivated plots. In
addition, ICOMOS notes that farming is now a part-time occupation for many of the farmers in the nominated property; very few of them have enough livestock to live on farming exclusively.

Whilst there is continuation in terms of use and function as well as traditions and techniques, conditions of authenticity cannot be demonstrated because of insufficient understanding of the attributes related to the completeness of the farming system.

The fragmented character of the nominated property is reflected by the proposed boundaries. Moreover, a buffer zone has not been proposed, although ICOMOS considers that it can contribute to the understanding of the nominated property as a whole, and to ecological connectivity.

In general, the governance and management arrangements are considered adequate for the protection of the nominated property as delineated, but some aspects could be improved. ICOMOS is concerned about several statements included in the nomination dossier that the potential inscription of the property on the World Heritage List would not lead to the introduction or designation of additional restrictions or protected areas. The State Party considers that the nominated property would be protected mainly by maintaining, strengthening, and expanding the existing system of positive incentives, in order to enable the farmers to continue traditional land use and animal husbandry.

ICOMOS also notes that some of the factors that could potentially affect the nominated property, such as the impacts of climate change and invasive species, are insufficiently addressed and would merit further consideration. ICOMOS considers that the long-term vulnerability of the nominated property in the face of social, economic and environmental change should be addressed.

ICOMOS considers that the fundamental premise of the current nomination to concentrate mainly on a collection of meadows, pastures and wetlands, and on their diversity, is insufficient to demonstrate how the nominated property reflects an outstanding example of a traditional land use which is manifested in an exceptional form in the landscape. In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property does not justify Outstanding Universal Value and cannot be recommended for inscription on the World Heritage List.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the Alpine and pre-alpine meadows, pastures and wetlands in the Ammergau, the Lake Staffelsee Area and the Werdenfelser Land, Germany, should not be inscribed on the World Heritage List.
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated component parts (November 2022)
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium)

Location
Municipality of Waadhoeke
Province of Fryslân (Friesland)
Netherlands

Brief description
Built between 1774 and 1781, the nominated property is a moving mechanical scale model of the solar system as it was known at the time. Conceived and built by an ordinary citizen – the wool manufacturer Eise Eisinga – the model is built into the ceiling and south wall of the former living room/bedroom of its creator. Powered by one single pendulum clock, it provides a realistic image of the positions of the Sun, the Moon, the Earth and five other planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn). The planets revolve around the Sun in real time and the distance between the planets are at scale. The model fills the entire ceiling of the room, making it one of the earliest predecessors of the ceiling and projection planetariums of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a monument.

Included in the Tentative List
17 August 2011 as “Eise Eisinga Planetarium”

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 5 to 8 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the boundary of the nominated property, the buffer zone, and the name of the nominated property.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 9 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
By the mid-17th century, heliocentrism (that is, the notion that the Earth revolves around the Sun) was generally accepted in scholarly circles. In the 18th century, numerous mechanisms and moving models of the solar system were built as visual aids to show the movements of the planets and sometimes their moons. Known in English-speaking nations as ‘orreries’, these models were expensive to make and required considerable technical and scientific knowledge. Hence, they were often built by specialised clockmakers (sometimes in collaboration with scholars) and used for demonstration purposes in academic settings or as items owned by prestigious collectors for the upper classes of society. Those orreries were usually portable, small-scale representations of the solar system.

‘Room planetariums’ were less common and it is unclear from where the design of the nominated property derived. While Danish astronomer Ole Rømer had installed a planetarium in the ceiling of the Round Tower (Rundetårn) in Copenhagen (Denmark) as early as 1697, measuring nearly two metres in diameter, the mechanism built by Eise Eisinga between 1774 and 1781 was even larger. The scale model of the nominated property has a diameter of 3.2 metres – a size that is largely dictated by the width of the room (4.07 metres). The design of the model by Eise Eisinga is also very different from that of Ole Rømer. The latter was driven by a crank mechanism and represented a compromise between the old geocentric worldview and the heliocentric one. The model by Rømer was damaged by fire in 1728 and later reconstructed following a different design.

Eise Eisinga was not a scholar but a wool manufacturer with an aptitude for mathematics and mechanics, and a special interest in astronomy. While most 18th century planetariums employed fine mechanical gear trains, Eisinga used mainly wooden disks with inserted iron pins. Based on his experience of hand-held combs for wool
Eise Eisinga kept guest books from 1783 onwards, attesting to the educational purpose of the planetarium and providing proof that it attracted considerable numbers of visitors.

In 1825, the planetarium was taken over by the State by royal decree, although Eise Eisinga received assurance of free lodging in the house for him and his descendants. When he died in 1828, his son Jacobus succeeded him in keeping the planetarium in operation. During the custodianship of Jacobus, the house underwent at least two architectural adjustments in 1838 and 1848.

After the death of Jacobus Eisinga in 1858, the State donated the planetarium to the municipality of Franeker, under the obligation to maintain and conserve the mechanism for all time.

Since 1930, the house has been uninhabited but always open to visitors. To this day, it is open to the public and used as an astronomical education centre. From the time that the planetarium was completed, the room itself has continuously served as a reception and presentation area. Since 2008 and 2016 respectively, two neighbouring buildings play a supporting role in the functioning of the planetarium.

The planetarium mechanism (and its functioning) is inextricably linked to the building in which it is located. The description of the planetarium, drawn up by Eise Eisinga in 1784 for his sons and the guest books, kept since 1783, are important sources of information both to the understanding of the nominated property and its conservation.

The original boundaries of the nominated property as proposed in the nomination dossier had an area of 0.00271 ha, and a buffer zone of 2.12539 ha.

State of conservation
The planetarium has been in operation almost continuously since 1781, except for a brief period between 1790 and 1797, during the Patriot Revolution which led Eise Eisinga and other insurgents to flee abroad.

Based on two illustrations from the early 19th century, it is possible to see that the doors on either side of the closet-bed, which had originally been fitted with windows with glazing-bars, are later depicted as fully-panelled doors.

In 1838, adjustments to facilitate access to the mechanism came at the expense of the former small study of Eise Eisinga. In 1848, larger windows were added in the northern facade to allow more light into the planetarium room and the floor above the mechanism was replaced by loose planks, in order to facilitate annual maintenance.

During a bombing raid in World War II, a bomb fell about 150 metres from the planetarium, which led the cogwheel mechanism to come to a standstill and the Mercury wheel

Eise Eisinga needed a large surface area to show the planetary orbits in their correct proportions, therefore he used the ceiling of his living room to install his orrery. On the Prussian Blue and gold painted ceiling, the Sun is painted in the middle, and around it, in six circular slots, the six planets known at the time (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) revolve around it. The distances between the planets are at scale (one millimetre on the ceiling corresponds to one million kilometres), but the dimensions of the planetary globes are not, otherwise the Earth model would have been invisibly small.

Made by a local clockmaker, the pendulum clock that controls the mechanism is housed in the space above the ceiling of the closet-bed. Composed of four cogwheels with an escapement and a pendulum with a length of seventy centimetres, the cogwheel mechanism is driven by nine slowly moving weights that must be raised manually, at intervals of five days to six months. The cogwheels are accessible via a short staircase opposite the entrance door of the room.

Because the planets revolve in real time, the mechanism seems to stand still; Mercury, the planet closest to the Sun, goes around in eighty-eight days whereas Saturn, the outermost planet, takes more than twenty-nine years.

Eise Eisinga started building the planetarium in 1774 after popular rumours that the conjunction of four planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars and Jupiter) and the Moon, which took place that year, could cause the Earth and those other planets to depart from their orbits and burn up in the Sun. He wanted to show there was no reason for alarm and that such a conjunction of planets is in fact based on an optical illusion: the planets may appear to be close to each other, but, in reality, they are a long way away from each other.

Historical research shows that as early as 1778, the planetarium could already rotate. In 1780, Jean Henri van Swinden – a renowned professor of philosophy, logic, metaphysics and physics at the University of Franeker – published a booklet where he described the planetarium. He also informed several well-known foreign scholars about it, even though the planetarium was not fully completed at the time. Eise Eisinga completed the planetarium in 1781, although he made some improvements some years later.

In 1784, he drew up a detailed description of the planetarium for his two sons. This instruction book described the functioning of the mechanism and gave directions for maintenance and repairs. Now kept in the municipal archives in Franeker (as well as in a digital version), those instructions play an important role in the conservation of the planetarium.

combing, he knew the construction would be solid and lasting.
broke in two. It was replaced by an identical one, after which the mechanism was put back into operation.

A year after the State took over in 1825, it assumed the costs of maintaining the building. The State donated the planetarium to the municipality of Franeker, under the obligation to maintain and conserve the planetarium mechanism for all time. In 1967, the building was designated as a protected national monument. In 2006, the planetarium received the right to bear the designation ‘Royal’; this designation is only awarded to Dutch institutions that occupy a very important place in their field, are of national significance, and have existed for at least a hundred years.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is very good. Extensive maintenance is undertaken approximately every twelve to fifteen years, when the mechanism is taken apart, cleaned and readjusted. The most recent intervention took place in 2013; the previous one happened in 1997-1998. Such interventions are well documented and the reports are kept in the planetarium library.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are fire hazards, flooding and spatial pressure due to visitor numbers. These factors are mainly potential, not current. A gas extinguishing system has been installed near the mechanism, which ensures that in the event of a fire, a gas mixture is blown into the room, which mixes with the air present, extinguishing the fire without water. In the event of a fire alarm, based on drills, fire brigades can reach the planetarium within an average time of eight minutes.

The risk of flooding in Franeker is considered minimal and several measures are laid down by law to deal with extreme climate effects. Windows were installed on the corridor side of the cogwheel mechanism to prevent visitors from touching the cogwheels and to optimise the operation of the gas extinguishing system.

Risks resulting from large visitor flows have been mapped in an analysis undertaken by the National Heritage Laboratory. Several visitor-related scenarios were selected from that risk analysis. Visitors, either individually or in groups, can only access the planetarium room under the supervision of planetarium staff.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is very good and that factors affecting the nominated property are potential risks from fire, flooding, and large visitor flows.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Built between 1774 and 1781, the nominated property is considered to be the oldest continuously operating planetarium in the world.
- The nominated property provides an accurate working model of our solar system, as it was known at the time, bearing testimony to the cultural tradition of presenting and providing insight into celestial phenomena, using technology.
- The planetarium is an outstanding example of a technological ensemble illustrating the democratisation of science and the transfer of knowledge to a wider audience in the 18th century.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are: the mechanism of wooden hoops and discs; the pendulum clock with nine weights that powers the mechanism; the Prussian Blue and gold painted ceiling along which the planets move, including the spheres of the Sun and the Earth, attached to cords, and in which five dials are fitted; the closet-bed wall, in which seven dials are fitted and the weights of the pendulum clock are hanging; the space above the ceiling, housing the combination of pendulum clock and cogwheels; the room itself in which the planetarium instrument is installed, which serves as the reception and presentation area; the maintenance processes described in the handwritten document by Eise Eisinga; the handwritten document, itself; and the guest books, kept since 1783. In addition, the planetarium instrument is inextricably linked to the building in which it is located.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis starts by placing planetariums in the broader context of astronomical heritage and of the ICOMOS Thematic Study Heritage Sites of Astronomy and Archaeoastronomy in the context of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (2010, 2017). This study does not refer to planetariums as stand-alone entities. Regarding properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, only the Jodrell Bank Observatory (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 2019, criteria (i), (ii), (iv), (v)) is mentioned. However, the mechanical planetarium installed there dates from 2013, and is in the Discovery Centre. There are no planetariums as stand-alone entities included on Tentative Lists.

The comparative analysis considers classical planetariums (or orreries) built in the Renaissance and early modern period. The following parameters were selected to identify potential comparisons: continuous and accurate realistic picture of the position of the planets and/or the starry sky; educational purpose; existence of a reception and presentation area; accessibility to a wide audience; regular explanations are/were given;
continuous function; and original state and location are maintained.

Against this framework, fourteen comparative mechanisms were identified: the Gottorp Globe (Germany/Russia, 1654); the Weigel Sphere (Germany, 1661); the Round Tower Planetarium (Denmark, 1697); the Great Sphere (Great Britain, 1758); the astronomical mechanisms of Jakob and Hüttig (what was then Prussia, around 1770); the Strasbourg Astronomical Clock/Planetarium (France, 1843); the Besançon Astronomical Clock/Planetarium (France, 1867); Perini’s Planetarium (United Kingdom, 1879); the Atwood Sphere (United States of America, 1913); the Copernican Planetarium (Germany, 1923); the Messina Astronomical Clock/Planetarium (Italy, 1933); the Copernican Hall and Morehead Planetarium (United States of America, 1935); the Horloge mère et Planétaire de Gresswiller (France, 1999); and the Jodrell Bank Orrery (United Kingdom, 2013).

Many of these mechanisms have been destroyed, have been altered, or no longer function as originally built. As a result, the State Party concludes that the nominated property is the oldest permanently functioning mechanical planetarium.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis is well-documented, structured adequately and that the conclusions presented are justified.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium is an iconic example of an 18th-century orrery, representing exceptional creativity in both its extraordinary technical design and execution, and artistic expression.

ICOMOS acknowledges that the construction of the mechanical planetarium involved considerable technical skills and creativity. However, it cannot be considered a masterpiece. It was not the first mechanism of this kind to be built and there is insufficient evidence to show that it opened up unprecedented design solutions, as is argued by the State Party. ICOMOS also considers that the nominated property stands out today partly because it survived in a well-preserved state whereas other mechanisms built around the same period were destroyed or were significantly altered. ICOMOS considers that criterion (i) has not been justified on its own and that some of the arguments presented are best used to reinforce criterion (iv).

Criterion (ii): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium is an outstanding example of a technological ensemble which illustrates a significant turning point in human history: the democratisation of science and the transfer of knowledge to a wider audience in 18th-century society.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is an outstanding example of a mechanical planetarium built by an ordinary citizen, not a scholar, and using ordinary materials. Thanks to the creativity of its creator and a strict maintenance regime, the mechanism has survived largely in its original state and is among the oldest functioning planetariums in the world.

By representing a moving mechanical scale model of the solar system as it was known at the time of its construction (1774-1781), it clearly illustrates a defined moment in the history of science and the understanding of the heliocentric model of the Universe. The precision of the mechanism in depicting the distance between the planets and their movements provides a realistic image of the positions of the Sun, the Moon, the Earth and the other planets that were known at the time. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified, and the elements presented in relation to criterion (i) reinforce its justification.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property bears a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property bears a unique testimony to the cultural tradition of presenting and providing insight into celestial phenomena, using technology.

ICOMOS considers that the arguments presented for justifying this criterion are largely related to the continuous function of the mechanical planetarium, its maintenance and presentation to the public, which in themselves do not justify the existence of a cultural tradition. A cultural tradition must be clearly related to processes which define a way of life or civilisation in a geo-cultural region in an exceptional way. ICOMOS also notes discrepancies in how the cultural tradition is defined in different parts of the nomination dossier. It is both presented as the tradition of presenting and providing insight into celestial phenomena, using technology, which is very broad, and the tradition of building planetariums, which would require different comparisons than the ones included in the comparative analysis. ICOMOS therefore considers that this criterion has not been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is an outstanding example of a mechanical planetarium built by an ordinary citizen, not a scholar, and using ordinary materials. Thanks to the creativity of its creator and a strict maintenance regime, the mechanism has survived largely in its original state and is among the oldest functioning planetariums in the world.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iv) but that criteria (i) and (iii) have not been demonstrated.
Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the extent to which the nominated property includes all constituent elements of the mechanical planetarium, including those that allow its functioning as well as those associated with its presentation.

ICOMOS considers that while all the mechanism elements and associated functioning elements are included within the boundaries of the nominated property, the planetarium is inextricably linked to the building. This interrelationship is recognised by the State Party in the nomination dossier but is not reflected in the proposed boundary of the nominated property, which is mainly limited to the living room area. Therefore, ICOMOS considered that the whole building must be included within the boundary of the nominated property and requested the State Party to change the boundary in its Interim Report. The understanding of the location of the mechanism within the building is important because of the educational purpose of the planetarium. How visitors perceive the location of the mechanism within the residence of a private citizen, and how they access it, contribute to the ability of people to comprehend the values of the nominated property.

In response to ICOMOS’ request, the State Party extended the nominated property to include the entire original 15th century house. A new map was submitted accordingly as part of the additional information provided in February 2023.

The precise instructions left by Eise Eisinga about the functioning of the mechanism and how to maintain it, make it possible to identify that, with a few exceptions, the original parts of the planetarium have remained largely unchanged since its construction. Only minor adjustments have been made (e.g., fire prevention measures, climate control and electric lighting) concerning the contemporary safety requirements and for an optimal visitor flow. In the northern façade, larger windows were added to provide more natural light into the planetarium room.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on whether the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is truthfully and credibly expressed, namely through use and function, form and design, materials, techniques and location. Knowledge and conservation of sources of information about the original characteristics of the nominated property and the transmission of its values over time are also essential for assessing all aspects of authenticity.

Except for a brief period between 1790 and 1797, the nominated property has been in operation since its creation. Its educational function has also been maintained.

Over time, some additions were made to the cogwheels to keep it going. During the interventions carried out in 1997-1998, some of those additions were removed. This is the case with a layer of wrongly composed Prussian Blue applied to the ceiling, which turned greener over time. Where possible, authentic materials were used and/or parts manufactured according to the original version. The most recent extensive maintenance took place in 2013. On both occasions, the works undertaken were adequately documented.

The instructions left by Eisinga form the basis of maintenance work. The cogwheels are cleaned, lubricated, and waxed annually; the wooden parts are checked every two years for the presence of woodworm and longhorn beetle; and major maintenance is undertaken approximately every twelve to fifteen years. The mechanical planetarium is inextricably linked to the building in which it is located and has been in its original position since its creation.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met.

Boundaries

The boundary of the nominated property, as submitted in the nomination dossier, encompassed mainly the planetarium mechanism in the former living room of the building of Eise Eisinga. However, the mechanism is inseparable from the building notably because it is attached to the original beam construction of the building, which was specially adapted for this purpose. The space above the ceiling, housing the combination of pendulum clock and cogwheels, is accessible via the short staircase opposite the entrance door of the room. However, the staircase was not included in the nominated property. ICOMOS therefore asked the State Party to revise the boundary of the nominated property, as part of the Interim Report sent in December 2022.

In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party clarified that during the nomination process, the delineation of the nominated property as recommended by ICOMOS had been considered. Hence the State Party agreed to extend the boundary to include the whole building, which dates back to the 15th century. A new map was submitted accordingly.

The buffer zone is drawn to include the buildings and plots located in the vicinity of the nominated property. The area is part of a larger designation aimed at protecting the cityscape and inner city of Franeker. Hence, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS also asked the State Party about the rationale for delineating the buffer zone in that way and whether the possibility of matching the buffer zone
boundary with the protective cityscape area had been considered.

The State Party clarified that the delineation of the buffer zone is based on the sightlines in the city from where the nominated property can be seen. The protected cityscape is considered as an additional layer of protection to the wider setting regarding potential impacts from architectural projects.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property merits consideration for inscription on the World Heritage List, under criterion (iv). While criteria (i) and (iii) are considered not to be justified on their own, certain aspects presented for those criteria help reinforce the justification of criterion (iv). With the revisions made to the boundary of the nominated property, integrity, as defined by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, is demonstrated. Conditions of authenticity are also met.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

The booklet of Van Swinden, the instruction book and the guest books of Eise Eisinga are critical sources of information and documentation about the nominated property. The instruction book and the guest books (up to 15 September 1932) are kept in the Municipal Archives of Waadhoeke (Franeker) and have also been digitised; the later guest books are kept in the planetarium. Other important documentation sources such as historic photographs, audio-visual materials, and other records are held in the Municipal Archives of Waadhoeke (Franeker), at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (Amersfoort) and at Tresoar Friesland Historical and Literary Centre (Leeuwarden).

The major maintenance works carried out in 1997-1998 and 2013 were well documented and the reports are kept in the planetarium library.

**Conservation measures**

Regular and consistent maintenance, based on the instructions left by Eise Eisinga, have kept the planetarium in a good state of conservation over a period of almost 250 years. Since 1973, the Monument Watch Fryslân Foundation – an institution that provides inspection services to its affiliated members – technically examines the planetarium every two years; an inspection report on the results is drawn up.

The cogwheel mechanism is checked annually by a watchmaker. Where necessary, small parts, such as the bushings in which the shafts rotate, are replaced ‘like-for-like’. Maintenance of the paintwork and cleaning of interior showcases and collections are carried out annually. Maintenance and inspection of the fire and intruder security system is done monthly. Approximately every twelve to fifteen years, extensive maintenance is undertaken, involving cleaning the ceiling and, if necessary, touching up deteriorated spots. The cogwheels are taken apart, cleaned, and readjusted. All this work is carried out under the supervision of the curator.

**Monitoring**

Maintenance processes are linked with monitoring processes. Regular observations by the staff of the planetarium are complemented by annual assessments of the condition of the nominated property and other inspections carried out throughout the year. Monitoring of visitor numbers and other visitation aspects are carried out annually.

ICOMOS considers that existing documentation, conservation measures and monitoring processes are adequate.

**5 Protection and management**

**Legal protection**

The building housing the planetarium is protected as a national monument, pursuant to article 3.3 of the Heritage Act, by ministerial decree of 21 February 1967. In 2006, at the time of its 225th anniversary, the planetarium received the right to bear the designation ‘Royal’. This designation is only awarded to Dutch institutions that occupy a very important place in their field, are of national significance, and have existed for at least a hundred years.

A blue and white shield at the front of the planetarium building indicates that the building must be protected in times of war on account of its great cultural heritage value, as laid down in the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The buffer zone falls within the status of protected cityscape of the inner city of Franeker (now part of the municipality of Waadhoeke), established in 1979. This designation is not aimed directly at individual buildings, but mainly at the historical characteristics, the urban planning structure and the layout of the public spaces. In addition, the protection of the area must be given an explicit place in spatial planning and development; this is included in the Franeker – Inner City zoning plan, dating from 2016.

Based on the information provided in the nomination dossier, because of the transition from the Spatial Planning Act to the Environment and Planning Act, expected to come into force in July 2022, municipal zoning plans would become part of the environmental plans. Hence, the granting of permits for national monuments and the protection of protected cityscapes, towns' and villagescapes and villagescapes have been transferred to the Environment and Planning Act.
Management system
The planetarium building has been owned by the municipality since 1859. Since 2001, the Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium Foundation has been responsible for the management of the nominated property. The board of the foundation consists of five members from scientific fields (University of Groningen and scientific journalism), the financial world (accountancy) and local representatives. It bears administrative responsibility for aspects such as: reviewing and implementing the management plan based on a five-year cycle; preparing biennial monitoring reports on the implementation of planned actions; and identifying fundraising opportunities for specific conservation, maintenance and engagement projects and secure funding for these.

The day-to-day management is carried out by a managing director and nine staff members. While each member has a specific task in the organisation, great importance is attached to the explanation for visitors in the planetarium room, therefore they all contribute to it.

A comprehensive management plan was developed in 2021 to support the nomination dossier. The plan clearly defines the factors affecting the nominated property and establishes five guiding principles, each associated with a main objective. Each objective is linked to several policies, covering a very wide range of management aspects such as: inner city management; marketing and promotion; scientific research; traffic and parking; workshops; and active and accessible city. A series of actions are then defined to help operationalise the policies. These actions are subsequently included in a strategic timetable for the first five years covered by the plan.

ICOMOS considers that the diversity of policies covered in the management plan may affect its effectiveness. Some of the policies are defined too broadly without a clear rationale as to how they have been identified and why they are a priority. The same can be said for the actions defined. The timetable defined for implementation presents imbalances as to the number of actions to be implemented each year; for example, only one action is identified to be implemented in year 2 (2026). ICOMOS considers that a clearer structure should be considered in a future revision of the management plan.

Subsidy agreements are in force between the municipality of Waadhoeke and the planetarium, and between the province of Friesland and the planetarium, on the basis of which the objectives of the planetarium are achieved.

Financial resources for protection and management of the nominated property are drawn from various public authorities.

Visitor management
The nominated property had an educational purpose from the beginning. The guest books kept since 1783 show that the planetarium attracted large numbers of visitors. To relieve pressure and facilitate visitor flows, the original entrance to the building was closed. Access is now possible from one of two neighbouring buildings that both play a supporting role in the functioning of the planetarium, since 2008 and 2016 respectively. These buildings accommodate a brasserie, an exhibition space, a visitor centre, and an auditorium/cinema. A garden at the back is used as an outdoor café.

In the planetarium room, small groups of visitors are given an explanation about the functioning of the instrument and of our solar system. Visitors are only granted access to the room under the supervision of a staff member. Currently, the planetarium attracts approximately 60,000 to 65,000 annual visitors. However, these numbers are expected to grow if the nominated property was to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The State Party has designed measures to deal with the potential increase in visitor numbers, such as the potential extension of opening hours and the introduction of time slots.

In 2019, the city council adopted the Parking Vision for the inner city of Franeker, which shows that the parking capacity in and around the centre is sufficient at present. Parking requirements are monitored annually. In 2020, the State Party undertook research about the consequences of different levels of increase in visitor numbers (i.e., 80,000, 100,000 or 125,000 per year); the results of this work showed that the location of the various parking options, the parking capacity and the different access and walking routes to and from the planetarium are adequate and can accommodate a substantially growing number of visitors to the planetarium without public nuisance.

Community involvement
Based on the information provided in the nomination dossier, social support for the protection of the nominated property is strong. The influx of more than 60,000 visitors per year is seen as very important for local businesses. According to the State Party, there are no reports or indications that residents are inconvenienced by the large numbers of visitors to the planetarium. One of the five guiding principles that structure the management plan is community benefit.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
ICOMOS considers that the legislative and regulatory measures for the protection of the nominated property are adequate. The complementary measures that apply to the buffer zone give an added layer of protection to the nominated property, as required in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The sustainability of the financial resources available from the different actors, as well as from the income generated from visitsation, guarantees that the management authorities can adequately plan and implement necessary actions. Visitor flows are controlled, and interpretation and presentation are of a high standard. In summary, ICOMOS considers that the existing protection and management mechanisms are effective to address current and identified future management challenges.
6 Conclusion

The Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium) represents an outstanding example of a technological ensemble, representing a moving mechanical scale model of the solar system as it was known at the time of its construction (1774-1781), and clearly illustrating a defined moment in the history of science and in the understanding of the heliocentric model of the Universe.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property cannot be qualified as a masterpiece of an orrery or of a mechanical planetarium for two main reasons. Firstly, it was not the first mechanism of this kind to be installed in the ceiling of a room. Secondly, while the design and construction of the mechanism involved considerable creativity, there is insufficient evidence to show that it opened up unprecedented design solutions. ICOMOS considers that some of the aspects presented for the justification of criterion (i) are best used in supporting the justification for criterion (iv).

ICOMOS is also of the view that the argument put forward by the State Party to justify criterion (iii) on the ground that the nominated property bears a unique testimony to the cultural tradition of presenting and providing insight into celestial phenomena, using technology, is not supported by the evidence provided in the comparative analysis. To do so, the comparative analysis would have needed to be broader in terms of typological scope, geo-cultural context and temporal timeframe. In addition, criterion (iii) is about processes which define a way of life or civilisation in a geo-cultural region in an exceptional way. The justification provided by the State Party for this criterion revolves mainly around the educational purpose of the mechanical planetarium and the maintenance processes required to keep the mechanism functioning, which are not in themselves outstanding. Hence, ICOMOS concludes that the nominated property meets only criterion (iv).

Almost all of the original parts of the planetarium have remained largely unchanged since its construction and only minor adjustments have been made to keep the mechanism functioning; for these reasons, it is considered as one of the oldest continuously operating planetariums in the world. ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property are fully demonstrated.

The delimitation of the boundaries, as adjusted and submitted with the additional information sent in February 2023, reinforces the inextricable relationship between the planetarium and the building in which it is located, emphasising that the nominated property is an immovable cultural property. In addition, the location of the planetarium within the building, and how people access and perceive it, are important attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The buffer zone is part of a larger designation aimed at protecting the cityscape and inner city of Franeker, which has complementary legal provisions, thus adding a layer of protection to the nominated property.

The state of conservation of the nominated property is very good. A well-conceived maintenance programme, based on the instructions left by Eise Eisinga, helps in maintaining the mechanism in its almost original state and functioning. The State Party has adopted measures to effectively deal with the main factors affecting the conservation of the nominated property, such as potential risks from fire, flooding and large visitor flows.

The governance arrangements are adequate and supported by appropriate legal provisions. The conservation measures in place, linked to the maintenance of the mechanism, are well defined both in terms of type and periodical implementation. The protection and management arrangements are also adequate. ICOMOS considers that the management plan would benefit from a clearer scope and structure, to effectively supplement existing management instruments.

Given the educational purpose of the nominated property, visitor management, interpretation and presentation are critical elements of the management system. The instruments and processes defined by the State Party in this regard are adequate to ensure the long-term protection of the nominated property whilst maintaining its educational function.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS raised some concerns regarding the proposed name of the nominated property linked to its evaluation that criterion (i) was not justified, as well as regarding the use of the term “royal”, which refers to a designation dating from 2006. Therefore, ICOMOS asked if the State Party would agree to change the name of the nominated property. The State Party took into account ICOMOS’ concerns and suggested changing the name of the nominated property simply to “Eisinga Planetarium”; convincing arguments were presented to support this name. Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that the location of the planetarium is important and notes that, under the new maps sent as part of the additional information, the nominated property is named as “Eisinga Planetarium in Franeker". ICOMOS considers that this name should be retained.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the property has demonstrated Outstanding Universal Value.
7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium), Netherlands, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iv).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis
Located in a modest house within the historic centre of Franeker, the Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium) is the oldest continuously operating planetarium (i.e. orrery) in the world. Built between 1774 and 1781, this accurately working model of our solar system provides an up-to-date and realistic image of the positions of the Sun, the Moon, the Earth and the five other planets that were known at the time (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn).

Conceived and largely built by an ordinary citizen – the wool manufacturer Eise Eisinga – the planetarium mechanism is ingeniously built into the ceiling and the closet-bed wall of the living room. Doing this made it possible to build a large orrery and to use the room beneath it as a reception and presentation area – just as in modern planetariums. To this day, it is open to the public and used as an educational centre dedicated to astronomy.

The fact that the mechanism is still in working order is evidence of the ingenuity and foresight of its maker, who left detailed instructions for its maintenance.

Criterion (iv): The Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium) is an outstanding example of an 18th-century orrery, representing exceptional creativity in its technical design and execution. The orrery provides an up-to-date and realistic image of the positions of the Sun, the Moon, the Earth and the five other planets that were known at the time. The planetarium mechanism is ingeniously attached to the original beam construction of the house, which was specially adapted for this purpose. In operation almost continuously since 1781, it consists of simple but robust components, such as wooden hoops and discs, and iron pins. As a technological ensemble, it continues to contribute to the dissemination of astronomical knowledge, and in particular to the understanding of the heliocentric model of the Universe. The property is also associated with the transfer of scientific knowledge to a wider audience in 18th-century society.

Integrity
The property includes all constituent elements of the mechanical planetarium, including those that allow its functioning as well those associated with its presentation and the building in which it is located and to which the planetarium mechanism is inextricably linked. This 18th-century depiction of the solar system fills the entire ceiling of the former living room/bedroom of Eise Eisinga. The planets hang like wooden balls from metal rods that protrude through the slots in the ceiling. The mezzanine space above the ceiling houses the pendulum clock and the cogwheels. Despite being made of ordinary materials, such as wood, the mechanism is still in full use and continues to work according to its original design. Thanks to a very strict maintenance regime, almost all the original parts have been preserved.

Authenticity
In operation almost continuously since 1781, the planetarium instrument has retained a high level of authenticity. Aside from necessary repairs, the various components of the instrument have remained unchanged since its completion. Two important sources of information help confirm the authenticity of the property: the first complete description of it, published in 1780 by Franeker University professor Jean Henri van Swinden; and the description and maintenance instructions left by Eise Eisinga in 1784. The almost complete series of guest books that have been kept from the very beginning also attest to its educational significance.

Protection and management requirements
The planetarium building has been designated as a national monument since 1967. In addition, the property bears the blue and white shield, the international distinguishing mark to identify cultural heritage properties protected by the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The property and its buffer zone are part of the larger protected cityscape of the inner city of Franeker. The protection of this area falls under the Environment and Planning Act. World Heritage occupies a special state-controlled position under this Act. The State provides mandatory instruction rules for provinces and municipalities in order to regulate matters in their environmental ordinances or environmental plans. All the rules relating to the living environment are included in the environmental plan. This concerns a balanced allocation of functions to locations (comparable to the current designations), as well as rules in respect of activities with consequences for the living environment.

Since 2001, the management of the planetarium has been in the hands of the Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium Foundation. The board of the foundation consists of five members from scientific fields (University of Groningen and scientific journalism), the financial sector (accountancy) and local representatives. The day-to-day business is carried out by a managing director and nine employees. The municipality of Waadhoeke has a structural subsidy relationship with the planetarium.

Since it came into operation in 1781, maintenance of the planetarium instrument has taken place on the basis of the instructions of its maker. Approximately every twelve to fifteen years, the planetarium mechanism undergoes major maintenance. In addition, the cogwheels are cleaned, lubricated and waxed annually. All this work is carried out...
by regional professionals, under the supervision of the curator. Because the property consists mainly of wooden parts, these are checked every two years for the presence of woodworm and longhorn beetle.

**Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS recommends that the name of the property be changed to: Eisinga Planetarium in Franeker.
Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (February 2023)
Observatories of Kazan University
(Russian Federation)
No 1678

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University

Location
Kazan
Zelenodolsk municipal district
Republic of Tatarstan
Russian Federation

Brief description
The Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University is a serial property comprised of two component parts: one is located in the historical centre of Kazan and one in a forested suburban area twenty-four kilometres west of the city. The Kazan City Astronomical Observatory, built in 1837, is situated within the University campus. The building, classical in its architecture, was purposely constructed to enable observations of the sky. It is characterised by a semi-circular façade and three towers with domes built to house astronomical instruments. The suburban Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory, where observation activities were transferred from the city, was completed in 1901. It is composed of several structures dedicated to sky observations as well as residential buildings, all located within a park. The observatories, which have been preserved complete with astronomical instruments, nowadays perform mainly educational functions. Both University observatories represent heritage associated with astronomy and observations of the sky, during a period of emergence and development of optical telescopes from the 19th to the early 20th century.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of two groups of buildings.

Included in the Tentative List
11 December 2020

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 4 to 9 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the boundaries of the nominated property, the comparative analysis, the state of conservation, legal protection, management, and a request for documentation.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 9 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022, summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the historic context of the Kazan Observatories' development, the functional links between the component parts and identification of attributes, conservation documentation for the nominated property, and development pressures, both existing and potential.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 22 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The nominated property, located in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation, is composed of two component parts, one situated in the historical centre of Kazan, and one in its suburbs, twenty-four kilometres west from the city.

The area of the two component parts totals 19.02 ha, and the buffer zones, as revised by the State Party in February 2023, total 454.81ha.

The Kazan Imperial University, now Kazan Federal University (KFU), was founded by the Emperor Alexander I in 1804 and developed in the 1820-1830s. The University campus is located in the historical centre on the southwestern slope of the Kremlin hill facing the Volga River. The ensemble was designed by the architects P. Pyatnitsky and M.P. Korinfsky, under the supervision of Nikolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky, Chairperson of the Construction Committee. Joseph Johann von Littrow, a renowned Austrian astronomer, organised the
Department of Astronomy of the University. Initially, the observatory was arranged in temporary buildings within the University complex. The current observatory was built in 1833-1837. As early as 1898, Emperor Nikolai II decreed the construction of new facilities at the suburban state-owned property. The Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory, named after Vasily Pavlovich Engelhardt, who donated his private observatory (instruments and library) to KFU, was completed in 1901 according to the designs of N.F. Malinovsky and K.L. Myufke, under the supervision of Dmitry Ivanovich Dubyago.

The teaching of astronomy in Kazan began at the Imperial Kazan Gymnasium (1758-1917). Astronomy was included in the curricula of gymnasium education as an integral part of teaching physics. However, the level of teaching was behind the development of astronomy in Europe. Therefore, renowned scholars and scientists were invited to Kazan to create a scientific institution with university status and international standing.

Component part 001: Kazan City Astronomical Observatory

This component part comprises two buildings, the astronomical observatory building, and a present-day laboratory, which marks the site of, and retains some remains of, the former Litrow Observatory used for observations of the sky before construction of the astronomical observatory.

The astronomical observatory is located on the west edge of the University complex, on a hillside at an elevation of 77.5 metres, at the highest point of the University complex, in order to get a clear horizon for sky observations. The brick building, raised on a terrace-like white stone foundation, has a complex plan. The north-eastern two-storey part of the building is rectangular. The south-western higher part of the building, covered with a flat roof, is part of a wide arc with its ends protruding beyond the rectangular part. The East and West halls were intended for observing the stars. These halls have a cylindrical shape, partly protruding from the side facades of the observatory. The flat roof, also devoted to sky observations, has three round and multifaceted towers with rotating domes. The central one dominating the building contains the large refractor telescope.

The building is compositionally aligned with the main axes and buildings of the University complex; however, its composition and arrangement are determined by the position of the meridian circle.

The laboratory building is converted from parts of the former Litrow Observatory. It marks the location of the first astronomical observation at the University and, at present, houses the administration of the Geographical Society.

Component part 002: Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory

Located in a flat, forested area at an altitude of fifty-five metres above the Volga River (ninety-four metres above sea level), it includes several buildings and structures dedicated to the observation of the sky, and some which are of residential character, located within an area historically composed as a landscaped park. The main feature is the observatory building with the refractor and the meridian circle pavilions placed in the centre of the site. The heliometer and telescope pavilions, the Meteor Department pavilion, the library and administrative buildings are also part of the nominated property as well as the northern and southern marks and a necropolis associated with the meridian circle. Other buildings and structures within the boundaries are not considered in the nomination dossier as part of the nominated property; however, they are part of the observatory features and facilities.

The observatory building is a forty-metre-long, six-metre-high brick building, with its longer axis being oriented east-west. The eleven-metre tower for the twelve-inch Engelhardt Equatorial telescope, made by Howard Grubb in 1875, is adjoined to the west. The rotating, 6.6-metre in diameter dome for the telescope tower was designed by Gustav Heide and made in the Patsig workshop in Dresden specially for the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory. It is made of wood with iron parts. The telescope, used to observe the brightness of variable stars and the position of minor planets and comets, went into operation in 1901. In 1965 the twelve-inch refractor was modernised and converted into a sixteen-inch astrograph.

The seven-metre high pavilion, adjoined to the observatory building to the east, was constructed to house the meridian circle produced in 1845 in Hamburg by Repsold. The pavilion is made of double shell corrugated iron, with an air layer between to balance the temperature. The roof of the pavilion is sliding with hatches on the southern and northern sides. The meridian circle, dedicated to determining the coordinates of the stars, was installed in the Engelhardt observatory in 1903 after rebuilding and modernisation. This date marks the beginning of systematic observations there.

Two marks, built in 1904-1905, are connected to the location of the meridian circle to ensure its alignment. The marks are precisely positioned at a certain height and distance in relation to the meridian. The northern mark is covered with a pavilion made of corrugated iron; the southern one, also made of iron, received a decorated design, serving at the same time as a chapel with a crypt, located on the hill, at the central point of the necropolis, where astronomers Dmitry Ivanovich Dubyago and Vasily Pavlovich Engelhardt are buried.

The heliometer pavilion houses the only heliometer telescope in the world that still operates today. It was manufactured in Hamburg in 1874, and first installed at
the city observatory in 1891 before being transferred to the suburban observatory in 1908 and housed in a specially built round brick pavilion with a rotating spherical dome. The research data collected throughout its operation have been fundamental for studying the Moon’s rotation.

The development of the observatory depended directly on the availability of instruments for sky observations and their quality. Purchase of a nine-inch refractor from the Fraunhofer workshop (Munich, Germany) and its subsequent installation in the Kazan City Astronomical Observatory in 1838 made it possible to start regular sky surveys. The development of the suburban Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory was initiated by the donation of a collection of instruments in 1897. Then, in the 1950s and later, it was equipped with a set of new instruments by the USSR Academy of Sciences. One of them is the AZT-14 mirror telescope, purchased in 1966 to improve photometry research work carried out at Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory since the 1930s. It is installed in a specially-built two-storey brick pavilion with a rotating dome. In the last ten years, the telescope has been modernised and equipped with new systems.

Both observatories were the place of work of renowned scientists and their scientific achievements. These include the creation of a celestial Fundamental Coordinate System in 1935, the first in the history of astronomy, which was made possible through cooperation with many other observatories around the world over a long period of time. Other important contributions to the development of science are the studies of the Sun and the Moon.

Both urban and suburban observatories continue to be places of activities related to astronomical research and education. The historic optical telescopes of the nominated property are used mainly for educational purposes. The scientific research is carried out with the use of modern radio telescopes and their networks located within (AZT-14 mirror telescope included) and outside the nominated property in different places in the world, either belonging to the KFU or to other universities or scientific institutions.

State of conservation
The building of the Kazan City Astronomical Observatory, completed in 1837, was badly damaged by fire in 1842, and then repaired according to its original conception. It has not been subjected to large structural intervention except for the small side tower, which was redesigned during the 20th century to accommodate modern instruments. There is no information provided in the nomination dossier on any conservation works done until 2004, when restoration and repair works were carried out in the building. At that time remodelling of the immediate setting of the building was also undertaken.

The Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory was completed in 1901. In October 1918, battles of the Russian Civil War took place near Engelhardt observatory, but no damage was done to the buildings and instruments of the observatory. Conservation and some completion works were carried out in 1934 and after a fire in 1942. In 2001 and 2009 some restoration works were carried out in Engelhardt observatory: the largest operating optical telescope (refractor) was revived, modern security and communication systems were installed, and the surrounding area was landscaped. In 2013, the planetarium and Astro Park located within the boundaries of the nominated property were opened to the public.

The Kazan City Astronomical Observatory is well preserved. Nevertheless, some visible structural and conservation issues should be resolved. In the case of the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory most of the buildings, except for the Meteor Department pavilion, are maintained. According to the photographic documentation in the nomination dossier and that provided by the ICOMOS mission expert, the state of conservation of buildings requires some interventions. The park also requires some research and conservation work.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory. Nevertheless, a conservation policy and a programme for the nominated property should be further developed and implemented.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are pollution and development pressure.

Obscuration of the sky, light pollution, electromagnetic oscillations, and other man-made interferences have a negative impact on the functioning of observatories. The Kazan City Astronomical Observatory is used nowadays only for educational purposes; therefore, the impact of these negative factors is not detrimental to its function, as it is in the case of the suburban Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory. Changes in the setting were one of the reasons why the sky observations were moved from the city to the forested area in the suburbs, and then to mountains in the Caucasus and Türkiye.

The Kazan City Astronomical Observatory stands within the KFU complex in a densely built-up urban area. Apart from 1970s high-rise buildings located in the direct vicinity of the observatory with a negative visual impact, no further significant impacts on this component part are observed. On the other hand, active development of the neighbouring settlements is happening near to the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory. Orekhovka village, Novaya Tura Technopolis, and Oktiabrsky village, located respectively north and south of the nominated property, are likely to expand. The possibility of a new railroad construction within the proposed buffer zone south of the nominated property is also a concern. ICOMOS recommends that Heritage Impact Assessments are implemented to assess the potential...
negative impact of urban encroachments into the forested setting of the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory.

Conservation, adaptation, and development plans for the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory are critically needed as the construction of the KFU planetarium has already had a detrimental impact on the nominated property and the way it functions (the planetarium has become a dominant space and function). Further development of educational and tourist infrastructure, such as the Scientific and Educational Center for Space Research and Technology project which started in 2008, together with upgrading of the territory and buildings, including the reconstruction of some residential buildings, may threaten the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. ICOMOS considers the potential impacts of such development proposals should be assessed through a Heritage Impact Assessment.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is satisfactory and that factors affecting the nominated property are mainly borne by the development pressure. Current and future developments within the nominated property as well as in its setting may increase the vulnerability of the attributes associated with the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- It illustrates the development and evolution of optical astronomy in the world between the 19th and early 20th century. It is an outstanding testimony of the development and gradual transition from positional astronomy to astrophysics and reflects the milestones in the development of the astronomical sciences worldwide over an extended period.
- It represents an outstanding example of unique architectural ensembles, which reflect the development of advanced engineering and design organically incorporated into the surrounding landscape.
- The collection of authentic historic instruments, semi-movable and movable, bears exceptional testimony to the evolution of optical astronomy and space geodesy during the period under consideration.
- It is the place of remarkable achievements of outstanding astronomers and other scientists, the place of ground-breaking, innovative and other important inventions and achievements in the field.

It is stated in the nomination dossier that the Kazan observatories played an important role in the development of optical astronomy in the world in the 19th and early 20th century, and subsequently played a key role in the transition from classical astronomy to radio astronomy and modern astrophysics.

ICOMOS notes that there is an important distinction between two different periods in the history of Kazan Federal University (KFU). The Imperial period the justification for inscription refers to was characterised by the deep involvement of the Russian scientists in European science, and many facets show some notable contributions and important exchanges by some notable personalities of KFU. However, it should be noted that they were working mostly in parallel scientific fields such as geography, mathematics, or geophysics. The Communist period shows a change in the scientific links with Western European science. At that time, efforts were pursued more independently at the observatories of Kazan with some notable results, especially in spectroscopy and associated technologies. After World War II, the efforts were also prominent in the context of the Russian conquest of space, although mainly through the suburban observatory and a new station in the mountains of the North Caucasus.

The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention state, in paragraph 48, that “[n]ominations of immovable heritage which are likely to become movable will not be considered”. A significant part of the features of the nominated property constitutes movable heritage and cannot be considered as elements supporting the proposed justification for inscription of the nominated property. Consequently, the importance of component part 001 cannot depend on the 19th-century movable instruments. Only the key semi-movable instruments, for which buildings and structures were specially constructed or dedicated, are considered as an integral part of the nominated property.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information provided, the key attributes of the nominated property are the characteristic classical 19th-century architecture of the Kazan City Astronomical Observatory and its location, the landscape composition of the Engelhardt Observatory and its engineered buildings and structures with still-operating authentic semi-movable instruments, and the cutting-edge research and discoveries that occurred there.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed on the ground that the nominated property contains observatories and optical astronomical research centres from the 19th and 20th centuries, which forms part of the vast heritage associated with astronomy and astronomical observations. It is carried out at a global level with the emphasis on the development of astronomical observatories in urban areas in Europe and Eurasia. The analysis is divided into three sections: properties on the World Heritage List; architecture of astronomical observatories; and instruments.

ICOMOS notes that there is a UNESCO Thematic Initiative on Astronomy and World Heritage created in
In the comparison, the State Party recalls that there are observatories inscribed on the World Heritage List but in the framework of larger nominations. The nominated property is compared, among others, to the Greenwich Royal Observatory (Maritime Greenwich, UK, 1997, criteria (i), (ii), (iv) and (vi)); Tartu University Observatory in Estonia (Struve Geodetic Arc, Belarus, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Sweden, Ukraine, 2005, criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi)); and Pulkovo Observatory (Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments, Russian Federation, 1990, criteria (i), (ii), (iv) and (vi)). However, the comparison is not exhaustive, and there are several omissions, for example: the Royal Observatory of Madrid, part of the property Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro, a landscape of Arts and Sciences (Spain, 2021, criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi)).

Although the comparison should be made against similar properties whether on the World Heritage List or not, the analysis does not include observatories on the Tentative Lists such as the astronomical observatory in the University City of Bogotá (Colombia, Tentative List) and the Astronomical Observatories of Ukraine (Ukraine, Tentative List).

In its first letter requesting additional information sent in October 2022, ICOMOS asked for an expanded comparative analysis. The State Party responded that given the large number of observatories of the optical period in the world, providing comparative analysis of all of them would not be possible within the given timeframe. Nonetheless a more in-depth analysis was carried out for three observatories inscribed on the World Heritage List: Pulkovo, Greenwich and Tartu, and four other sites: Paris Observatory (France), First Moscow Observatory (Russian Federation), National Observatory in Athens (Greece), Observatory in Quito (Ecuador). However, even in light of this expanded analysis, the reasons that make the nominated property stand out are still unclear.

One of the major attributes identified in the nomination dossier is the creation of the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory as an advanced astronomical park. However, in the comparative analysis, the State Party indicates that several similar sites were created at the same time or even earlier (La Plata in Argentina, Nice in France, Brussels in Belgium), while recalling that the idea of an astronomical park observatory was born in Hamburg. There are other similar sites that could have been considered as well, particularly the Albert Einstein Science Park in Potsdam.

The selection of component parts is not supported by the comparative analysis either. According to information provided in the response to the Interim Report there are four observatories belonging to the KFU. Their functional and historical interrelationship as complementary elements of an evolutionary process in scientific, cultural and technological terms, is not clearly explained and their selection is not justified. The fact that they belong to the same University and are administratively connected is not sufficient to justify the series, as each part should contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property as a whole in a substantial, scientific, readily defined and discernible way, as prescribed by paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The observatories operated over a long period of time and in different historical contexts. For almost sixty-four years, until the foundation of the suburban observatory in 1901, the city observatory was the main centre for research and international cooperation in the field of astronomy. Then, the suburban observatory became active, in particular during the period of its second infrastructural development in the 1950-1970s, and with notable achievements in research. The Russian Revolution of 1917, the two world wars and geo-political changes had an impact on the framework for cooperation and development of science in the USSR. This reflects potential timeframes for comparison and areas of significance.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, including its supplement, proves that there is a large number of optical observatories expressing the same values as the nominated property in the world. It does not prove that the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University stands out as being representative in its geo-cultural context over a given period of time.

ICOMOS does not consider that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List at this stage.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii) and (iv).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University as a “collective tool” are a masterpiece of human creative genius of eminent scientists who revolutionised the understanding of space and the Universe. It is argued that the nominated property showcases revolutionary advances in culture and science, being a research centre and the easternmost observatory in the world where innovative observation instruments at that time were installed.

The work of the astronomers and other scientists who worked in the KFU does not support the conclusion that
the nominated property represents a masterpiece of human creative genius. To justify this criterion, the nominated property itself should embody the human creativity and, as a historic monument/site, be an outstanding example representing a high level of intellectual, artistic, technical, or technological achievement.

ICOMOS considers that the significance and technological advancement of the semi-movable instruments for which the buildings and structures were constructed have not been demonstrated either. The instruments were technically advanced, but they were not pioneering devices and were used in parallel with similar ones at other facilities and even secondarily as acquired from other observatories.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (i) has not been justified.

ICOMOS notes that the significance of ideas and events directly associated with the observatories of Kazan, especially those during the Soviet period, might be more relevant for criterion (vi).

Criterion (ii): *exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University demonstrate important changes in human values and are vivid evidence of the synthesis of scientific and cultural traditions, mutual influence of human values, and the mutual enrichment of cultures. The long history of the two observatories is marked by exchanges with other universities and observatories, as well as other scientists, in Russia and elsewhere in Europe.

Exchanges between universities and observatories and individual scientists concern the great majority of research centres, including astronomical observatories. The work, observations, and research in the astronomical observatories of KFU could be considered as an example of an interchange of human values related to the development of optical sciences in the 19th and 20th centuries, that marks an international exchange of scientific knowledge and a worldwide collaboration for the development of science. However, it has not been demonstrated that any cultural or scientific exchange has produced an outstanding creative response with a physical or functional representation.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) has not been justified at this stage.

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University are unique examples of classical and neoclassical buildings together with their setting, linked with the technological ensemble represented by the set of instruments aimed at astronomical research and discoveries, that illustrate more than 200 years of human history. Orientation with respect to cardinal points and engineering solutions in the construction of pavilions make the observatories unique monuments that combine architecture, engineering, science and the genius of the place. The State Party states that architectural solutions responding to the requirements for the functioning of astronomical observatories allowed the correct placement of volumetric tools in the buildings of the observatories and ensured the maximum accuracy of the conducted research.

The development of the observatories as a unit in correlation with the development of sky observations over a given period is not presented clearly. Their functional interrelations, the typological features of the unit and its outstanding qualities are not demonstrated at this stage.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iv) is not justified at this stage with respect to the proposed series.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iv) may have potential to be justified in the case of the Kazan City Astronomical Observatory as this component part represents an exceptional design of an innovative observatory for the time and an early example of purpose-built buildings for astronomical observations that responded to the new needs of observational instruments.

Criterion (iv) could also be considered if a serial approach is undertaken to represent the wide spectrum of optical observatories present in Europe and their technological development for science and research.

ICOMOS does not consider that any of the cultural criteria have been demonstrated at this stage.

**Integrity and authenticity**

**Integrity**

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the design, structure and function of the observatories. Integrity is also a measure of the intactness of the attributes, and the way major pressures on these are managed.

The boundaries of component part 001 encompass the observatory and laboratory buildings. The immediate setting of the observatory building together with the natural hill with its slope on which it is located are important attributes which should be included in the proposed boundaries.

The boundaries of the component part 002 are following the historic boundaries of the site with exceptions to the north and east of the perimeter of the site, but they still
encompass all key elements necessary to express the value of the property.

The physical fabric of the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University, both its nominated parts and their significant features, is maintained in a good condition. Buildings, instruments and related scientific archival documents and publications are preserved. Exceptions are the Meteor Department pavilion and the landscaped park in the case of component part 002. In addition to the changes within the historic residential part of the site located on its outskirts, there are also current changes to the composition of the site, in particular the recently-built planetarium which could be considered as a development of the place in line with its historic function but which still constitutes an important alteration to the historic composition of the park, claimed by the State Party as unique and supporting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. Although some elements are preserved, the park has also suffered from neglect.

The city component part is located within a densely built-up part of the town. The high-rise building from the 1970s, located in the direct vicinity of the nominated property, that houses the Institute of Physics of KFU, has a detrimental impact on the visual integrity of this component part. The Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory is in the suburban area, with active development of the neighbouring settlements and transport routes. Their development may have an impact on the setting of the nominated property and, therefore, its integrity.

The nominated property is a series of two sites. The nomination dossier does not offer a justification of the rationale for the selection of the component parts, which could provide a basis for assessing the integrity of the series.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated at this stage, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be confirmed, so integrity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated at this stage.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property, as explained in the nomination dossier, relates to the physical aspects and function of the nominated property. Its assessment is based on the availability of information on the history and state of conservation of the nominated property.

ICOMOS notes that the building of the Kazan City Astronomical Observatory and the buildings and structures of the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory are preserved in their original state. The buildings have been kept together with most of their original finishes and key astronomical instruments. They have not been subjected to extensive reconstruction and modernisation except for the side tower with a dome of the city observatory. Authentic mechanical techniques are still preserved in many of the buildings. Many of the original instruments of the buildings and structures have been preserved complete and are used in situ. The locations and the settings of the component parts have undergone some changes due to development pressure but still retain their character.

Both component parts of the nominated property continue to be used for sky observations, research, and education.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated at this stage, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be confirmed and authenticity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated at this stage.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have not been met at this stage.

Boundaries

The delineation of the boundaries of component part 001 encompasses the observatory and laboratory buildings and covers only a small area directly adjacent to them without the hill and immediate setting. They are illegible on the ground and lack legal status.

The proposed buffer zone covers the area of the historic KFU campus complex within its historic main quarter. The observatory, located in the southwest corner of the complex, thus receives a buffer zone only on the north and east sides. In the response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the State Party proposed an extension of the buffer zone. Its boundaries have been extended to include quarters located below and above the main historic part of the University campus. They also include the tall buildings in the vicinity of the observatory building. The proposed buffer zone has no legal status yet. ICOMOS considers that the buffer zone should be formally adopted.

There are no inhabitants living in this component part, either within the nominated property component part or in its buffer zone.

The delineation of the boundaries of component part 002 follows the historical boundaries of the site and covers the cadastral land provided in perpetuity to the KFU.

The proposed buffer zone covers vast areas, mostly forested, around the nominated property and follows the delineation of the protection zone introduced into the Territorial Planning Regulations and Spatial Planning Scheme of the Republic of Tatarstan in 2018. The protection zone should introduce restrictions for the height of new developments, but the regulations are not fully in force. The proposed buffer zone does not include the built-up recreation area located 160 to 170 metres from the boundary, nor Oktyabrsky and Orekhovka villages.
nor Novaya Tura Technopolis situated in the vicinity. Their development could potentially have a detrimental impact on the nominated property and should, therefore, be controlled. ICOMOS considers that the buffer zone should be extended to control these potential developments and should be formally adopted.

There are 67 people living within the boundaries of the nominated component part, and 3,234 people in the buffer zone (as of January 2022).

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription
In summary, ICOMOS considers that although the architectural and landscape qualities of the two component parts of the serial nominated property, as well as the importance of the research carried out there, are undeniable, it has not been demonstrated through the description, justification and the comparative analysis that the nominated property can be considered outstanding or representative in its typological and geo-cultural frameworks. Therefore, consideration of this property for the World Heritage List is not justified at this stage. ICOMOS considers that none of the proposed cultural criteria have been demonstrated at this stage. Therefore, neither the attributes supporting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value nor the conditions of integrity and authenticity can be confirmed at this stage.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
Detailed baseline documentation of all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is important for any future management, conservation arrangements and monitoring, as well as for risk preparedness and in case of disasters. The nomination dossier refers to archival documents but there is no documentation that clearly illustrates the history of the buildings and landscapes as they progressively developed and changed from the 19th century to the present day. There is no conservation documentation that has been provided, apart from the results of an architectural survey of some of the buildings conducted between 2001-2003. Despite the description, conservation documentation concerning the instruments is not provided either.

Conservation measures
The current heritage protection law specifies the rules for carrying out conservation works and the corresponding measures for registered monuments. The nominated property is managed by the Kazan Federal University (KFU) which is responsible for the protection and conservation of the sites. Funding for the conservation of the nominated property is guaranteed from the state budget.

The nominated property is maintained and regularly repaired. Some conservation works have already been carried out for the city observatory building, and its setting, and some works are scheduled and already implemented in the suburban component part. In general, their results are positive but some structural cracks, dampness and salinisation on the walls, as well as the use of inappropriate materials during repairs, or changes in the landscape, have been observed. Therefore, there is a need to develop a conservation plan and take appropriate conservation measures to minimise the negative effects and future deterioration of the sites. There is a "Strategy for the Conservation and Use of Astronomical Observatory Complexes of Kazan University" mentioned in the management plan, but no details are provided.

Monitoring
Annual inspections are carried out and provide general information on the individual monuments, the description of maintenance and repair interventions, including technical specifications, and budgets. Records of the existing monitoring, despite requests, were not provided for information, either within the nomination dossier or during the technical evaluation mission.

An adequate monitoring system, to inform the management of the nominated property and monitor its state of conservation, is yet to be developed. Its elaboration was included as one of the strategic goals in the management plan annexed to the nomination dossier.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property lacks conservation research and documentation which is crucial to prepare a well-informed conservation policy and programmes. Such documentation should be prepared, and a comprehensive conservation plan should be developed and implemented as soon as possible to avoid future degradation of the complex. The elaboration of the monitoring system should be carried out and integrated into the management plan.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection
The Kazan City Astronomical Observatory is one of the highest federal significance (Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic No. 1327, 1960; Decree of the President of Russia No. 176, 1995). At its individual level, the observatory building is designated as a monument of urban planning and architecture of federal significance in accordance with the same regulation. The site is included in the Unified State Register of Cultural Heritage Sites (Historical and Cultural Monuments) of the Peoples of the Russian Federation and introduced into the national cadastral system of heritage properties. According to the documentation fiche (passport) of the astronomical observatory building, adopted by the Order of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation (No. 1906, 2015), the territory of the monument covers the territory of the Kazan Federal University (KFU) designated area. In addition, the building of the astronomical observatory is also a monument of regional significance in accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Tatarstan (No. 318, 2001).

ICOMOS notes that the territory of the Kazan City Astronomical Observatory building, as a legally protected monument at the federal level, includes the whole territory of the KFU and matches the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone for the nominated component part. At the same time, the boundaries of the component part, as they are proposed, are in contradiction to the legal recognition of the monument at the federal level.

The Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory is a monument of federal and regional significance in accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Tatarstan (No. 318, 2001) with the subject of protection approved by the Decree of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tatarstan (No. 835, 2011). It is also designated as a monument of urban planning and architecture of federal significance. The boundaries of the cultural heritage property “the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory Complex” are determined by the Decree of the Committee of the Republic of Tatarstan for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Sites (No. 360-P, 2022). They match the cadastral land provided in perpetuity to the KFU and are introduced into the national cadastral system of heritage properties. The complex includes: the main building, the heliometer pavilion, the pavilion of the AZT-14 telescope, the pavilion of the Meteor Department, the library, the observatory with the refractor, the meridian circle pavilions, and the necropolis with the graves of the directors of the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory. The observatory, with the refractor pavilion and the necropolis, are also individually protected as monuments of regional significance.

According to the law, monuments or ensembles inscribed onto the national list/register must have defined elements and features. They are subject to mandatory preservation and monitoring (a subject of protection of a cultural heritage object – named in the nomination dossier “attributes of protection”).

Subjects of protection of the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory were adopted by the orders of the Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation in 2016, and included in the documentation fiches (passports) of the monuments. These lists focus mainly on the exteriors of the buildings and do not consider astronomical instruments. Specific structural elements like the northern mark or the landscape within the boundaries of the nominated property are not included in the passports.

According to the legislation there should be a protection zone adjacent to the monuments and ensembles included in the register established, within the boundaries of which the construction of capital development sites should be prohibited with an exception for linear objects. All projects within the boundaries of their protection zones also must receive relevant approval from the Committee of the Republic of Tatarstan for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Sites.

The works on the preservation of the cultural heritage property are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Urban Planning Code of the Russian Federation (No. 190-FZ, 2004). Conduction of works on the legally protected properties are supervised by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tatarstan. Only four types of work on cultural heritage sites, which are defined by the general term “preservation of cultural heritage sites” are allowed. They are conservation, repair, restoration and adaptation for modern use. All these works, from the project plan to its realisation, may be implemented only by entities licensed by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

In the case of the historical astronomical instruments, some of them were formally transferred to the collection of the University museum and are taken under federal protection as a part of the Museum Fund of the Russian Federation. Semi-movable instruments, like the large nine-inch telescope or twelve-inch Engelhardt refractor, are not legally protected.

Management system
The Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University are owned by the Russian Federation (the state) with the exception of two privately-owned residential buildings within the proposed boundaries of the suburban component part.

The nominated property is managed by the Department of Astrophysics and Space Geodesy of the Institute of Physics and the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory of KFU. The University, responsible for the protection and conservation of the sites, operates on the basis of regular plans and the federal budget. The other body responsible for the management of the nominated property is the Committee of the Republic of Tatarstan for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Sites, which issues permits and monitors the work.

There is no overall management of the nominated serial property; it takes place within the ownership and
competence of the individual units responsible for managing the component parts of the nominated property. In its additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party indicated that the Museum of Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory has been included in the Directorate of Museums of KFU, in order to improve the coordination. This transition is aimed at improving control over cultural, educational as well as scientific and restoration activities.

There are many other entities directly involved in the management of the nominated property, namely the administration of Kazan municipality, Zelenodolsk municipal district, Oktjabrsky rural settlement, the Center of Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Tatarstan, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, the Russian National Committee of the World Heritage, and the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO. They are members of the Coordination Committee for the management of the nominated property, which is planned to be established.

The development of the management plan for the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University was initiated at the time of the preparation of the nomination dossier. The document is conceived to run from 2023 to 2043, with 2023-2027 set as the priority period. It was approved by the Decree of the KFU Rector and the Supervisory Board of the KFU and adopted for implementation.

The document addresses a vast array of issues and problems related to the protection of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property and provides for a range of programmes and projects aimed at achieving the goals. Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms and risk management are included.

**Visitor management**

A tourism development strategy is presented in some detail in the nomination dossier and the management plan. The city observatory and the University facilities will stay largely reserved for scientific and educational activities. The suburban observatory, which has been performing a touristic function for decades, will continue to develop it. For this purpose, it is planned to define functional zoning of the territory as a condition for the sustainable development of the nominated property. This would include an historical zone (with the buildings of the observatory), a learning zone (including the planetarium building, the UNIGRAD Science and Technology Palace and an open-air exhibition of scientific instruments), and a recreation and sports zone.

**Community involvement**

Local communities in the case of both component parts are considered to be the scientific community of researchers, teachers and students, and the families of scientists. Due to their engagement, especially in the 1990s, the suburban complex has been preserved. The local scientific community was the initiator of the nomination process, and is highly invested in conserving the property, its functioning and presentation to the public.

There is no other public involvement reported. The management plan refers to a Community Engagement Strategy, which is yet to be developed.

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**Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection is rigorous, but still requires some amendments to reach a level of protection that would fully reflect the significance of the nominated property and its attributes. ICOMOS considers that the management of the nominated property is satisfactory and that the management authorities have enough human and financial capacities to manage the nominated property. The management plan provides clear strategic objectives and ICOMOS recommends that it is implemented as soon as possible. The objectives regarding conservation and community involvement should become a priority and be consequently pursued.

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6 Conclusion

The Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University, founded in 1837 and successively developed, has been nominated as a serial property to be included on the World Heritage List illustrating the development and evolution of optical astronomy and evidence of the gradual transition from positional astronomy to astrophysics. The observatories, as described by the State Party, represent, together with the collection of historic astronomical instruments, an interesting example of authentic architectural ensembles, a place of remarkable achievements of outstanding astronomers and other scientists.

Representing heritage associated with astronomy and observations of the sky, a type of heritage which, despite its richness, is not well represented on the World Heritage List, the observatories are an example of classical forms and organisation of the space made to allow sky observations through use of astronomical instruments. Natural conditions and accessible technologies were skilfully used to create a suitable environment dedicated to scientific research.

ICOMOS appreciates the intention by the State Party to present the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University and acknowledges the effort made in elaborating the nomination dossier and in investing the necessary resources for protection and presentation of the sites as heritage of science of national significance. A remarkable aspect of the observatories is the fact that they are preserved in their almost original condition and that they both were continuously places of activities related to astronomical research and education.

ICOMOS considers that the importance of the nominated property in the 19th and early 20th century lies in the
Despite the additional information provided by the State Party, the claims expressed in the justification of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are not convincingly supported by the comparative analysis. This did not sufficiently distinguish the Kazan observatories from other observatories of the same period and type that also participated in the development of optical astronomy and the gradual transition from positional astronomy to astrophysics, reflecting the milestones in the development of the astronomical sciences.

ICOMOS considers that none of the criteria have been demonstrated at this stage. Outcomes of interchange of values on development in architecture, technology in response to scientific research needs, and the representativeness of the type and direct association of the observatories with significant events or ideas, should be demonstrated in a clear, referenced way and supported by a compelling comparative analysis. They should also have a physical or functional representation in the form of attributes specified and clearly described to better understand the significance of the nominated property.

In addition, although the current state of conservation is acceptable, some significant issues concerning the evolution of the nominated property and its integrity have been identified. It should be noted that in the case of the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory building, the planetarium, that dominates spatially and functionally the historic site, and existing development pressure in the setting, have a detrimental impact which undermines the integrity of this component part.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property, or its component parts taken individually or in combination with other sites, might have the potential to justify consideration for the World Heritage List, but only once their potential outstanding significance is clearly presented in comparison with similar properties at the global level and within the relevant geo-cultural area.

ICOMOS considers that different nomination strategies for the Kazan observatories might be envisaged as well, based on a robust comparative analysis and further documentation and research. The State Party may need time to reconsider its approach and develop a new nomination, either individually or in cooperation with other States Parties.

A mission to the reconfigured property will be required once the nomination has been substantially revised.

development of astronomical science in Eurasia and then, in the Soviet era, in its position as a leading research centre in Russia, particularly in the conquest of space, and in the fact that some of the historic astronomical instruments are still in working order. Simultaneously, the observatories, notwithstanding being part of the same University, were developed in different historic contexts due to global geopolitical shifts which led to a limiting of the exchange between Russia and Europe after the Russian Revolution. Therefore, the periods of comparison and areas of significance are potentially different, together with the nomination strategies that may be derived from them. This fact should be considered as an important stage or change in the development of the University and be reflected in the future nomination strategy.

In addition, ICOMOS considers that this nomination poses some key problems regarding its scope and the selection of its component parts and attributes.

The nomination dossier concentrates on the history and scientific achievements of individual scholars who worked at the Kazan Federal University (KFU) throughout its history. It refers to the significance of the University and its role in developing science but this cannot be considered as a justifying factor for inscription on the World Heritage List, unless cultural or scientific interchange between the scholars produced an outstanding creative response that has a physical or functional representation on site; or their achievements are proved to have outstanding universal significance and are directly or tangibly associated with the nominated property.

The nomination dossier also strongly underlines the importance of historic movable instruments used for sky observations in the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. They were commissioned especially for Kazan or transferred from other observatories, also between the nominated component parts. The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention state, in paragraph 48, that "[n]ominations of immovable heritage which are likely to become movable will not be considered". Therefore, collections of movable objects are out of the scope of the World Heritage Convention and cannot be considered as attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

Arguments justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value that fall outside the scope of the World Heritage Convention cannot be taken into account. The nominated property is composed of two of the oldest observatories of KFU, purpose-built for sky observations and the development of science. Their selection has not been justified and cultural, scientific, or functional links that provide connectivity demonstrated, as required by paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The way the individual component parts contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, as argued in the nomination dossier, is not presented in a logical and substantial manner.
7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University, Russian Federation, to the World Heritage List be deferred in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to:

- Consider if a robust case can be made based on a global thematic framework of astronomical heritage, which would underpin a thorough and compelling comparative analysis in order to bring into focus the potential significance of the nominated property, or of its component parts taken individually or in combination with other sites, and of its historic, architectural, technological and scientific values;

- Reconsider, based on the above, the nomination strategy of the current nominated property;

- Develop conservation documentation with appropriate historical and functional/spatial analysis to better understand and present the evolution of the observatories in their architectural, functional and scientific aspects.

Any revised nomination should be visited by a mission to the site.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Developing policy and comprehensive conservation plans for the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University,

b) Implementing Heritage Impact Assessments at the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory (component part 002) for development proposals, such as the creation of a Scientific and Educational Center for Space Research and Technology, and to assess the potential negative impact of urban encroachments into its forested setting,

c) Extending the buffer zone of the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory (component part 002) to control potential developments, especially at the Oktyabrsky and Orekhovka villages and Novaya Tura Technopolis,

d) Providing a legal status to the two proposed buffer zones;
Map showing the location of the nominated components parts
Medieval Mosques of Anatolia
(Türkiye)
No 1694

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure

Location
Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque
Merkez District, Province of Afyonkarahisar
Aegean Region

Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque
Altındağ District, Province of Ankara
Central Anatolia Region

Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque
Sivrihisar District, Province of Eskişehir
Central Anatolia Region

Mahmut Bey Mosque
Merkez District, Province of Kastamonu
Black Sea Region

Eşrefoğlu Mosque
Beyşehir District, Province of Konya
Mediterranean Region

Türkiye

Brief description
The nominated serial property is comprised of five hypostyle mosques built in Anatolia between the late 13th and mid-14th centuries, each of which is located in a different province of present-day Türkiye, as well as a number of associated buildings and a small graveyard. The unusual structural system of the mosques combines an exterior building envelope built of masonry with multiple rows of wooden interior columns (“hypostyle”) that support a flat wooden ceiling and the roof. These mosques are known for the skilful woodcarving and workmanship used in their structures, architectural fittings, and furnishings. The construction of these mosques, five of which have been selected as the best representatives of the wooden hypostyle mosques of medieval Anatolia, can be linked to the Mongol invasions of this area in the 1240s and the subsequent immigration of Central Asian craftspeople knowledgeable about wooden construction technology and possessing excellent woodworking skills, coupled with the driving forces from powerful political figures in the Anatolia region.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of five groups of buildings.

Included in the Tentative List
2 May 2018 as “Wooden Roofed and Wooden Columned Mosques in Anatolia”

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 4 to 12 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 10 October 2022 requesting further information about the links between the component parts of the serial nomination, the rationale for selecting the component mosques, the documentation, research, management, and risk management plan.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 14 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report, including the comparative analysis, implementation of the management plan, the documentation and baseline information, the coordinated management, the risk management plan, and Heritage Impact Assessment.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 27 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The nominated property comprises five wooden columned or “hypostyle” mosques built between the late 13th and mid-14th centuries, each of which is located in a
different province of Türkiye, as well as a number of associated buildings and a small graveyard.

The mosques have a structural system whereby the exterior envelopes are of masonry but the rows of columns (hypostyle) that support the flat ceilings and the roofs are all of wood. The wooden columns sit on stone pedestals, and wooden muqarnas (three-dimensional “honeycomb” Islamic decorations) or stone spolia (repurposed architectural fragments) form the capitals of columns. The wooden corbel beams supporting the main beams rest on top of the capitals. Above the main beams are rows of rafters on which wooden planks are placed as roof boarding. The roofs were once flat and topped by an earthen layer, but were later changed to a gabled or pitched form sheathed in lead, copper or tiles. The wooden structures are richly decorated with hand-drawn paintings using natural pigments. The exteriors of the mosques are of rubble and cut stone masonry.

Component part 1 - Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque

The Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque, also known as the Great (Ulu) Mosque of Afyon, is at the foot of the Kocatepe Hill (crowned by the Afyon Castle) in the centre of the city of Afyonkarahisar. It has an irregular, somewhat rectangular plan with entrances in each of the north, east, and west walls. A single-balcony brick minaret is attached to the north façade of the building. The wooden ceiling is supported by forty wooden columns with wooden muqarna capitals. Some capitals have a stalactite form and are painted with hand-drawn decorations.

The white marble prayer niche (mihrab) with six rows of muqarnas is located on the qibla (Mecca direction) wall. The minbar is typical of late 13th-century pulpits, though its double-winged wooden door is one of the earliest examples from the Seljuk era. The names of the carpenters are written on the doors, which is rare amongst surviving mosques.

Component part 2 - Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque

Located outside the outer walls of the Ankara Castle on a slope visible from afar, this component part, located in the Province of Ankara, comprises four elements: the Ahi Şerefeddin Mosque; the Arslanhane Lodge; the Ahi Şerefeddin Tomb; and the Ahi Şerefeddin Tomb graveyard.

The mosque, also known as the Arslanhane Mosque, has a rectangular plan with entrances in each of the north, east, and west walls. A single-balcony brick minaret is attached to the northeast wall of the mosque. The wooden ceiling is carried by twenty-four wooden columns with reused-marble Roman Corinthian and Doric capitals. The mihrab is decorated with glazed mosaics. Centred in its upper portion is a large stucco medallion, while in the lower portion is a rectangular niche with six rows of muqarnas. The walnut minbar, with the signature of Muhammad bin Abi Bakr and the date of 1290 CE, is considered one of the best examples of the woodworking technique known as kündekari.

The Ahi Şerefeddin Lodge (zaviyya) is located northwest of the mosque. It occupies the top of the slope, and is approached from the south by passing along a wall laden with spolia, including the iconic marble lions that give the building its name. The base of the porch was a fountain or possibly the sadirvan used for ablutions at the mosque.

The Ahi Şerefeddin Tomb is located next to the Arslanhane Lodge. It has an octagonal pyramidal cone that sits atop an octagonal drum, which in turn sits on a square base. The tomb once contained eight cenotaphs, prominent amongst them being the tomb of Ahi Husam ad-din, the father of Ahi Şerefeddin.

The Ahi Şerefeddin Tomb graveyard contains eight graves around the tomb and four burials on the northeastern terrace of the mosque. The tombstone of Ali Hüsameddin Hüseyin b. Yusuf, who died in 1379 or 1380, is the only surviving tombstone of the many that once existed.

Component part 3 - Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque

Located in the Sivrihisar District of the Province of Eskişehir, this mosque has a roughly rectangular plan with three entrances in the north, east, and west walls. A single-balcony brick minaret is attached to the southwest corner. The wooden ceiling in the prayer hall is carried by sixty-three wooden columns, and an elevated platform (Sölpük Masjid) at the east end of the hall is carried by four additional wooden columns. Some columns are richly decorated with multiple patterns. Antique spolia are used as both the capitals and bases of the columns. Two columns next to the mihrab are topped with Corinthian capitals and bear carved ornamentation. Next to the minaret and attached to the west wall is a small brick-domed building (Sölpük Masjid) with a floor raised one metre above the mosque floor. The stone mihrab has a shallow niche whose outer frame is surrounded by a thuluth-calligraphic writing strip. The niche has a five-row muqarnas kavsara on cylindrical columns.

Component part 4 - Mahmut Bey Mosque

Located in Kasaba village in the Province of Kastamonu, the rectangular-plan Mahmut Bey Mosque has a covered porch to the north, the only mosque of the five with such a configuration. The porch, framed by blind side walls, is supported by four wooden columns placed on stone pedestals and spanned by wooden beams and eaves. A reconstructed steel minaret clad in wood is located at the northeast corner of the entrance. The wooden ceiling of the prayer hall is carried by four wooden columns on stone pedestals. In addition, there are four corbeled tribunes that are supported by wooden columns, each of which has its own balusters. One of the tribunes is dedicated to the Muezzins, with its own staircase. The mihrab is made of plaster with a polygonal niche in an apsidal form. The interior wooden elements are richly decorated with hand-drawn paintings and wooden carvings.
Component part 5 - Eşrefoğlu Mosque

Located in the İçerişehir neighbourhood in the District of Beyşehir in the Province of Konya, on the shore of Lake Beyşehir, this component part is comprised of the Eşrefoğlu Mosque, Süleyman Bey’s Tomb, and the Half Tomb (Ottoman Tomb).

The mosque has a rectangular plan which is truncated at its northeastern corner. It is accessed through a crowned gate in the northeast façade and small entrances in the east and west walls. A single-balcony brick minaret with stone footing and a fountain is attached to the northeast façade next to the crowned gate. The wooden ceiling of the hall is supported by forty-one wooden columns with ornamented muqarnas. The ceiling and upper structures are largely covered by hand-drawn paintings of vegetal, geometric, rumî, and star motifs. The raised platform of the mahfil of the Muezzin is in front of the mihrab. There is an opening in the middle of the ceiling, and a pit in the floor below the opening that collects snow to cool the building in the summer. The mahfil of the Sultan is a raised platform located in the southwest corner of the hall. Below the mahfil of the Sultan is the cibâiîne, a small underground space dedicated to devotion. The last prayer hall is located immediately to the right of the crowned gate, with access to the minaret door and the mahfil of women. A wooden mihrab with six rows of muqarnas and sacred inscriptions is in the last prayer hall.

The rectangular mihrab is richly decorated with mosaic tiles in turquoise, dark blue, and purple colours. The inside of its square niche resembles the stary dome of the Karatay Madrasah of the Seljuk period in Konya. A dome above the mihrab has sacred inscriptions. The minbar, located next to the mihrab, is made in the kündekari woodworking technique and ornamented with inlays of stars and geometric pieces. Attached to the north wall is a small modern (2017) one-storey sloped-roof annex that contains a library and office.

Süleyman Bey’s Tomb is a stone construction with a conical roof above its octagonal walls. It is attached to the east wall of the mosque and is connected to the prayer hall with a window. The so-called Half Tomb, a small rectangular stone building, was reconstructed next to Süleyman Bey’s Tomb.

The area of the five components totals 0.61 ha, with buffer zones totalling 36.66 ha.

History and development

Evidence shows that wooden religious buildings have existed from the beginning of Islamic architecture in the 7th century. The wooden mosque typology flourished in the historic region of Anatolia in the late 13th and mid-14th centuries, with the cities of Ankara and Kastamounu as the two epicentres.

The emergence of the wooden mosques as a specific type of building in medieval Anatolia is closely related to the Mongol invasions of Anatolia between the 13th and 14th centuries. Between the 11th and 13th centuries, the Seljuk Türkic group had been the dominant power, with Konya as its capital. The Mongol invasions in the 13th century weakened the power of the Seljuk sultans, and the Seljuk state started to split into small municipalities (beyliks) that increasingly became more independent of both Mongol and Seljuk control. Consequently, the construction of congregational mosques was no longer the prerogative of the Seljuk sultans. High officials of the Seljuk sultanates, chiefs of the beyliks, emirs, and wealthy merchants often patronised the construction of mosques that were smaller than the grand-scale stone and brick counterparts constructed by the sultans. Amongst these donors, Sahip Ata, a prominent minister of the Seljuk government, is known to have commissioned several smaller-scaled mosques that employed wooden columned or “hypostyle” structures within stone exterior walls.

A related consequence of the Mongol invasions was the introduction of construction techniques that were novel to Anatolia. Under the Mongol rule of the region, craftspeople moved more freely from Central Asia and elsewhere to Anatolia, bringing with them their knowledge of wooden building construction. These intertwining factors contributed to the emergence of this particular type of wooden hypostyle mosque in medieval Anatolia.

In the international context, while the origin of wooden mosques goes back to the beginning of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and Central Asia, almost all the early examples of this type of mosque, except the Juma (Friday) Mosque of Khiva in Uzbekistan, have been demolished, significantly altered or reconstructed in other materials. The selected group of wooden mosques located in Anatolia is therefore considered to include some of the earliest examples of this type of building. The tradition of constructing wooden mosques continues to the present day, not only in Türkiye but in all regions of the Islamic world.

Begun in 1272 and finished between 1277 and 1278, the Abyonkarahisar Ulû Mosque underwent modifications and renovations in 1341, 1765, 1851, 1947, and 1984. The minaret was added to the structure in the Bayazid Period (1389-1402). During the 1947 campaign, the top layer of the structure was completely opened, some parts of the walls were reconstructed, and all the degraded wooden columns and most of the capitals were replaced. The original flat earthen roof was modified to a pitched form with a metal covering, and the lantern on the roof was removed. The traces of arched entrance eaves and some windows were removed. This campaign transformed the mosque into its current form.

The Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque was built during the late 13th century. It underwent renovations and transformations in 1299-1290, 1331, 1694, 1704, 1876, 1900, and 1902. Details about these interventions are not available. The Ahi Şerefeddin Tomb was constructed in 1330, while the mihrab was renovated at the end of the 19th century. Renovation activities continued from the beginning of the 1900s to 1962. Before 1962, the original
The Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque was constructed in the mid to late 13th century and was renovated in 1274-1275, 1439-1440, and 1778-1779. There is no detailed record of what changes were made at these dates. The minaret was built in June 1487. The flat earthen roof was replaced with a gabled roof between 2012 and 2014. With this change, the mosque took on its current form. 

The Mahmut Bey Mosque was constructed in 1366-1367 and first repaired in 1852. The flat earthen roof was replaced by a wooden structure covered with tiles in 1945, which transformed the mosque into its current form. The minaret was destroyed by an earthquake in 1943 and was reconstructed, repaired repeatedly, and finally reconstructed again with a steel framework covered by wooden panels. 

The Eşrefoğlu Mosque was built between 1296 and 1299, and has been the subject of many modifications and repairs throughout its history, although no detailed information is available on most of the interventions. The most significant alteration happened in 1941, when the original flat earthen roof was replaced with a tile roof. With this modification the mosque took on its current form. Some relatively minor changes have been undertaken recently, such as adding a small library and office annex to the north wall of the mosque. 

The physical fabric and the significant features of this component part are in good condition. The impact of deterioration processes is being controlled, though the unsolved humidity issue is causing swelling and peeling of the plaster and paint on the exterior walls and interior surfaces. Cracks, ruptures, and colour changes in the wooden materials due to external factors have also been observed. 

Component part 3 - Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque

A large-scale restoration campaign took place at the Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque between 2006 and 2007. The original plaster, annexes, and decorations of the envelope were revealed at that time and were examined using archaeometric methods. The roof was dismantled between 2012 and 2014 and replaced with a gable roof. Displaced ceiling beams were put back in place, and parts of decayed beams were replaced with the same materials. Rainwater was channelled down into the ground through downspouts, and exterior façade plaster of later periods was removed to reveal the original surface. Steel supports were placed against a structural deformation in the western façade, and low-quality architectural elements and annexes that had been added in later periods were removed to reveal earlier features and details. Monitoring of structural stability is in place to inform decisions about potential physical interventions. Concrete shops that were built close to the northern and western façades have been removed. 

Both the stone envelope and wooden structure are stable. However, the condition of the physical fabric and its significant features should be improved. Swelling and peeling of the interior plaster and insect and fungi attacks on the wooden elements are active. Deterioration and discolouration of the stone envelopes have been observed.
Component part 4 - Mahmut Bey Mosque

Several conservation campaigns have been conducted at the mosque since the 1940s. The collapsed minaret was reconstructed between 1944 and 1945, and the roof was reconstructed with wooden materials and covered with tiles. The minaret was repaired in 1961. From 1985 to 1987, the minaret, the exterior walls of the mosque, the wooden ceiling, the tribunes, and the wooden columns were repaired. Finally, between 2005 and 2008, the minaret was reconstructed with a steel framework covered by wooden panels, the wooden columns and ceilings in the narthex were replaced with the same materials, blocked windows were reopened, the roof was renovated, the façades were consolidated, missing parts of the painted surfaces were completed, and landscaping with washrooms and an ablution area were put in place.

Both the stone envelope and wooden structure are stable. However, some problems remain with the physical fabric and its significant features. Intensive insect damage is observed, causing material losses, colour changes, and cracks in wooden elements and architectural features.

Component part 5 - Eşrefoğlu Mosque

The recorded conservation history of this mosque starts in 1900, when the structure was repaired, and ends with a campaign that was completed in 2020. The minaret was renovated in 1920, and the structure was thoroughly repaired between 1934 and 1940. The flat earthen roof was changed to a tiled roof in 1941, which transformed the form of the mosque into the present one. The roof was renovated again between 1962 and 1965, when a roof opening was installed and covered with glass. The roof tiles were replaced with copper in 1978 and with lead in 2004. Fifteen restoration campaigns are recorded between 1990 and 2020. The 1994-1996 campaign addressed a stability problem with the mosque. The mugarnas were renovated, and stone pedestals below the floor were reinforced with concrete beams, the main outer walls were insulated, and missing parts of the wooden minbar were completed. In 2002 the roof was insulated and gutters were installed. Between 2004 and 2020, the glazed tiles were restored, a camera system and a fire alarm system were installed, and a one-storey library and office annex were added to the north wall. The surroundings of the mosque were also improved.

Routine maintenance has been undertaken in terms of renewal of the roof cover and gutter system, consolidation and renewal of wooden façade sections and floor coverings, and repair of painted surfaces and micro-cracks in the interior plaster.

The wooden structure and stone envelope are in good condition and the impact of deterioration processes is being controlled. However, material losses are observed on the wall surfaces, joints, and stone blocks due to the combined factors of high humidity in the rainy season, the low location of the mosque, and an inadequate drainage system. Insect damage is also observed.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the stone envelopes and wooden structures of the component parts are stable. However, some immediate actions are needed to address the active deterioration of building materials caused by moisture in the fabric, insect attack of the wooden elements, and problems with the painted decoration.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are environmental pressures such as insect attack and moisture, as well as the risk of fire, earthquakes, and floods. There are also demographic pressures, including changes to the surrounding social structure. In addition, there are a number of factors that are specific to individual mosques.

Insect attack of the wooden elements is a severe threat to the Eşrefoğlu Mosque component part. The same risk, although less acute, is observed in the four other component parts. Immediate action based on thorough scientific research and testing should be undertaken to address this threat, followed by preventive measures that can ensure the long-term survival of the nominated property.

Moisture in the building fabric has been a persistent threat to the stone envelopes and plaster finishes of the mosques. Comprehensive research on the cause of this problem should be undertaken, followed by targeted actions that address the cause.

The risk of fire is common in all the component parts. Very limited fire alarm systems and fire extinguishing equipment are in place.

Changes to the surrounding social structure as population income declines, and deterioration of abandoned historic houses in the buffer zones, are factors common to the historic environments of the four urban component parts. Addressing underlying societal issues can include raising awareness about the value of the nominated property to the communities in which these mosques are found.

In addition to the above common factors, specific factors are found at the individual mosques. There is a potential risk of rockfalls at the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque, which is beside a "Disaster Exposed Area". In addition, a cable car is planned to be built near the mosque, which could significantly affect views to and from the mosque. This project has been halted to allow a Heritage Impact Assessment to be made. Traffic around the Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque has increased, causing a corresponding increase in potentially damaging air pollution.

A pilot project to address a number of these threats has been conducted at the Eşrefoğlu Mosque component part, and its outcome will be used to develop a risk
management plan for all five component parts. The ICOMOS Interim Report included a request for additional information about this project. In its response provided in February 2023, the State Party advised that the Workshop on Risk Management and Protection in Wooden Mosques of Foundation Cultural Heritage: Konya-Karaman Project was held from 5 to 6 January 2023. The outcome document of this workshop, the Final Declaration of the Workshop on Risk Management and Protection in Wooden Mosques of Foundation Cultural Heritage: Konya-Karaman Project, was officially distributed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to all the relevant stakeholders, which initiated the drafting process of the comprehensive risk management plan.

ICOMOS considers that the overall state of conservation is stable. ICOMOS considers that the factors affecting the nominated property should be controlled, and that the threats common to all five component parts, including insects, moisture, and the risk of fire, earthquakes, and floods, as well as deterioration of the settings, should be addressed immediately. Threats specific to certain component parts should be addressed at the same time, and the comprehensive risk management plan should be completed in priority.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The five mosques represent outstanding examples of a specific building type that holds an important place in the development of Islamic architecture. The mosques were built with a unique wooden structural system, where a flat wooden ceiling is carried by wooden columns with muqarnas or spolia column capitals, while the exterior of the buildings was built of masonry using rubble and cut stone.

- These mosques are significant for the skilful woodcarving and workmanship lavishly used on the architectural fittings and furnishings, including doors, minbars, columns, capitals, ceiling beams, and consoles. Some have outstanding examples of late 13th century minbars with the tongue-and-groove (kündekari) technique. They also bear inscriptions giving the names and titles of the craftspeople who made them as carpenters (neccar or derüdger) or decorators (nakkaş).

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information, the key attributes of the nominated property are the five mosques, their associated buildings and graveyard, their wooden columns with muqarnas or spolia column capitals, their flat wooden ceilings, the woodcarving, painting, and workmanship expressed in their architectural fittings and furnishings, and their masonry walls, as well as key views to and from the mosques.

ICOMOS considers that the name of the nominated property should be changed to “Wooden Hypostyle Mosques of Medieval Anatolia” in order to convey more concisely and accurately the essential characteristic of the nominated property.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed around the following parameters: construction date; role played in developing and disseminating the typology; representativity of wooden post-and-beam construction; quality and refinement of architectural fixtures and fittings; authenticity of conservation materials and techniques; present state of conservation; and continuity of original use and function. It has examined properties, within the country and the relevant geo-cultural region, inscribed on the World Heritage List and one inserted in a Tentative List, as well as other properties.

The comparative analysis is presented in three parts. In the first part, a methodology described in The World Heritage List: Filling the Gaps (ICOMOS, 2004) is used to examine the World Heritage List. The State Party concludes that the typology of the nominated property is underrepresented on the World Heritage List on the basis of there being no mosques amongst nine religious properties built with a wooden structural system that are currently inscribed.

In the second part, regional comparisons with mosques in Central Asia, Iran, and East Asia are made, and a detailed comparison with mosques within the State Party (the historic region of Anatolia) is conducted. The regional comparisons include, amongst others, the Djuma (Friday) Mosque of Khiva (Itchan Kala, Uzbekistan, 1990, criteria (iii), (iv) and (v)); mosques in Bonab, Maragheh, and elsewhere in East Azerbaijan Province, Iran; and Tomb of Bibi Jawindi, Baha’al-Halim and Ustead and the Tomb and Mosque of Jalaluddin Bukhari (Pakistan, Tentative List). Comparisons are made with a large number of mosques in the national context, amongst them the Gökçe Mosques and the Yaycilar-Şeyh Habil Mosque. None are seen to be comparable to the nominated property in terms of scale, design, workmanship, furnishing, and decoration.

In the third part, the position of the nominated property in the temporal and spatial contexts of wooden mosques is summarised, the criteria for selecting the component parts are described, and justification for the selection of the component parts against these criteria is made. The State Party concludes that the five selected mosques are the most representative of their typology and the most outstanding examples of a once-widespread wooden tradition.

In October 2022, ICOMOS requested additional information about the serial approach to the nomination, including the links between the component parts and the
rationale for selecting them. The State Party responded in November 2022 with a comprehensive explanation outlining the historical, cultural, and artistic links between the component parts; the methodology, rationale, and criteria for selecting the five components; and how each component part contributes to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the methodology for the comparative analysis is sound, the links between the component parts are demonstrated, and the rationale and criteria for selecting the nominated component parts are justified.

ICOMOS considered that the international comparison was limited. The ICOMOS Interim Report included a request for an extended comparative analysis in order to better understand the origin of the construction technique. In its response sent in February 2023, the State Party provided an extensive comparison, suggesting that this technique did not emerge locally but was introduced from Central Asia through both immigration of the craftspeople with this particular knowledge and intentional technical transfer promoted by important political figures. ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis has successfully established the important position the nominated property holds in the development of Islamic architecture.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

**Criteria under which inscription is proposed**

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi).

Criterion (ii): *exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the five mosques with wooden columns and timber ceilings that comprise the nominated property are significant evidences of the interchange of ideas and practices regarding an early Islamic building type that originated in the Arab region and Central Asia and was transmitted to Anatolia during the medieval period. These mosques also exerted considerable influence in large areas of Anatolia and beyond from the 14th century to the early 20th century.

ICOMOS considers that the construction of the wooden hypostyle mosques on a large scale in medieval Anatolia during a relatively short period of time demonstrates in an important way the interchange of human values on developments in architecture within this geo-cultural region of the world. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the five mosques that comprise the nominated property are surviving representatives of the hypostyle-type mosques built with a wooden structure where the timber ceilings are carried by wooden columns topped with either wooden muqarnas or marble spolia capitals. As a specific group, they testify to an important historical period of medieval Anatolian architecture that illustrates expertise in timber construction techniques, the use of wood as a structural element, interior decoration, woodcarving, and artwork.

ICOMOS considers that, in the context of Islamic religious architecture that is dominated by stone and brick buildings, the nominated property is an outstanding physical testimony of a rarely surviving type of wooden hypostyle mosques that once flourished in medieval Anatolia, and which illustrates a significant stage in Islamic architecture. In addition, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is directly and tangibly associated with the historical event of the Mongol conquests of Anatolia in the 13th and 14th centuries. On the one hand, this event released from the Seljuk sultans the prerogative of constructing congregational mosques. High officials of the Seljuk sultanates, chiefs of the beyliks, emirs, and wealthy merchants were allowed to build mosques of this type. On the other hand, the Mongol control of Anatolia facilitated the immigration of Central Asian craftsmen with their timber structure construction technology and woodworking skills. These intertwining factors led to the prevalence of wooden hypostyle mosques in Anatolia. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion (vi): *be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the five mosques are tangibly associated with the Islamic beliefs, art, and architecture that prevailed in Anatolia during the medieval period. They illustrate unique examples of craftsmanship and artwork regarding woodcarvings and hand-drawn painted decoration.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is indeed tangibly associated with the Islamic beliefs, art, and architecture then prevalent in medieval Anatolia, but that all the mosques within and outside Anatolia and throughout the history of Islam also have such associations. In addition, the dimension related to craftsmanship and artwork is better reflected under criterion (iv). ICOMOS considers that this criterion is not justified.
ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iv). Criterion (vi) is not justified. The serial approach and the rationale for selecting the component mosques are justified.

**Integrity and authenticity**

**Integrity**

The integrity of the nominated property is based on medieval Anatolian hypostyle-type mosques built with a wooden structure consisting of wooden columns carrying a flat timber ceiling.

At the level of the whole series, the nominated mosques and related buildings cover the entire period between the late 13th and mid-14th centuries when the construction of wooden mosques prevailed in Anatolia. The distribution of the mosques stretched from northern to central to southern parts of the historic region of Anatolia, reflecting the extent of once widespread wooden mosque construction activities in the medieval period. ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property at the level of the whole series is justified.

At the level of individual component parts, all the key attributes necessary to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, particularly the wooden load-bearing structure within the stone envelope, are included within the boundaries of the nominated serial property. Its size is adequate to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that convey the significance of the nominated property.

In order to meet the conditions of integrity, the attributes supporting the nominated property must be intact, and major pressures on them must be managed. A number of interventions have had a visual impact on the integrity of the nominated property, such as alterations to the roof forms, additions, deteriorating settings, and unsympathetic installations of infrastructural facilities.

While each mosque has undergone its own distinct path of evolution, which compromised the integrity of each component part to a certain extent, ICOMOS considers that the key attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value largely remain. ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the nominated property at the individual component part level have been met.

**Authenticity**

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the forms and designs, materials and substance, locations, uses and functions, and spirit and feeling of the mosques and the related buildings located within its five component parts.

All five component parts have undergone alterations in the past, some of which did not respect the original materials, forms, and/or designs, thus affecting their authenticity. The roofs of the mosques have been changed from flat earthen to gabled or pitched. Roof openings and lanterns have been adapted or removed. Almost all the upper windows have been replaced by a later standard version. Other windows have been added or changed over time. A large quantity of wooden material has been replaced on a semi-cyclical basis. A certain amount of the original decorations on the wooden structure and other elements remain unchanged. The settings around the urban mosques have evolved constantly over time and some have deteriorated in recent decades.

While many of these changes have had a negative impact on the authenticity of the nominated property, the key attributes that define this particular type of Islamic architecture such as the wooden load-bearing structures, stone envelope, interior woodwork, and painted decorations remain authentic. The majority of the interventions over the centuries have been sympathetic to traditional techniques. The original functions of all the mosques are also authentic. All continue to be the religious centres of their local communities and have preserved an authentic religious spirit and a strong feeling of the place. The institution known as waqf has for generations been the main guarantee for the preservation and continuity of the component parts by means of specific endowments. ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole series as well as the authenticity of each of the component parts has been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

**Boundaries**

There are no permanent inhabitants in the nominated serial property. As of 2021, a total of 1,562 people live in the buffer zones of the nominated property.

The boundaries of the nominated property encompass all the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The buffer zones are demarcated to include all areas that contribute to the settings of each component part. They include important views and other supporting and functionally linked elements. The boundaries consider topographic features, land-use patterns, and ownership status.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List, criteria (ii) and (iv) have been met, and the serial approach is justified. ICOMOS also considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met. The boundaries include all the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and the buffer zones provide an extra layer of protection for the nominated property.
4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation
Most documentation of past interventions, historical photographs, measured drawings, and other archival materials are deposited at the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums and the General Directorate of Foundations under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, as well as in the archives of their regional branches. These documents are used as historical references to inform conservation interventions.

In response to the additional information request sent by ICOMOS in October 2022 regarding the structural aspects of the mosques, the State Party provided, in November 2022, architectural drawings, some of which were of inadequate quality. This highlighted a lack of comprehensive baseline documentation of adequate quality for the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. A programme is needed to establish baseline information that can be used for monitoring the condition of the nominated property, as well as for evaluating the effectiveness of protection, conservation, and management activities, all in support of making informed decisions. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS recommended that the State Party conduct a comprehensive documentation programme, create a database of all the information from this programme plus the relevant archives of past interventions and historical texts, and share this database with all stakeholders to benefit the conservation, management, and monitoring of the nominated property. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party confirmed that the comprehensive documentation campaign will be conducted, and the database is already in place and accessible to all stakeholders.

Conservation measures
The conservation measures in place are a combination of daily maintenance and occasional conservation campaigns.

The primary roles of daily maintenance are to keep the mosques functioning as local religious centres and to monitor the conditions of the structures and materials. The monitoring results are recorded and analyzed. When conditions are deemed by the analysis to be serious enough, a conservation campaign is conducted.

Maintenance activities for each component part of the nominated property have included renewal of the roof cover and gutter system, consolidation and renewal of wooden façade sections and the wooden floor of the interior gathering place, and repair of micro-cracks in the interior plaster and painted decoration. Since some of these activities intervene directly on key attributes, a cumulative loss of authenticity of the nominated property has occurred.

ICOMOS noted in its Interim Report that maintenance activities may cause detrimental changes to the authenticity of the component parts of the nominated property over the longer term, if such activities are inappropriate or improperly implemented. ICOMOS considers that a maintenance manual based on internationally accepted conservation principles should be developed and implemented by the staff responsible for undertaking maintenance activities. In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party advised that under the consultancy of the Scientific Committee, the preparation of maintenance and repair manuals will be planned by the General Directorate of Foundations.

Conservation campaigns are carried out to address larger issues such as structural instability and water infiltration, as well as the renovation of roofs, floors, and wall openings. Proposals for conservation campaigns are prepared based on in situ investigations and the collection and analysis of scientific data through a multidisciplinary approach, and are approved by competent authorities in consultation with conservation experts. The funding for conservation campaigns is mainly from government budgets. Recent campaigns have followed internationally accepted conservation principles such as respect for authenticity, minimum intervention, and distinguishability of new work from old.

ICOMOS considers that, overall, the current conservation measures are adequate. ICOMOS nevertheless considers that capacity building is needed for the maintenance personnel, and that a maintenance manual should be developed to guide the personnel in their activities so as to avoid a cumulative loss of authenticity over the longer term.

Monitoring
Seventeen monitoring indicators have been defined by the State Party in categories such as structural stability, material deterioration, environmental impact, water-related damage, tourism-related impacts, number of restoration projects, education resources and activities, and risk preparedness. The periodicity varies from three months to five years. The monitoring at each mosque is carried out by the maintenance staff and the Site Managers, with the involvement of institutions from national, regional, and local governments. In addition, implementation of the management plan is monitored by the State Management Unit within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The Site Management Unit compiles the annual reports with information collected from institutions or individuals responsible for implementing the management plan. These annual reports are shared with the Advisory Board and the Coordination and Supervision (Audit) Board, the site management bodies.

ICOMOS considers that the current monitoring system establishes a broad framework for the continuous assessment of the conditions of the mosques. For the monitoring system to be fully effective, ICOMOS considers that the comprehensive documentation campaign should be conducted following a common standard, and the outcomes are compiled to serve as the starting point for monitoring. ICOMOS further considers
that, in order for the monitoring system to inform the decision-making process, the links between monitoring outcomes and responsive actions should be developed, and capacity building for the personnel responsible for monitoring should be carried out.

ICOMOS considers that baseline documentation is needed for all the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The conservation measures are generally appropriate, though capacity building for maintenance personnel is imperative and a maintenance manual should be developed. The monitoring system needs to be improved. Furthermore, it would be advisable that the monitoring system be adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The legal framework for protecting the nominated property is comprised of laws, regulations, and plans at the national, regional, and local levels. At the national level there are two Laws and four Principal Decisions that specify the legal status of the nominated component parts, demarcate the nominated property and buffer zones through legal provisions, regulate activities regarding the component parts and their settings, and establish the management system.

Each of the five component parts is registered as cultural property “that requires protection” under the Law on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property (Law No. 2863, 23/07/1983 as amended by Law No. 5226, 14/07/2004; hereinafter referred to as Conservation Law No. 2863). This is the highest level of protection for cultural heritage in Türkiye. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism is the primary government department responsible for implementing Conservation Law No. 2863.

In addition, the Mahmut Bey Mosque component part and its buffer zone are in a designated “conservation area”, while each of the four other component parts and their buffer zones is situated in an area designated as an “urban site”. Any project proposals concerning buildings or areas in the conservation areas and urban sites require prior permission from the relevant Regional Councils for the Conservation of Cultural Properties, which are the regional branches of the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Conservation Law No. 2863 also stipulates that cultural properties located in urban sites should have conservation plans. Conservation plans for the Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque, Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque, and Eşrefoğlu Mosque component parts have been prepared by the relevant municipalities, and have been implemented in cooperation with the regional conservation councils. ICOMOS notes that these plans need to be updated, since some of them were made decades ago. In addition, the relevant Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Properties has specified “Temporary Protection Principles and Terms of Use” for the urban site in which the Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque is located, to create an added layer of protection.

The nominated property is also subject to protection by the Foundations Law No. 5737, since all the component mosques are owned by the General Directorate of Foundations under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. According to this Law, projects concerning these properties must be carried out by the relevant Regional Directorate of Foundations. A Principal Decision (Decision No. 731) made in 2007 by the High Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties, a national-level consultative body for the conservation and management of cultural heritage, lays out the conservation principles to be observed in interventions carried out at properties owned by the General Directorate of Foundations. These principles apply to the nominated property.

Principal Decisions are issued by the High Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties. These Decisions prescribe the principles to be followed in heritage conservation and management activities. Some Decisions also designate heritage categories to be protected, conserved, and managed, according to their specific characteristics. In 1999, the Principal Decision on Classification, Maintenance and Repair of Immovable Cultural Properties (Decision No. 660) was issued. It stipulates intervention methods, restoration principles, and supervisory procedures. This Decision is a guiding document for any interventions undertaken in the nominated component parts. In addition, all the mosques except for the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque have been registered as “1st Group” cultural properties, which is the highest designation under this Decision.

The Principal Decision on Protection and Use Provisions in Archaeological Sites (Decision No. 658) specifies the legal protection system for archaeological sites and the regulations relating to each protection status. Since the Eşrefoğlu Mosque is located in a “3rd Degree” archaeological site, it is protected by the provisions of this Decision.

The Principal Decision on Urban Sites, Terms of Protection and Use (Decision No. 681) was issued in 2017. Construction and development activities in urban sites are regulated under this Decision. It applies to the nominated property because four of the five component parts are located in urban sites.

In addition to these national legal frameworks, there are several regional and local legislative provisions as well as planning policies, guidance, and plans that affect the nominated property. All of them stem from these national legal frameworks. Collectively, the national, regional, and local protective mechanisms ensure the safeguard of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, and mechanisms are in place to ensure that the buffer zones provide the necessary added layer of protection.
**Management system**

The management system has been established pursuant to Conservation Law No. 2863, which prescribes the establishment of the management bodies and mechanisms for the management of heritage sites.

The nominated property is managed at the national, regional, and local levels. At the national level, the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums and the General Directorate of Foundations under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism are in charge of managing immovable cultural properties. The General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums is responsible for preventing the destruction of historical and cultural properties, keeping the values of these properties alive, and developing, promoting, and evaluating the cultural property. The General Directorate of Foundations is responsible for identifying and protecting movable and immovable cultural properties belonging to foundations. It is also a central government institution authorised to expropriate, evaluate, repair, restore, and, if necessary, rebuild cultural properties and conservation areas of foundations whose ownership has changed. The High Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties stipulates the terms for the protection and use of urban sites. It also determines, through its Principal Decisions, the intervention methods, major repair principles, and terms of implementation and inspection for cultural properties owned by the General Directorate of Foundations.

At the regional level, the regional branches of both the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums and the General Directorate of Foundations are responsible for the management and conservation of individual cultural properties. Any activity regarding the nominated property must be approved by the relevant Regional Directorate of Foundations with the prior consent of the relevant Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Properties. The implementation of approved projects is controlled by experts from the Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Properties to ensure conformity with the approved proposals.

At the local level, the component parts are managed by three interrelated bodies: the Site Manager, the Advisory Board, and the Coordinating and Supervision (Audit) Board.

The Site Manager, who receives payment from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, is responsible for coordinating the development of site management plans, preparing work programmes to realise the annual targets of the management plan, and preparing annual audit reports and submitting them to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The Advisory Board, composed of at least five persons with the right to property in the area plus persons from professional chambers, civil society organisations, relevant university departments, the Site Manager, and members determined by the competent authority, is responsible for examining the management plan and submitting proposals for decision-making and implementation regarding the plan. The Advisory Board meets at least once a year.

The Coordination and Supervision (Audit) Board is chaired by the Site Manager and composed of two members from the Advisory Board and at least one representative from each of the administrations whose services are needed within the scope of the management plan. The Board examines the management plan, approves the final version, and controls its implementation. It meets at least twice a year. Being living religious places for the local populations, the mosques are maintained by the Imam, the Muezzin, and their assistants, assigned by the local mullahs.

In addition to the current management system established pursuant to Conservation Law No. 2863, the Scientific Committee has been established according to the Science and Consultancy Protocol Concerning Works to be Realized in “Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure”, which was signed between the General Directorate of Foundations and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Foundation University. An art historian and an architect were appointed to the Committee, and additional support can be obtained from different academic experts including the preservation of hand-drawn painting (kalemişi) and wooden structures. The Scientific Committee will evaluate, direct, and monitor all kinds of study and conservation activities concerning the mosques, making decisions in a scientific manner in accordance with national and international legislation and contemporary conservation principles.

The management plan of the nominated property, which was approved in 2022, is the guiding document for the management system. The management plan was developed through a participatory process that respected diversity, equity, gender equality, and human rights, and conforms to Conservation Law No. 2863. It defines the common vision and eleven management policies for the nominated property as a whole: preserving the proposed Outstanding Universal Value; developing conservation approaches; increasing social awareness; involving local people and other stakeholders; improving conservation and management standards; making contributions to tourism; solving infrastructural and access issues; improving the quality and safety of visitation; minimising adverse tourism impacts; ensuring risk preparedness; and encouraging scientific research and publications. A set of management objectives and actions has been developed under each of the eleven common policies for every component part of the nominated property. The period of implementation of the plan is five years. Heritage Impact Assessment and risk management mechanisms are embedded in the management plan.

ICOMOS considers that the management plan of the nominated property provides a comprehensive framework to address the pressing conservation and management issues. Its implementation is of utmost importance. In its Interim Report to the State Party, ICOMOS requested additional information on how the implementation progress of the management plan is monitored. The State Party responded in February 2023 that it is monitored primarily by the "Annual Implementation Progress Report" mechanism exercised by the Site Manager. In the annual report, the
ICOMOS considers that, overall, the current management system is adequate for the individual component parts. ICOMOS considers, however, that the overall management system for the nominated serial property demonstrates a weak sense of interconnection between the component parts in terms of coordinated efforts, shared experiences and expertise, and common interpretation and presentation of the values of the nominated property as an integral whole. A mechanism for managing the individual component parts as a whole should be established. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested additional information on this issue. The State Party responded in February 2023 that the coordinated management is undertaken by the Site Manager who convenes the consultation and coordination meetings every six months, with the participation of all the stakeholders. Additionally, sub-working groups will be established to ensure the coordination of tourism, promotion, and capacity-building activities.

Visitor management

The level of visitor management varies between component parts. Currently, the primary function of the mosques is to serve the religious needs of the local population. Tourism has not yet developed as a factor that requires immediate visitor management actions. While adequate attention to the needs of both worshippers and visitors is available at all the mosques, facilities and information services dedicated specifically to tourism are insufficient. A national tourism strategy is in place that includes the nominated property amongst its promoted destinations. In addition, the management plan of the nominated property encourages the development of tourism to increase national and international awareness of the values of the mosques and, at the same time, contribute to the local economies. Detailed tourism strategies and actions are developed in the management plan for each mosque, including aspects such as enriching experiences of tourists while ensuring there is no negative impact on the nominated property, and providing adequate information, facilities, and access.

Although the current situation may not appear to demand immediate action regarding tourism, ICOMOS considers that this may change in the near future with the promotion of the nominated property at the international, national, regional, and local levels. This is even more likely in view of a potential inscription on the World Heritage List. Tourism-related actions that are described in the management plan of the nominated property should therefore be implemented as soon as possible, so as to prepare the nominated property for a possible surge in tourism.

Community involvement

The local communities are involved in the protection, conservation, and management of the nominated property in two ways. They are consulted as stakeholders in the process of preparing the management plan of the nominated property; and they are employed in the conservation campaigns and daily maintenance of the mosques on a contractual or voluntary basis.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is legally protected under the highest level of cultural heritage protection in Türkiye as well as other protective mechanisms that safeguard the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. The management system is in place, and the management plan was approved in 2022. The management effectiveness depends on the implementation of the management plan and priorities should be placed on risk management, conservation interventions on active deterioration, and tourism-related actions. A set of indicators should be developed for effectiveness assessment of the outcomes of implementing the management plan of the nominated property.

6 Conclusion

The Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure is a serial nomination of five mosques, and collectively they are an outstanding representative of the early wooden hypostyle religious buildings in the historic development of Islamic architecture. Located in five different provinces of Türkiye and constructed between the late 13th century and mid-14th century, the five mosques share a common feature where a flat ceiling is supported by columns through wooden or stone capitals and this load-bearing structure is enclosed by a stone envelope. The excellency of the woodwork and painted decorations testify to the exceptional level of artistic and craftsmanship achievement once prevalent in mediaeval Anatolia. Rarely
surviving due to the vulnerable nature of wood as the building material, the selected mosques are the best example of this type of building in medieval Anatolia in terms of scale, design, workmanship, furnishing and decoration. More elaborated examples of this type of architecture can be found in other parts of the world, however, they are dated to a much later period.

The comparative analysis successfully establishes the outstanding position that the nominated property occupies in the historic development of Islamic architecture, and as an underrepresented typology of the World Heritage List. The nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iv), and conditions of integrity and authenticity.

The current legal protection and management are adequate, and the management plan of the nominated property is comprehensive. However, improvements can be made to the current management system by establishing the sub-working groups. The implementation of the management plan should be monitored closely, since most of the acute issues are expected to be addressed by the actions listed in the plan.

The mosques being religious centres in continuous use, their functional aspects are under constant and good care by local people. However, they are affected by certain factors such as fire risk, moisture in the fabric, and insect attack. Immediate actions are required to address these issues. In addition, a Heritage Impact Assessment Report of the cable car project near the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque should be submitted and the project halted. Capacity building to improve knowledge and skills in heritage conservation and monitoring is imperative for those responsible for regular maintenance.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of the Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure, Türkiye, be referred back to the State Party to allow it to:

- Complete the establishment of the sub-working groups within the scope of the management plan;
- Submit the Heritage Impact Assessment Report of the cable car project near the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque and halt the project;
- Complete the comprehensive risk management plan for the series as a whole;
- Develop a maintenance manual based on internationally accepted conservation principles;
- Update the outdated conservation plans of the nominated component parts;
- Implement the tourism-related actions described in the management plan;
- Develop a set of indicators to assess the effectiveness of the outcomes of implementing the management plan of the nominated property.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Controlling the factors that affect the nominated property and, in particular, immediately addressing the threats common to all five component parts, including fire, insects, moisture, and deterioration of the settings,

b) Undertaking comprehensive documentation of all the mosques following a common standard, with the outcomes to be used as the baseline information for monitoring and management,

c) Building capacity for maintenance and monitoring staff,

d) Conserving the dismantled original pieces in safe storage for research and reference,

e) Improving the current monitoring system by establishing the links between the monitoring outcomes and responsive actions;

ICOMOS recommends that the name of the serial property be changed to: “Wooden Hypostyle Mosques of Medieval Anatolia”.

Map showing the location of the nominated component parts
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks

Location
Licking, Ross, and Warren counties
State of Ohio
United States of America

Brief description
Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks is a series of eight monumental earthen enclosure complexes built between 2,000 and 1,600 years ago along the central tributaries of the Ohio River in east-central North America. They are the most representative surviving expressions of the Indigenous tradition now referred to as the Hopewell culture. Their scale and complexity are evidenced in precise geometric figures as well as hilltops sculpted to enclose vast, level plazas. Huge earthen squares, circles, and octagons are executed with a precision of form, technique, and dimension consistently deployed across a wide geographic region. There are alignments with the cycles of the Sun and the far more complex cycles of the Moon. These earthworks served as ceremonial centres, built by dispersed, non-hierarchical groups whose way of life was supported by a mix of foraging and farming. The sites were the centre of a continent-wide sphere of influence and interaction, and have yielded finely crafted ritual objects fashioned from exotic raw materials obtained from distant places.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of eight sites.

Included in the Tentative List
30 January 2008

Background
This is a new nomination.

At the request of the State Party, an ICOMOS Advisory Mission visited the nominated property from 16 to 20 November 2015.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 17 to 24 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the boundaries and integrity archaeological finds, ownership and protection, monitoring, research, and community involvement.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 31 October 2022, 1 November 2022, and 12 December 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report, including: research, management, community involvement, site interpretation, land use and integrity.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 17 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The eight component parts of the nominated property are situated in Licking, Warren, and Ross counties in the southern part of the State of Ohio. Built between 2,000 and 1,600 years ago on the upper-level terraces of river valleys in a landscape shaped during the last glaciation of northeastern North America, they illustrate the full repertoire of earthwork configurations created by the Indigenous tradition now referred to as the Hopewell culture (1 to 400 CE). These include landform-based shapes plus geometrically precise earthen circles (diameters greater than 300 metres with less than a 0.25 metre variance), squares, and octagons in a variety of combinations. Many were built to standard dimensional units and related geometrical principles that were used across the region and that conceptually link all these archaeological sites to each other.

Built as places for ceremonial assemblies often involving burials, these earthworks consist of embankment walls enclosing huge spaces, with carefully positioned and often monumental gateways. These earthworks are distinguished by their size, geometric and formal precision, and archaeological objects made from materials obtained...
from across much of North America. In many cases, walls, mounds, gateways, and other features are aligned to the cyclical risings and settings of the Sun and Moon, the latter encoding all eight lunar standstills over an 18.6-year cycle. There is also archaeological evidence of substantial stone and timber constructions associated with the use and development of the sites.

**Octagon Earthworks and Great Circle Earthworks**

The two northernmost component parts are the principal surviving portions of what is known as the Newark Earthworks complex. The first of these is the Octagon Earthworks component part, comprised of two linked geometric figures enclosing an area of more than 24 hectares. A circular enclosure and its adjoining open-cornered octagon have multiple lunar orientations. The second is the Great Circle Earthworks component part. The best preserved and largest of the circular earthworks, the 10.07-hectare enclosure is entered from the northeast through a monumental gateway. Evidence indicates that its interior ditch was engineered to hold water.

**Hopeton Earthworks and Mound City**

About one hundred kilometres to the southwest, in the Scioto River Valley, the Hopeton Earthworks component part illustrates the combination of a circle and a square, enclosing a total of 15.16 hectares, with two adjacent smaller circles and a parallel-walled avenue. Hopeton appears to form a geographical and ritual pair with Mound City, which is just across the Scioto River from Hopeton. Mound City is the finest surviving necropolis of the Hopewell culture. A rounded-cornered square earthen wall encloses an area of 6.81 hectares containing the highest density of burial mounds of any Hopewell earthwork.

**High Bank Works**

The High Bank Works component part, located twelve kilometres south of Mound City in the Scioto Valley, complements the Octagon Earthworks with a circular enclosure of identical size linked to a smaller octagon, together enclosing 16.42 hectares and aligning to key positions of the solar and lunar cycles.

**Hopewell Mound Group**

This component part is located eight kilometres west of Mound City in the small valley of the North Fork of Paint Creek. The largest of all Hopewell earthen enclosures, its combination of geometrical and landform elements encloses 55.34 hectares. Its many mounds were the repositories of the best assemblage of artefacts known from the Hopewell world.

**Seip Earthworks**

The Seip Earthworks component part is in the Paint Creek Valley, eighteen kilometres southwest of the Hopewell Mound Group. Two large circles combine with a square to enclose more than 40 hectares in total. It presents a repertoire of shapes and sizes that were repeated at four other nearby earthworks that no longer survive.

**Fort Ancient**

Finally, the Fort Ancient component part crowns a high bluff overlooking the Little Miami River, eighty kilometres west of the Seip Earthworks. It is the most elaborate and largest Hopewell hilltop enclosure (40 hectares). It encodes solar and lunar alignments, and exemplifies architectural techniques of building earthen walls and water features in relation to the topographic conditions.

The area of the eight components totals 320.7 hectares, with buffer zones totalling 561.8 hectares.

By about 800 BCE, people in this area had begun experimenting with small-scale horticulture. From about 500 BCE, during the Middle Woodland period, the Adena culture started to build small-scale earthworks. By the year 1 CE, the Middle Woodland period had ushered in the increasingly elaborate Hopewell culture, which dominated the Miami, Muskingum, and Scioto river watersheds and influenced many regions beyond.

People began to assemble here over many generations, creating elaborate earthwork complexes as places of assembly, ceremony, and burial. All of this rich cultural activity, along with the monumental earthworks themselves, was achieved by otherwise dispersed groups of relatively egalitarian hunter-gatherers. The Hopewell culture was not a single group of people, but instead a religious movement that linked many distinct communities, likely with differing languages. By about 400 CE, however, forests were reclaiming the hilltop and geometric earthworks. The sites were being used less frequently by then, and no new ones were being built.

In the Late Woodland period, the so-called Intrusive Mound culture placed their own burials into the Hopewell mounds and earthworks. Around 900 CE, the forests in the region were being more widely cleared to accommodate intensive, large-scale cultivation of maize. From about 1000 until 1650, the residents of the area shifted to a sedentary, village-based, agriculturist way of life. By the early 1500s, the people had largely coalesced into fewer and larger settlements along the main valley corridor of the Ohio River.

European goods began to appear in the Ohio Valley by 1550. The region was largely depopulated of its residents within one hundred years, mainly due to devastating epidemics following their contacts with Europeans. This was followed by Iroquois military incursions, which displaced the surviving groups to refuges largely outside the region. The area was later repopulated by several Indigenous groups.

By the beginning of the 19th century Euro-Americans were settling in ever larger numbers in the river valley areas, and a policy of removing Indigenous peoples was implemented. The settlers cleared forests, created large farms, and established towns and transportation networks that

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transformed the landscape and the earthworks. Beginning in 1854 and extending into the early 21st century, the area of the nominated property gradually entered into public ownership. While the Octagon Earthworks component part has been public land since 1892, it was leased to a private golf club in 1911.

The first European references to the Hopewell earthworks date from the 1780s. Scientific investigations began in the early 1800s, and documentation and study became more systematic in 1820. Many earthworks were documented in the 1840s, including some that are not conserved today. These and other investigations that followed speak to the important role the nominated property has played in the history of scientific archaeology in the United States of America.

State of conservation
Most of the earthworks were built on well-drained stable soils in areas where flooding was unlikely. Only the steep topography of Fort Ancient has suffered from some natural erosion. The sites were covered by forests between 400 and 1800 CE, which helped to preserve them. Today, the component parts are more park-like or are open fields, due to having been in agricultural use for many decades.

Three of the eight component parts (Octagon Earthworks, Great Circle Earthworks, and Fort Ancient), despite superficial disturbances, are in near-pristine condition both architecturally and archaeologically. Two component parts (Mound City and Seip Earthworks) have had their earthen architecture partially or wholly restored based on archaeological and documentary evidence. The remaining three component parts (Hopeton Earthworks, High Bank Works, and Hopewell Mound Group) are architecturally degraded from activities such as ploughing, but retain their archaeological integrity.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are environmental pressures, including invasive woody vegetation, burrowing animals, erosion, flooding, and tree falls. Events such as extreme wind have been linked by the State Party to global climate change. Some of the component parts are in built-up areas and could be the subjects of future development pressures.

A turf grass and native grassland cover is used to stabilise the earthworks and prevent destruction by burrowing animals. Dead or damaged trees are monitored and removed if they are considered to pose a threat. In general, visitation levels seem to be well below the carrying capacity. Visits are well monitored and currently do not pose a threat. In the additional information provided

in November 2022, the State Party indicates that possible solutions are still being investigated for three high-voltage transmission towers and a visitor overlook at the Hopewell Mound Group component part, as well as for the road that crosses the Fort Ancient component part.

ICOMOS welcomes the information provided by the State Party on 12 December 2022, on the cessation of the use of the Octagon Earthworks as a golf course that restricts public access. This situation was considered incompatible with the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The ICOMOS Advisory Mission in 2015 mentioned easements at the Hopeton Earthworks and Hopewell Mound Group component parts, where gravel extraction is taking place. These could represent future threats.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good and that factors affecting the nominated property are well known and controlled. Nevertheless, some current uses such as gravel extraction will have to be resolved.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The nominated earthworks exhibit geometric precision of a vast scale and complexity. Huge squares, circles, and octagons executed with an astonishing precision of form, technique, and dimension are consistently deployed across a wide geographic region.
- The nominated property includes astronomical alignments of great variety and accuracy. These alignments are not only with the cycles of the Sun, but also with the far more complex rising and setting patterns of the Moon.
- The earthworks served as elaborate ceremonial centres, built by dispersed, non-hierarchical groups whose way of life was supported by a mix of foraging and farming.
- This was the centre of a continent-wide sphere of influence and interaction, as evidenced by exceptionally finely crafted ritual objects fashioned from exotic raw materials from distant places.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information provided, the key attributes of the nominated property are the earthworks of vast scale and geometric precision, including remnants of earthen walls, gateways, mounds, ditches, earthen and timber rings, as well as water features; the astronomical alignments; and the elaborate ceremonialism expressed through the earthworks themselves as well as through the archaeological features contained in them such as woodhenges, burials, and offerings. Some claims related to the astronomical alignment aspect would need further deliberation to be
supported with confidence. The artefacts, which are indicators of continent-wide interactions, are not considered attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, but instead play a supporting role.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed around the following parameters: monumental works that manifest sophisticated geometry; works that demonstrate astronomical precision; works with elaborate ceremonialism of a non-hierarchical, non-urban culture; and works with a nearly continent-wide interaction. It has examined properties within eastern North America, within the continent of North America, and throughout the world inscribed on the World Heritage List, inserted in the Tentative Lists of States Parties, as well as other properties.

The component parts are compared to eighteen other Hopewell sites, most of which are judged to be good or excellent in at least one of the parameters of comparison. The State Party concludes that the selected component parts represent the most complete examples of the wider Hopewell phenomenon and constitute the most comprehensive collection of attributes necessary to illustrate the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

A comparison with other North American sites excludes the cultures of southern Mexico, since they are considered to be completely different both culturally and architecturally. The cultures/sites of comparison in the United States of America are Watson Brake, Louisiana, 3500-2800 BCE; Poverty Point Culture, Louisiana, 1600-1100 BCE (Monumental Earthworks of Poverty Point, 2014, criterion (iii)); Adena culture, Ohio River Valley, 500-0 BCE; Effigy Mound culture, Upper Mississippi River Valley, 900-1200 CE (Serpent Mound, Tentative List); Mississippian culture, southeastern United States, 1000-1450 CE (Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, 1982, criteria (iii), (iv)); and Ancestral Puebloan culture, southwestern United States, 850-1250 CE (Chaco Culture, 1987, criterion (iii)). The State Party considers that, apart from Chaco culture, the geometrical and astronomical properties of the sites compared here are less precise, and most of them are much smaller as monumental architectural conceptions. The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks also stand apart from all the others as “vacant” ceremonial centres – places of widespread importance and influence, yet conceived and created by otherwise dispersed, non-resident, non-hierarchical groups.

At the global level, the nominated property is compared with eleven sites that exemplify monumental and/or astronomically significant works by ancient mixed-economy or non-urban cultures. These include Chankillo Archaeoastronomical Complex (Peru, 2021, criteria (i) and (iv)); Heart of Neolithic Orkney (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1999, criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)); and Göbekli Tepe (Türkiye, 2018, criteria (i), (ii) and (iv)). The State Party considers that a number of these properties share some of the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, but the constructions of the nominated property are exceptional amongst ancient monuments worldwide in their combination of enormous scale, geometrical and astronomical precision, and region-wide consistency and distribution. In particular, the high precision in marking rising and setting points of the Moon appears to be almost non-existent amongst ancient monuments worldwide.

The State Party also highlights that the nominated property, if inscribed, would help to address several significant gaps identified in the World Heritage List by UNESCO and ICOMOS.

ICOMOS considers that the methodology for the comparative analysis is sound, and the rationale and criteria for selecting the component parts for the serial nomination are justified.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i) and (iii).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated component parts are exceptional amongst ancient earthworks worldwide, not only in their enormous scale and wide geographic distribution, but in their geometric precision and in their astronomical breadth and accuracy. These features imply high-precision techniques of design and construction and an observational knowledge of complex astronomical cycles that would have required generations to codify. The series includes the finest extant examples of these various principles, shapes, and alignments, both in geometric earthworks and in the pre-eminent surviving hilltop enclosure. They reflect the pinnacle of Hopewell intellectual, technical, and symbolic achievement.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (i) is demonstrated in relation to the enormous scale, wide geographic distribution, and geometric precision of the earthworks. The astronomical alignment aspect is not as well documented in the nomination dossier. The additional information provided on this point in February 2023 refers to some recent work undertaken by a limited group of researchers. Given the on-going state of the research, ICOMOS considers that further deliberation should be facilitated in order to confirm which claims can be supported.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that these earthwork sites bear exceptional testimony to the unique characteristics of their builders, who lived in small, dispersed, egalitarian groups amongst the river
valleys and who gathered periodically to create, manage, and worship within massive public works that reflect an elaborate ceremonials linked to the order and rhythms of the cosmos. The continent-wide reach of the interactions of this culture is evident in raw materials such as mica, copper, and obsidian brought from so far away as the Rocky Mountains more than 2,500 kilometres distant. The quantity, diversity, and aesthetic quality of these artefacts have few equals in the history of American Indian artistry.

In its request for additional information sent in October 2022, ICOMOS indicated that more research or better presentation of existing research was needed concerning the artefacts as well as the lifeways of the Hopewell culture, in order to better contextualise the ceremonial centres. Additional information and a full bibliography concerning the latter point were supplied by the State Party in November 2022. More information about the research done on the archaeological artefacts and their origins was provided by the State Party in February 2023. In addition, ICOMOS notes that the artefacts are not attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value but are playing a supporting role.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iii) is demonstrated.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i) and (iii), and that the serial approach for selecting the component parts is justified.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

All the attributes necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are encompassed within the boundaries of the nominated serial property. These include the earthwork walls, gateways, ditches, ponds, and in situ archaeological remains. The series is of sufficient size to ensure the complete representation of the features and values that convey the nominated property’s significance.

The maps of the component parts show that in some of them (Seip Earthworks, High Bank Works, and Hopewell Mound Group) small parts of the earthworks are located outside the nominated property, in the buffer zones. In the additional information supplied in November 2022, the State Party indicates that these are still in private ownership. The law of the United States of America requires the consent of the owners for privately-owned land to be included in a World Heritage nomination. The National Park Service has committed to acquire these parcels once the owners agree to sell. The additional information supplied by the State Party in February 2023 notes that LiDAR surveys indicate that the privately-owned parcels do not contain significant resources. The relationship with the landowners is described as generally positive, with open communications.

The attributes are intact, and major pressures on those attributes are being managed. Two situations received particular attention from the 2015 ICOMOS Advisory Mission: the Moundbuilders golf course in the Octagon Earthworks component part; and the three high-voltage transmission towers in the Hopewell Mound Group component part. In the first situation, a ruling by the Ohio Supreme Court in December 2022 has opened the way for the non-profit Ohio History Connection to acquire the leasehold of the Octagon Earthworks from the Moundbuilders Country Club and to create conditions to increase public access to the site. In February 2023, ICOMOS was informed that Ohio History Connection will have possession of the property before the end of 2023, but that there is the possibility of appeals, which could delay the process. In the case of the transmission towers, the consensus is that the most viable course of action is to leave the towers in place for the remainder of their useful life (fifty to seventy years), especially since the component part is of sufficient size to largely offset the adverse visual effect. The State Party also considers that all other options have significant drawbacks.

The detailed description of the state of conservation of the nominated property in the nomination dossier showed that the secondary uses of the sites in prehistoric, historic, and modern times left their mark on them. These uses include the construction of roads, buildings, and other infrastructure, as well as surface alterations and excavations for a number of different reasons (agriculture, archaeological investigation, restoration, etc.). All of these situations affect the integrity of the nominated property. The State Party contends that, in spite of these situations, recent LiDAR images, geophysical surveys, and excavations show that the archaeological attributes are intact and thus support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the condition of integrity for the nominated serial property has been met. Efforts should be made to resolve any issues connected to non-conforming elements and uses, as well as the situation where attributes are excluded because they are on private property.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series as well as the integrity of each of the component parts have been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated serial property is based on its locations and settings, forms and designs, materials and substance, and spirit and feeling. The settings of the earthworks are predominantly semi-rural or low-density residential areas, surrounded for most of their perimeters by parkland. In form and design, the enclosure walls and mounds remain mostly intact. High-resolution remote-sensing data for the Seip Earthworks, Hopewell Mound Group, Hopeton Earthworks, and High Bank Works component parts clearly show intact subsurface portions of wall and building constructions. The materials and substance of the earthworks are likewise authentically preserved in the intact forms of Fort Ancient and the Newark Earthworks complex, as well as in the in situ...
archaeological remains at all the other component parts, in several cases made visible by LiDAR imagery and geophysical surveys. Finally, the State Party highlights the spiritual resonance of the sites with contemporary American Indian Woodland traditions, which supports an authenticity of spirit and feeling.

ICOMOS considers that the attributes of the nominated property authentically convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, even though some elements have been damaged or altered during their long history. ICOMOS recommends indicating clearly on the ground and in documents which parts of the nominated property were altered, restored or destroyed in order to facilitate a correct reading of the component parts by visitors. Furthermore, it would be important to include more information on the relationships of present-day Indigenous peoples with the earthworks.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole series as well as the authenticity of each of the component parts has been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

**Boundaries**

There are no permanent residents within the nominated property and a total of 386 permanent residents in the buffer zones.

The boundaries of each component part encompass all the attributes necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. These attributes include remnants of earthen walls, gateways, mounds, ditches, earthen and timber rings, as well as water features. All known surviving traces of features connecting sites, such as parallel-walled causeways, are included within the boundaries of the relevant component parts.

While the concept of a ceremonial landscape is raised in the nomination dossier, the State Party stresses, in the additional information submitted in November 2022, that the landscape aspect does not play a relevant part in the nomination and is not an attribute that supports the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. The vistas and landforms on the horizon, which are also mentioned in the nomination dossier, are understood to be part of the setting, not attributes contributing to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The only exception is the alignment with the distinctive landforms of the Mount Logan Range in Mound City, six kilometres away. The State Party maintains that it is not necessary to include the intervening land in the buffer zone, since the mountain peaks are protected within state park lands and are so large that they cannot be obscured.

Very small portions of earthwork elements that are part of the High Bank Works, Hopewell Mound Group, and Seip Earthworks are not currently included in the nominated property, but remain instead within their buffer zones. This privately-owned land is located within the authorised boundary of the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park and has been identified for acquisition in the future, depending on willing sellers.

ICOMOS considers that the buffer zones proposed by the State Party for the nominated property are realistic and offer extra protection to the eight component parts through direct ownership (with the exceptions mentioned above), inclusion within the authorised boundary of the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, and local government zoning laws.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis shows in a conclusive way that the nominated property justifies consideration for the World Heritage List. Criteria (i) and (iii) have been met, and the serial approach for selecting the component parts is justified. The nominated property meets the conditions of integrity and authenticity. The boundaries of the nominated serial property are clear and contain, with minor exceptions, the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The buffer zones are adequate.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

The historic documentation of the component parts is very complete. The descriptions and plans elaborated since 1820 have been used as baseline information for conservation and restoration interventions. More recent information, including LiDAR images and geophysical surveys, allow changes to the state of conservation of the nominated property to be tracked up to the present day. The inventories and condition assessments are updated regularly (annually, at a minimum) by Ohio History Connection and Hopewell Culture National Historical Park for their respective component parts. For the National Park Service, the most recent inventories and assessments are maintained in management software systems. Ohio History Connection maintains inventory and assessment documents within its Historic Sites & Museums and Facilities Management Department files.

Concerning artefacts, the additional information supplied by the State Party in November 2022 advises that artefact collections and much of the related documentation is stored in a Collections Facility maintained by Ohio History Connection, and Hopewell Culture National Historical Park artefact inventories are maintained in a comprehensive national collections management database. Many of the objects are exhibited.

No detailed overarching research plan appears to exist for the nominated property as a whole. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party indicates that the drafting of shared research questions and an overall research strategy for the nominated property is
in the early stages. Currently, Ohio History Connection is working with Indigenous peoples to develop priorities and appropriate procedures for conducting research with the archaeological collections and at sites managed by Ohio History Connection. The development of a comprehensive research plan will be part of that conversation. Ohio History Connection expects to involve Tribal Nations in reviewing research proposals and will share research results at the annual Tribal Nations Conference. In addition, the organisation has been working with Indigenous groups to conduct research that addresses questions of interest to them.

Archaeological investigation has a long tradition at the nominated property, and both management agencies have given much thought to future archaeological research. In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party advises that a new landscape-scale framework for organising and interpreting archaeological research in the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park was outlined in 2019 in “Hidden Hopewell Landscapes: An Archeological Research Framework for Hopewell Culture National Historical Park.” It is conceived as a long-term effort to revolutionise the basic understanding of Park resources and encourage multi-disciplinary studies, and is intended to integrate the activities of researchers from a wide range of institutions.

**Conservation measures**

Conservation activities are fully integrated into management decisions and business functions. Each component part has a management plan and is subject to ongoing monitoring and maintenance. Soil erosion is addressed by using a turf grass and native grassland cover. Dead, dying or diseased trees are removed from the earthworks before they potentially uproot, and new trees are not planted or allowed to grow on the earthworks. Eroding terrain is stabilised before it affects the nominated property. Visitation is actively and passively monitored, but is not considered a current issue at any of the component parts. Signage to discourage visitors from walking on the earthworks is present at the seven sites that are open to the public. The National Park Service and Ohio History Connection work collaboratively to ensure that conservation activities are carried out to accepted standards.

These conservation measures ensure the conservation of the nominated property and its attributes. The measures are appropriate to preserve the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, including authenticity and integrity. Funding to implement conservation work and maintenance is adequate.

**Monitoring**

All attributes and features within the boundaries of the nominated property are closely monitored on a regular basis by professional expert staff from the two owner agencies. The aspects monitored by the managing agencies include changes in the surface and dimensional stability of the mounds, walls, and ditches due to erosion; evidence of intrusions on below-grade resources due to burrowing animals; the number of mature trees with weakness or disease, susceptibility to serious damage or falls, or number of falls; changes in the presence of invasive or exotic plants and woody species; numbers of visitors per day, per event, and per type; and impacts from visitor foot traffic or other activities.

Private landowners within the buffer zones of the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park practice no-till agriculture. Until such time as these land parcels may be purchased by the National Park Service, staff monitors them closely for any disturbances. The Fort Ancient component part requires continuous monitoring of its areas at risk of erosion and land slippage due to its steep slopes, many ravines, and significant forestation (and resulting tree-falls).

Monitoring is done weekly or monthly and monitoring forms are filed annually. For the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park component parts, a mobile application is now available to document site conditions. The information is centralised and evaluated by the National Park Service staff or the Historic Sites & Museums staff of Ohio History Connection.

ICOMOS considers that the documentation is very complete, though no detailed overarching research plan appears to exist for the nominated property as a whole. The conservation and monitoring measures in place have proven to be effective. It would be important for the management agencies to develop a joint approach to archaeological investigation in the nominated property as well as the Hopewell culture in general. ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

**5 Protection and management**

**Legal protection**

The nominated property is fully protected by means of federal and state laws, regulations, and policies. The primary legal protection for the National Historical Park is provided by the National Park Service Organic Act (1916). The national significance of the component parts Octagon Earthworks, Great Circle Earthworks, Hopeton Earthworks, and Fort Ancient is recognised by their designation as National Historic Landmarks. Five component parts (High Bank Works, Hopeton Earthworks, Mound City, Hopewell Mound Group, and Seip Earthworks) are included within the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park and thus equally considered as having national significance. Hopeton Earthworks has both designations. Some component parts have Ohio State Memorial status and are protected under Ohio Revised Code 149.30 (1965, revised 2018).

The eight component parts are owned by three entities: the United States Department of the Interior’s National Park Service, which owns Hopewell Culture National Historical Park comprised of the High Bank Works, Hopeton
Earthworks, Mound City, Hopewell Mound Group, and Seip Earthworks; Ohio History Connection, which owns the Newark Earthworks complex comprised of the Octagon Earthworks and Great Circle Earthworks; and the State of Ohio, which owns Fort Ancient. Hopewell Culture National Historical Park is under federal jurisdiction through the National Park Service and is subject to federal laws, policies, and guidelines for the protection of cultural heritage. Ohio History Connection is a private non-profit corporation acting on behalf of the State of Ohio. Fort Ancient and the Newark Earthworks complex are located on State of Ohio lands and are subject to state laws, policies, and guidelines.

Federal and state laws, guidelines, and regulations to protect the nominated serial property are well documented. ICOMOS considers that the legal and regulatory environment is robust and well enforced, and that there are no concerns with its effectiveness in the context of the nomination.

The buffer zones for the Octagon Earthworks, Great Circle Earthworks, and Fort Ancient rely to a large degree on zoning restrictions of the City of Newark, the City of Heath, and Warren County. These local zoning restrictions serve to maintain the largely residential or rural characters and viewsheds of these buffer zones, and appear to be effective.

The Indigenous peoples consulted support the nomination process and feel a great responsibility toward the nominated property, its protection, and its commemoration.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that robust legal protection is in place and implemented at all eight component parts of the nominated serial property.

Management system
Ohio History Connection has individual management plans for the Newark Earthworks complex covering the Octagon Earthworks and Great Circle Earthworks, dated 2003, and for the Fort Ancient component, dated 2021, as well as other agency-wide policies and directives. Ohio History Connection will prepare a new management plan for the Newark Earthworks complex by 2023 (foreseen to be completed and to include the Octagon Earthworks by summer 2025), but in the meantime has developed an Addendum to the 2003 plan that provides essential updates.

The five component parts that are within the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park are included in management and planning documents covering the Park as a whole. The General Management Plan (1997), the prime document for decision-making, was developed in consultation with service-wide programme managers, park staff, interested parties, Indigenous partners, and the general public. The General Management Plan of the Park articulates basic values for the long term and is not expected to change, while subsidiary documents are updated more routinely. The nomination dossier indicates that Park managers are currently conducting a comprehensive planning portfolio review to define additional resource protection strategies and visitor experience enhancements.

ICOMOS considers that, pursuant to paragraph 114 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, a management system or mechanisms for ensuring the coordinated management of the separate component parts are essential.

The two agencies responsible for managing the nominated property maintain an ongoing Cooperative Agreement (2019) that provides a framework for coordinated approaches to site management. The current agreement is limited to five years, but the organisations intend to renew it perpetually. The agreement specifies areas of shared work and responsibility, communication protocols, and financial considerations. ICOMOS considers that a commitment to safeguard the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value should be embedded in the Cooperative Agreement.

The administrative structure includes the World Heritage Ohio Executive Committee, which oversaw all aspects of the preparation of the nomination dossier and will continue in a coordinating role in the case of inscription, and World Heritage Ohio Ambassadors, who have been identified to support the nominated property beyond the roles of the two owner agencies. It is comprised of stakeholders and citizens with expertise and connections, such as representatives of federally recognised Indigenous nations, universities and colleges, business and civic organisations, travel and tourism organisations, and state, county, and municipal governments, amongst others.

The technical, human, and financial resources necessary for the conservation of the nominated property are in place. On-site leaders and staff include highly trained personnel in all aspects of heritage conservation, from the maintenance of archaeological remains to liaison with Indigenous peoples.

ICOMOS recommends that mechanisms for Heritage Impact Assessments and risk management provisions be included in the management system.

Visitor management
All component parts are open year-round, and only Fort Ancient has an entrance fee. Information on the component parts is available on the websites of the managing agencies. Interpretive brochures and guidebooks are available at the visitor centres at Mound City and the Newark Earthworks complex, and at the Museum of American Indian History at Fort Ancient.

The museums and visitor centres also offer exhibits and informational films, shops, and restrooms. Some basic visitor installations (for example, orientation and informational signage, trails, car parks, and/or restrooms) are available at the Hopewell Mound Group, Hopeton Earthworks, and Seip Earthworks component parts. No public amenities are currently available at the Octagon
Earthworks, though changes are foreseen once Ohio History Connection acquires the golf club lease. Visitor access to the High Bank Works component part is currently limited, since the archaeological site is reserved for research.

Differential mowing of the grass is practiced on the archaeological sites in order to enhance the visibility of the degraded earthworks. Where possible, areas inside earthwork enclosures are maintained in low-mown grasses, and taller grass is grown on the earthwork walls themselves. Native warm-season grasses are cultivated in areas surrounding the earthworks.

A new Long Range Interpretive Plan for the nominated property has been completed, in consultation with Indigenous peoples. It outlines a set of themes, approaches, topics, and programmes shared amongst the component parts. Collaborative work is well underway toward visitor experience planning and a property-wide approach for all visitor touchpoints and media around the specific factors affecting multi-site earthwork visitation. The activities are planned for implementation over the next three to five years.

In the additional information supplied in February 2023, the State Party indicates that information on restoration and changes at the nominated property can be found on the social media channels, website, individual site bulletins, and the national mobile application of the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park.

All the component parts are believed to have a carrying capacity well in excess of current visitation numbers. Both component parts in the Newark Earthworks complex have had thousands of people on them during their varied recreational uses without significant detrimental impact on the earthworks. The State Party advises that despite this evidence of the higher visitor capacities, measures and monitoring will be put in place across the nominated property to minimise the social, physical, and environmental impacts of increased numbers of visitors. ICOMOS considers that most of the archaeological sites and the nominated property as a whole are well equipped to receive visitors. The activities planned within the framework of the Long Range Interpretive Plan will further enhance the current situation. Finally, it would be advantageous to define the actual carrying capacities for each of the component parts.

ICOMOS also considers that, while it is important to provide sufficient interpretative information, on-site signage should not cause a visual disturbance. Furthermore, museum displays should specify which artefacts are original and which are replicas.

Community involvement
The State Party highlights the efforts made by the managing agencies to include local and Indigenous communities in their efforts to protect, manage, and interpret the nominated property. The Indigenous nations consulted support the nomination process, and have indicated their great responsibility toward the nominated property, its protection, and its commemoration. This support is expressed, for example, in a 2011 Resolution from the National Congress of American Indians entitled Support the Nomination of the Ohio Earthworks to become World Heritage Sites (Resolution PDX-11-060), as well as through the one provided, amongst others, by the Miami, Eastern Shawnee, and Pokagon Tribes. One important step that led to this support was the appointment of a Director of American Indian Relations within Ohio History Connection.

Hopewell Culture National Historical Park has had a formalised consultation programme with Indigenous peoples since the 1990s. An increasingly robust consultation and involvement process has been informing all significant management planning at the Park, and activities such as the annual Tribal Nations Conference have created a fertile context for involvement of Indigenous peoples in the preparation of management plans and the development of new interpretive themes, events, and materials. In the additional information supplied in February 2023, the State Party informed ICOMOS about the recent authorisation and funding for a Tribal Liaison position for the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park.

Since 2017, Ohio History Connection and Hopewell Culture National Historical Park have jointly updated Tribal Partners on the nomination efforts at the Tribal Nations Conference, where forty-five federally recognised tribes with historic ties to Ohio are invited each year. The conference will continue to serve as the annual focus for consultation and collaboration with Indigenous partners on the subject of World Heritage and the nominated property. Additional consultation and collaboration occurs frequently on specific documents, exhibits, and projects. Efforts are being made to co-manage the forest at Fort Ancient with Indigenous forest caretakers.

The archaeological sites that are open to the public engage their local communities through the involvement of volunteers for visitor and school programming, site tours, and general staffing support, and have done so for decades to the benefit of the two managing agencies. The agencies also reach out to local schools, inviting them to activities both on and off site that include “Ranger in the Classroom” at local schools, as well as field trips to the Park grounds.

While the management structure of the nominated property draws heavily on input from local and Indigenous communities, it is not clear to what degree these groups are included in decision-making processes.

**Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property**
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the protection and management structures of the nominated property are very effective. The State Party is recommended to further address some issues, including renewing individual site management plans; ensuring the coordinated management of the separate component parts; implementing the Long Range Interpretive Plan; and exploring additional
opportunities for involving local and Indigenous communities in decision-making processes at the nominated property.

6 Conclusion

Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks is a series of eight monumental earthen enclosure complexes built between 2,000 and 1,600 years ago by the Indigenous tradition now referred to as the Hopewell culture. The most remarkable aspects of the nominated serial property are the vast scale and geometric precision of the earthworks together with the elaborate ceremonials expressed through the earthworks themselves, as well as the archaeological features (woodhenges, burials, offerings) and artefacts contained in them. Furthermore, the artefacts are indicators of continent-wide interactions.

The nomination dossier is very clear and well-presented. It is evident that the management agencies have considerable experience with the conservation and presentation of the archaeological sites, some of which have been actively studied and protected for more than a century.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i) and (iii).

Several important issues require further attention by the State Party. In the long term, more documentation and more deliberation would be needed regarding the astronomical alignments in order to support the claims related to their existence and exactitude. While research goals concerning groups of archaeological sites have been defined, no overarching research plan for the nominated property as a whole appears to exist. A commitment to protect and conserve the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value should be added to the Cooperative Agreement. Furthermore, Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms and risk management provisions should be included in the management system. The coordinated management of the separate component parts must be ensured.

While visitor numbers do not seem to be a problem at the moment, a carrying capacity study for all the component parts would be necessary in the future. Efforts need to be made to resolve remaining issues associated with non-conforming elements. In terms of interpretation, it will be important to implement the Long Range Interpretive Plan, paying particular attention to indicating explicitly which (parts of) earthworks are restored and why it was necessary to restore them. It is also important to avoid visual disturbance when posting signage on the sites.

Follow-up has to be ensured concerning the acquisition of the leasehold of the Octagon Earthworks component part, as well as for the plan to acquire the privately-owned lands in the buffer zones that include parts of the earthworks. Local and Indigenous communities are informed and consulted about activities concerning the earthworks, but further involvement in the decision-making processes could be explored. More information should also be made available concerning the relationships of present-day Indigenous peoples with the earthworks.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, United States of America, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i) and (iii).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks is a series of eight monumental earthen enclosure complexes built between 2,000 and 1,600 years ago along the central tributaries of the Ohio River in east-central North America. They are the most representative surviving expressions of the Indigenous tradition now referred to as the Hopewell culture. Their scale and complexity are evidenced in precise geometric figures as well as hilltops sculpted to enclose vast, level plazas. Huge earthen squares, circles, and octagons are executed with a precision of form, technique, and dimension consistently deployed across a wide geographic region. There are alignments with the cycles of the Sun and the far more complex cycles of the Moon. These earthworks served as ceremonial centres, built by dispersed, non-hierarchical groups whose way of life was supported by a mix of foraging and farming. The sites were the centre of a continent-wide sphere of influence and interaction, and have yielded finely crafted ritual objects fashioned from exotic raw materials obtained from distant places.

Criterion (i): Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks comprises highly complex masterpieces of landscape architecture. They are exceptional amongst ancient earthworks worldwide not only in their enormous scale and wide geographic distribution, but also in their geometric precision. These features imply high-precision techniques of design and construction and an observational knowledge of complex astronomical cycles that would have required generations to codify. The series includes the finest extant examples of these various principles, shapes, and alignments, both in geometric earthworks and in the pre-eminent surviving hilltop enclosure. They reflect the pinnacle of Hopewell intellectual, technical, and symbolic achievement.

Criterion (iii): Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks bears exceptional testimony to the unique characteristics of their builders, who lived in small, dispersed, egalitarian groups, between 1 and 400 CE, amongst the river valleys of what is now southern and central Ohio. Their economy was a mix of foraging, fishing, farming, and cultivation, yet they gathered periodically to create, manage, and worship within these massive public works. The precision of their
carefully composed earthen architecture, and its timber precursors, reflected an elaborate ceremonialism and linked it with the order and rhythms of the cosmos. The earthworks in this series, together with their archaeological remains, offer the finest extant testimony to the nature, scope, and richness of the Hopewell cultural tradition.

Integrity

All the attributes necessary to convey and sustain the Outstanding Universal Value are in the boundaries of the serial property. These include the earthwork walls, gateways, ditches, ponds, and in situ archaeological remains. The series is of sufficient size to ensure the complete representation of the features and values that convey the significance of the property, through the inclusion of the largest and best-preserved examples of each major geometric form found amongst Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, as well as the most important hilltop enclosure. In addition, all the component parts are complete and in good condition, with the ability to convey their large forms and the relationships amongst them. The property does not suffer from adverse effects of development and/or neglect, as each site is managed as a public park in rural or low-density suburban settings. The curated artefacts in site-based collections also support the understanding of the attributes.

Authenticity

Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks is authentic to an extraordinary extent, given the long time that has elapsed since its construction, in terms of their locations and settings, forms and designs, materials and substance, and spirit and feeling. The locations for all the component parts are unchanged; the settings for the earthworks are still predominantly semirural or are in low-density residential districts buffered for most of their perimeters by parkland. In form and design, the enclosure walls and mounds remain mostly intact. High-resolution remote-sensing data for the Seip Earthworks, Hopewell Mound Group, Hopeton Earthworks, and High Bank Works component parts clearly show intact subsurface portions of wall and building constructions. The predominant materials and substance of the earthworks are likewise authentically preserved in the intact forms of Fort Ancient and the component parts at the Newark Earthworks complex, and in the in situ archaeological remains at all the other sites.

Protection and management requirements

All the component parts are protected as national or State parks. Rigorous federal, state, and local protective measures are also in place to ensure the continued conservation and protection of the property. The buffer zones provide additional protection around the component parts.

Detailed management plans are in place for all eight component parts, following the established policies and legal requirements of their respective governmental owner agencies, the Ohio History Connection and the United States National Park Service, whose local representatives work closely together to provide consistent and coordinated management for the series. All features and elements within the boundaries of the property are closely monitored on a regular basis by professional expert staff from the two owner agencies. Regular maintenance and periodic conservation programs ensure that the sites, features, and resources will be sustained in a superior state of conservation in the future.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Ensuring the acquisition by Ohio History Connection of the Octagon Earthworks leasehold from the Moundbuilders Country Club following the Ohio Supreme Court ruling issued in December 2022, and creating conditions to increase public access to the site,

b) Ensuring the coordinated management of the separate component parts of the serial property,

c) Adding to the Cooperative Agreement a commitment to protect and conserve the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value,

d) Furthering the inclusion of local and Indigenous communities in the management and decision-making processes at the property,

e) Elaborating an overarching research plan for the property,

f) Implementing the Long Range Interpretive Plan that will include information explaining the various alterations done to the earthworks as a result of the numerous changes caused by secondary uses and restorations, in order to facilitate a correct understanding of the public visiting the property,

g) Elaborating a carrying capacity study for all component parts of the property,

h) Acquiring from willing sellers any privately-owned parcels of land in the buffer zones that include parts of the earthworks, followed by adjustments to the boundaries of the property through requests for minor boundary modifications,

i) Making efforts to resolve the issues associated with non-conforming elements and uses such as high-voltage transmission towers and gravel extraction,

j) Including Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms and risk management provisions in the management system.
k) Facilitating more research and deliberation on the astronomical alignments of the property;
Map showing the location of the nominated component parts
III Cultural properties

A Africa
Extension

B Arab States
New nominations

C Asia – Pacific
New nominations

D Europe – North America
New nominations
Extension
Nomination deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

E Latin America and the Caribbean
New nomination
Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone (extension)  
(Portugal)  
No 1031bis

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone (extension)

Location
Province of Minho
Portugal

Brief description
The Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone is an extension of the intra muros area of the Historic Centre of Guimarães already inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2001 on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv). The extension includes two monastic complexes and an industrial area, the Couros Zone, which, like the local river, was named after the traditional craft of leather tanning. While the craft ceased to be practiced in the mid-20th century, tangible evidence, particularly of the 19th and early 20th centuries, persists in the form of tanneries, workers’ houses and urban spaces. The extension is nominated on the basis of the same criteria as the already-inscribed property to complement its narrative as a testimony to a thousand years of Portuguese urban, architectural and societal developments.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a nomination of an extension of a group of buildings.

Included in the Tentative List
31 January 2017. The nominated extension had previously been included on the tentative list as a new property named “The Guimarães leather sector” in 2016

Background
This is a nomination for an extension of the site of Historic Centre of Guimarães (Portugal) inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 25th session of the World Heritage Committee (Helsinki, 2001), on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv). The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was adopted retrospectively in 2016.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 21 to 24 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about the description of the nominated extension and elements included, the proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value, comparative analysis, boundaries of the area proposed for extension and of the buffer zone, legal protection, state of conservation, development projects, management issues and factors affecting the nominated extension, as well as about monitoring, interpretation and promotion.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 7 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022, summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: boundaries of the nominated extension, of the buffer zone and the wider setting, protection, rehabilitation of the Couros Zone and development projects, involvement of local communities, and tourism development.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report only briefly summarises the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The already-inscribed property is the walled historic centre of Guimarães which developed in the 10th century around an elevated fortress and the Monastery of Mumadona Dias (Collegiate of Nossa Senhora da Oliveira). These two centres of power were fortified with a single enclosure in the 13th and 14th centuries. The intra muros area is characterised by the medieval castle and the town wall, the medieval religious buildings, as well as grand residences which date from the 16th to the 20th century. It has maintained its medieval urban layout which includes a succession of representative public places.

The nominated extension complements the inscribed property with a lower-lying industrial area and two monastic complexes located south along the Couros river. The river and the urban area are named after the craft of tanning leather which persisted here until the mid-20th century besides other industries such as textile
production. The traditional industrial area, the Couros Zone, features former tanneries dating from the 12th to the 20th century. The area comprises simple workers' houses, factory buildings and associated public spaces. This includes "Ilha do Sabão", the 19th century working-class neighbourhood. The leather tanning industry depended on water from the wider urban and natural landscape. The Couros Zone to date features related historic water infrastructure such as sections of the Couros river and a network of small canals identifiable by stone slabs that cover them.

The Couros Zone, with its ancient but still preserved proto-industrial processing facilities, residential quarters and water management infrastructure, testifies to one of the oldest and best-thriving activities in Guimarães that contributed to its development.

The early history of Guimarães is closely associated with the formation of Portugal's national identity and language. Guimarães was the seat of the Portuguese (Portucalense) Counts from the 10th century onwards. The region was given as feudal property to the family that created the country in the 12th century. In 1139, Count Dom Afonso Henriques declared the independence of Portugal from León and took the name of Afonso I as the first king of the new kingdom.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the town developed a variety of activities, including the manufacture of cutlery and jewellery, the treatment of leather, and the marketing of goods. The production reinforced the position of Guimarães on the trade route between the coast and the interior, connecting Monção and Braga with Viseu and Caminha.

The establishment of Dominican and Franciscan orders outside the walls of the medieval core, in the nominated extension, contributed to the urbanisation outside the town walls, in close relationship with it and with the surrounding area, including the pre-industrial area for the treatment of leather close to the Couros river.

The economic and social status of the town was recognised in the new charter granted by Dom Manuel in 1517. The 16th century was a period of intensive construction activity, particularly marked by noble residences. It was also the period of the first urban plan for the development of the city, though most of its implementation took place in the first half of the 19th century. New access roads led to modification of the medieval design, establishing the basis for the present-day layout in the region. The medieval defensive walls and gates, which had already lost their principal function in the 16th century, were gradually demolished between the 17th and the 19th centuries.

Construction systems and building techniques also evolved over time. The use of two construction techniques characterises the residential buildings in the nominated extension, one dating from before the 16th century, called taipa de rodízio, a particular type of half-timber structure, which combined granite for the ground floor with a timber structure and an infill in sun-dried brick, using clay mortar. Another technique, named taipa de fasquito, came into use in the 19th century and made use only of timber. Mastery of both techniques is still evident today. They were first developed in the region of Guimarães and then exported to Portuguese colonies in other parts of the world, becoming a distinct characteristic of Portuguese colonial architecture.

The town centre testifies to a thousand years of urban development. In the 20th century, the town expanded owing to industrial development. Guimarães is today the second-largest city in Portugal. In the 1980s the municipality recognised the importance of the historic centre of the town, establishing a technical office responsible for its conservation and rehabilitation.

The already-inscribed property of 19.4 ha is proposed to be enlarged to an area of 38.2 ha. The nominated extension lies within the inscribed property's buffer zone which was proposed to be reduced from 99.2 ha to 89.4 ha in the nomination dossier. In February 2023, the State Party indicated to ICOMOS that the size of the buffer zone has become 129.4 ha.

State of conservation
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the intramural area is overall in a very good state of conservation due to its exemplary rehabilitation since the 1980s. This concerns its historic urban and architectural features as well as functional and socio-economic characteristics of the living town centre and extends to the continuing use of traditional construction techniques.

The state of conservation of the extra muros area of the nominated extension appears to be more heterogeneous. While some parts of the urban fabric of the area have already been restored or redeveloped, other areas and buildings remain in medium to poor condition. The latter includes a number of abandoned former factory buildings and rear buildings in the Couros Zone. ICOMOS notes that the historic water management infrastructure of the traditional leather tanning industry seems not well maintained and prone to degradation.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested further information on whether a strategy and a roadmap for the rehabilitation of the Couros Zone has been devised by the State Party, considering the complexity of the rehabilitation and the scale of the problem. The State Party replied that the Municipality, with the University of Minho, have been trying to define a programme of reuse of municipality-owned tanneries to generate new spaces for the University. This collaboration is ongoing. Smaller tanneries are also in private ownership. Projects to restore the tanneries have been presented but none have yet materialised.
Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated extension are the degradation of abandoned traditional industrial structures and buildings on the one hand, and the danger of loss of authenticity due to development pressure and gentrification on the other. According to the additional information provided by the State Party in November 2022, the nominated extension is also prone to fire hazards and floods. Signs of insufficiently-controlled urban developments within the buffer zone have also been witnessed.

In November 2022, the State Party sent a map indicating the building complexes needing rehabilitation in the nominated extension as well as planned and ongoing projects in the buffer zone.

ICOMOS considers that Heritage Impact Assessments for these projects must be prepared in advance of implementation, to ensure that potential negative impacts on the nominated extension and the inscribed property are assessed and, where necessary, mitigated.

In response to ICOMOS’ Interim Report, the State Party has provided further information concerning a number of project proposals, some of which have already been approved or for which obligations have been assumed.

ICOMOS considers that Heritage Impact Assessments will have to be developed for all these projects and their outcomes sent to the World Heritage Centre for review. ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party provide detailed information about any large-scale project in accordance with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

ICOMOS notes that the nomination dossier does not differentiate the nominated extension from the property already inscribed on the World Heritage List. Hence, the information was difficult to interpret, and ICOMOS asked for additional information on this matter.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, a robust explanation for the rationale of the extension has been made by the State Party: the extramural Couros Zone developed coherently alongside the already-inscribed property and adds attributes that exemplify, complement, and amplify the Outstanding Universal Value of the already-inscribed property.

Key attributes of the nominated extension have also been presented: the urban morphology of the extramural neighbourhood and the way in which it developed, along access routes, around monastic complexes and proto-industrial tanneries with their processing infrastructures; the residential areas; a variety of building typologies; the taipa de rodizio and taipa de fasquito techniques along with vernacular technologies used in the tanneries.

The exceptional documentation of the urban and architectural development of Guimarães in the Middle Ages on the division of property, the urban form, the diversity of buildings, and public spaces resulting from Portugal’s relationship with the World, especially with Brazil and the trade with Arabs.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated extension is uneven. While some parts are in good condition, other buildings are in an average or poor state of conservation. The main factors affecting the nominated extension include the degradation of abandoned buildings and historic water management infrastructure, urban pressures, and gentrification due to tourism and real estate development. ICOMOS recommends that Heritage Impact Assessments are developed for all projects that may have a negative impact on the nominated extension and the inscribed property as per paragraph 118bis and to provide details about these projects to the World Heritage Centre in accordance with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated extension is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The pre-industrial area, characterised by the ancient local craft of leather tanning along with two monastic complexes which played significant roles in the urbanisation process outside the walled town centre, completes the testimony of a thousand years of urban and societal development, including the formation of the Portuguese nation and language.
- The inclusion of a pre-industrial working area to a particularly well-preserved and exemplarily rehabilitated small European town with buildings and spaces of great formal value represents a wide range of typologies, traditional construction techniques and historic layers.
- The continued use of taipa de rodizio and taipa de fasquito techniques along with vernacular technologies used in the tanneries.
- The exceptional documentation of the urban and architectural development of Guimarães in the Middle Ages on the division of property, the urban form, the diversity of buildings, and public spaces resulting from Portugal’s relationship with the World, especially with Brazil and the trade with Arabs.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, a robust explanation for the rationale of the extension has been made by the State Party: the extramural Couros Zone developed coherently alongside the already-inscribed property and adds attributes that exemplify, complement, and amplify the Outstanding Universal Value of the already-inscribed property.

Key attributes of the nominated extension have also been presented: the urban morphology of the extramural neighbourhood and the way in which it developed, along access routes, around monastic complexes and proto-industrial tanneries with their processing infrastructures; the residential areas; a variety of building typologies; the taipa de rodizio and taipa de fasquito construction techniques; typical azulejos decorations; and the water management system to channel water to the tanneries, including the Couros stream.
Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis developed in the nomination dossier is focused on settlements with leather tanning areas. It has examined properties within the territory of the State Party and worldwide, including towns inscribed on the World Heritage List and as well as other properties.

The first section of the analysis compares the Couros Zone to the World Heritage properties in North Africa and Europe featuring leather tanning areas.

The second section presents an extensive tabular comparison of these and other sites with derelict or continuing tanneries.

The comparative analysis in the nomination dossier did not include a comparison between the nominated extension and the already-inscribed property that could explain in what ways this extension would exemplify, complement, and amplify the Outstanding Universal Value of Guimarães. As ICOMOS requested additional information on this point, the State Party provided in November 2022 a synthetic though clear explanation about the function that the nominated extension plays in understanding the urban development of this historic city, and the economic activities that generated the wealth needed for Guimarães to continue to thrive throughout the centuries.

ICOMOS requested additional information in October 2022 on the choice of the nominated extension and why other areas and elements within the town of Guimarães, including the buffer zone, have been excluded. The State Party replied in November 2022 that they have limited the nominated extension to the part of the city that had achieved a consolidated urban form up to the beginning of the 20th century.

As a result of the State Party’s clarification, ICOMOS considers that the nominated extension is well-grounded. Its relationship with the historic city centre and the surrounding landscape is clear and still legible. The comparative analysis, along with the additional information, justifies the relevance of the nominated extension.

Although ICOMOS acknowledges that the Historic Centre of Guimarães has been rehabilitated in an exemplary manner since the 1980s, the comparative analysis does not provide information which would allow a justification for inscription based on this argument.

Finally, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis does not justify claims that Guimarães is a rare example of a historic town preserving a pre-industrial area, as other cities exist in which such areas have survived, as the comparative analysis has shown.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies the relevance of the nominated extension to the already-inscribed property of the Historic Centre of Guimarães.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The proposed extension is nominated on the basis of the same culture criteria under which the Historic Centre of Guimarães is inscribed on the World Heritage List: (ii), (iii) and (iv). The nomination dossier however presents a rather significantly revised justification of each criterion for the entire property.

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

The original justification of criterion (ii) focuses on the vernacular building techniques which – according to the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value – were developed at Guimarães, preserved in an exemplary way there and exported to Portuguese colonies. The justification of criterion (ii) as presented in the nomination dossier does not mention this value dimension but focuses on the Historic Centre and Couros Zone as a unique witness of various significant periods in Portugal’s history and of its relationship with the world, particularly with Brazil.

ICOMOS notes that the relevant construction techniques, taipa de rodízio and taipa de fasquio, were also employed in the nominated extension.

ICOMOS considers that in the case of a major boundary modification, the area proposed for extension needs to demonstrate that its attributes support, extend and complement the attributes of the already-inscribed property in expanding and amplifying the original justification for this criterion. ICOMOS asked for additional information on this matter, and the response received from the State Party in November 2022 confirms that the nominated extension justifies criterion (ii) as presented in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the Historic Centre of Guimarães.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

Both the original and the newly-proposed justification of criterion (iii) focus on the early history of Guimarães being associated with the establishment of Portuguese national identity and language in the 12th century. In this context, the revised justification stresses the urban landscape and architecture as well as intangible heritage dimensions, such as the tradition of tanneries, and the current identification of the population with this heritage.

Based on the additional information provided by the State Party in November 2022, ICOMOS considers that the attributes of the nominated extension complements those of the already-inscribed property and amplifies the original justification of criterion (iii).
Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history:

The original justification of this criterion stresses that Guimarães is an exceptionally well-preserved town which illustrates the evolution of particular building types from the medieval period to the present day, with a focus on the period between the 15th to the 19th centuries. The proposed justification of criterion (iv) builds on this justification by describing Guimarães as an exceptional ensemble of a small European town that testifies to a thousand years of Portuguese urban, architectural and societal evolution and all social strata of the historic urban population. It partly bases criterion (iv) on the transmission of traditional building techniques over five centuries and the exemplary urban conservation practices in historic areas since the 1980s.

Based on additional information provided by the State Party in November 2022, ICOMOS considers that the attributes of the nominated extension complement those of the already-inscribed property and amplify the original justification for criterion (iv). However, ICOMOS does not consider that the claim related to exemplary urban conservation practices in historic areas since the 1980s is supported.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated extension of the Historic Centre of Guimarães meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv), and contributes to expanding and amplifying the already-approved justification of these criteria.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The nomination dossier does not differentiate between the nominated extension and the property already inscribed on the World Heritage List in presenting the conditions of integrity. However, based on the nomination dossier, the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission and the additional information provided by the State Party in November 2022 and February 2023, ICOMOS considers that the nominated extension has the potential to strengthen the integrity of the already-inscribed property by complementing the testimony to urban and societal development over the centuries.

The structural, architectural and functional integrity of some individual elements of the nominated extension seems vulnerable.

ICOMOS considers that, overall, the conditions of integrity have been met. They could have been further reinforced if Largo da República do Brasil and Church and Oratory of Nossa Senhora da Consolação e Santos Passos had been included in the nominated extension.

Authenticity

The nomination dossier does not differentiate between the nominated extension and the property already inscribed on the World Heritage List in presenting the conditions of authenticity. However, based on the nomination dossier, the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission and the additional information provided by the State Party in November 2022 and February 2023, ICOMOS considers that the attributes of the nominated extension contribute to complementing those of the already-inscribed property in strengthening and amplifying its authenticity. The nominated extension is authentic regarding its location and setting, forms and designs, and materials and substances. While residential, certain commercial, and religious uses persist, the craft of tanning leather is no longer practiced in the area.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated extension has been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the nominated extension have been met but could have been reinforced if Largo da República do Brasil and Church and Oratory of Nossa Senhora da Consolação e Santos Passos had been included in the proposed boundaries. The conditions of authenticity of the nominated extension have been met and reinforce the authenticity of the already-inscribed property.

Boundaries

ICOMOS requested additional information on the rationale of the boundaries of the nominated extension and the buffer zone. The State Party replied in November 2022 by presenting further arguments and historic maps that have helped clarify the reasoning behind the proposed boundary delineation. ICOMOS however considers, taking into account the Outstanding Universal Value of the already-inscribed property and the rationale for the extension, that the boundaries of the nominated extension could have been expanded. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS proposed to the State Party to include the Largo da República do Brasil and Church and Oratory of Nossa Senhora da Consolação e Santos Passos, as they reflect one of the latest stages of development of the historic city.

The State Party informed ICOMOS that consideration was given to its proposal. However, while recognising the tangible and intangible qualities of the Largo da República do Brasil and of the Church and Oratory, the authorities have not accepted the proposal as the inclusion of this urban space would also mean including several recent buildings that are not considered appropriate by the State Party. The area is proposed to remain in the buffer zone; however, the State Party agrees on the need for enhancing and safeguarding this public space.
ICOMOS also observed that the buffer zone is too tight in some locations and needs to be expanded to properly fulfil its function as an effective added layer of protection for both the nominated extension and the already-inscribed property. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested the State Party to consider this point.

In February 2023, the State Party proposed an expansion of the buffer zone and gave a detailed explanation when it could not follow ICOMOS’ suggestions. In particular, some suggested areas were considered not suitable due to previously assumed contractual obligations, which, according to the State Party, might be halted if these areas were to be included in the buffer zone.

In this regard, ICOMOS draws the State Party’s attention to the fact that the impact of any development on the Outstanding Universal Value of a property, irrespective of the development’s location, needs to be assessed in advance; hence, any contracts and obligations stemming from development proposals would ideally need to be agreed once potential negative impacts on Outstanding Universal Value have been ruled out.

However, ICOMOS considers the extended buffer zone acceptable and a robust step forward to guaranteeing the necessary added layer of protection to the property with the nominated extension.

The State Party has also informed that a study on the historic urban landscape of Guimarães has been carried out, resulting in the definition of a “study area”. The delineation of this area can be considered as the physical limits of the wider setting. However, management mechanisms are still to be devised.

As stated in the nomination dossier, in 2011 there were 1,755 inhabitants in the area comprising both the already-inscribed property and the nominated extension, and 4,821 inhabitants in the area of their buffer zone. Updated information on this aspect would be important for management purposes.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS observes that the proposal for an extension of an already-inscribed property has to be based on its Statement of Outstanding Universal Value and this was not clearly set out in the nomination dossier for the extension. However, the additional information provided by the State Party has clarified that the attributes of the nominated extension complement those of the already-inscribed property and explain the way in which Guimarães developed through the centuries and its socio-economic basis. The further considerations provided about the comparative analysis have shown the relevance of the nominated extension in contributing to deepening, expanding and amplifying the Outstanding Universal Value of the Historic Centre of Guimarães. On the other hand, neither the nomination dossier nor the additional information demonstrates that new facets for Outstanding Universal Value could be considered for the inscribed property and its proposed extension.

The conditions of integrity and authenticity have been demonstrated. However, development and tourism-related pressures may affect the integrity and authenticity of some attributes of the already-inscribed property and its nominated extension and will need to be carefully monitored and managed.

The proposed boundaries for the nominated extension can be considered adequate. ICOMOS recommended the inclusion of the Largo da República do Brasil and Church and Oratory of Nossa Senhora da Consolação e Santos Passos to strengthen the rationale of the nominated extension. ICOMOS welcomes the extension of the buffer zone proposed by the State Party in response to the Interim Report as it reinforces the necessary added layer of protection for both the nominated extension and the already-inscribed property.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

According to the information provided, there are individual datasheets of all buildings from the nominated extension and the buffer zone at the archives of the Local Technical Office and the Historic Centre Division of the Guimarães City Council. Printed inventories date from 1994 and 2001. A digital inventory is continuously updated. In addition, the files of the World Heritage nomination of the Historic Centre of Guimarães from 2001 are preserved at the archives of the Local Technical Office and Historic Centre Division of Guimarães City Council. Lastly, the Directorate-General for Cultural Heritage (DGPC) maintains an Architectural Heritage Information System (SIHA) on the Portuguese architectural, urban and landscape heritage.

ICOMOS considers that these inventories provide detailed baseline documentation for future management, conservation arrangements and monitoring. At this stage, however, it remains unclear whether all attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are adequately documented, i.e., the historic water infrastructure of the tanneries and the water management system.

As ICOMOS asked for additional information on this matter in its Interim Report, the State Party responded that documentation on the water management system is being carried out and the first results were presented in an annex to the nomination dossier. However, further research will be carried out on this subject in the future.
Conservation measures

The already-scribed property has been subject to profound and exemplary urban rehabilitation and conservation works since the 1980s. Information presented in the nomination dossier on the conservation of the nominated extension is not quite clear as the nomination dossier does not consistently differentiate between conservation works in the nominated extension and the already-scribed property. However, conservation works have been less consistent in the nominated extension. In the additional information provided to ICOMOS in November 2022, the State Party confirmed that the state of conservation is uneven, particularly for the tanneries, as a number of them were built in timber and after abandonment rapidly fell into ruin. However, stone buildings and tanning tanks survive in legible conditions.

The nomination dossier points to two urban rehabilitation projects within the nominated extension: the urban arrangement of the Rua da Caldeira and the requalification of Rua d. João I. As ICOMOS requested updates and details on these initiatives, the State Party confirmed in November 2022 that these projects are completed.

The State Party further explained that rehabilitation criteria for re-purposing the tanneries varied greatly depending on the shape, building techniques, conditions and new functions. Some have been kept almost intact, others were substantially adapted, and some still await being restored and finding new uses. The State Party has also provided a map indicating tanneries in different situations; most of them, however, await rehabilitation interventions.

ICOMOS considers that a strategy for the conservation, restoration and rehabilitation of the tanneries within the urban fabric seems urgently needed, along with guidance on how to approach interventions without undermining the integrity and authenticity of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS also recommends that a Heritage Impact Assessment approach and related mechanisms be put in place to ensure that plans and projects for the rehabilitation and reuse of the tanneries for new functions are compatible with their role as attributes. Developing guidelines to guide proposals could be considered.

Monitoring

The nomination dossier provides only very basic information on monitoring indicators and pertinent administrative arrangements. In the additional information submitted in November 2022, the State Party provided synthetic information about key monitoring indicators considered by the authorities. ICOMOS considers that whilst the indicators may be relevant for keeping track of the trends in the ‘state of health’ of the nominated extension and of the inscribed property, more clarity is needed about responsibilities in collecting, preserving and using the information from monitoring to ensure that the exercise is useful for management effectiveness.

ICOMOS considers that the documentation of the nominated extension is being carried out systematically, although the water management-related infrastructure does not seem to have received the same attention as the tanneries. ICOMOS encourages the State Party to continue with the documentation activity as a basis for the conservation and presentation of this important attribute of the nominated extension. While the conservation of the inscribed property has been the object of careful urban conservation and rehabilitation work for several decades, the conservation of the nominated extension is uneven; the tanneries require an urgent conservation strategy, with a Heritage Impact Assessment approach. The monitoring system would benefit from a clarification of responsibilities in the monitoring activity and data conservation.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone is subject to several legal provisions regarding the protection of historic buildings, including Law No. 107/2001 of 8 September, Decree-Law No. 120/97 of 16 May, and Decree No. 3/98 of 26 January, and to legal provisions regarding town planning, including Decree-Law No. 38/382 of 7 August 1951, Decree-Law No. 445/91 of 20 November, and Decree-Law No. 250/94 of 15 October. Its master plan (dated 1994) includes regulations for protecting the historic centre. The nominated extension includes several historic buildings or ensembles that are legally protected as National Monuments, as properties of Public Interest, or as properties of municipal interest. In April 2021, the initiation of the procedure for the extension of the inscription of the Historic Centre of Guimarães to include the Couros (Leathers) Zone was published in Diário da República (Official Gazette), and the respective provisional protection area (ZEPP) was established, which will remain in force until the conclusion of the process and publication of the final decision.

ICOMOS commends the efforts made to improve the legal status of the nominated extension since its inclusion in the buffer zone of the already-scribed property. The process of registering the Couros Zone, including the historic tanneries, as national monuments was still ongoing when the nomination dossier was submitted. In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party clarified that the process began in February 2021, and that the establishment of the extended buffer zone was announced in April 2021. It was confirmed by the State Party in February 2023 that the final decision concerning those two processes has been publicised.
ICOMOS has further requested clarifications about the process of listing the ancient tanneries. The State Party explained in November 2022 that once the procedure for listing the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone as a National Monument is completed, there will be no need to list individual tanneries, as this designation provides adequate protection to the nominated extension and the inscribed property. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS underlined that listing the most important and best-preserved tanneries individually would strengthen protection. The State Party agrees that individual protection could help and will be considered in the future.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested some clarification on which measures are envisaged in the designation of the Montanha da Penha as a protected landscape to ensure the preservation of the landscape values of the already-inscribed property and the nominated extension. The State Party briefly explained in February 2023 that this project is part of a wider strategy of the Municipality to achieve sustainable development. However, no detail is provided on how this designation will contribute to enhancing the protection of the property and its nominated extension through specific mechanisms.

Territorial development instruments at national, regional and municipal level relevant for the property, the nominated extension and the buffer zone include the National Programme for Territorial Planning Policy (PNPOT) under Law 58/2007 as amended in 2007 and further revised as per Law n. 99/2019. The programme is under implementation, and the Observatory for Territorial Planning is expected to evaluate its effectiveness. Further plans are the regional land management plans; the Regional Territorial Plan for the northern region (PROT-Norte) is under development. The Plano Director Municipal of Guimarães (Municipal Master Plan), the main instrument for managing the city, including heritage areas, was approved in 2015; it includes Regulations, a Land Use Plan and a Constraints Plan. The master plan is currently under revision, and ICOMOS observes that this offers an opportunity to carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment at the strategic level of the plan and its development previsions.

ICOMOS has requested further information on the landscape legibility plan and the mapping of sightlines, and the State Party replied in November 2022 that no document exists on these specific topics, but these aspects have been considered in the management plan and in the planning documents.

ICOMOS notes that mapping the sightlines and developing an inter-visibility study as part of a landscape legibility plan would be urgently needed as a basis to guide new development or urban regeneration processes and avoid negative visual impacts on the nominated extension and the already-inscribed property.

**Management system**

Apart from some state-owned properties, most of the building stock is privately owned. The public areas of the historic centre are the property of the Municipality of Guimarães. Management of the historic centre including the nominated extension is the responsibility of the Local Technical Office for the Historic Centre of the Municipality (GTL), established in 1985. Any intervention related to listed buildings is under the control of the Directorate General for Cultural Heritage (DGPC). There is a management plan for the period 2021-2026, which jointly addresses the nominated extension and the already-inscribed property.

ICOMOS requested from the State Party an update on the progress of implementing the management plan and an overview of management issues in the nominated extension. The State Party replied in November 2022 that the main management issues include the limited interest of the population in the proto-industrial heritage of the Couros Zone as its importance is not fully understood, challenges in managing conservation standards, and keeping a balance between the need for rehabilitation and respecting the spirit of the place, with risks for integrity and authenticity.

ICOMOS considers that the management system and the available financial and human resources appear adequate within the inscribed property, but it seems less so in the buffer zone and the nominated extension. As presented by the State Party in the additional information provided in November 2022, management challenges remain, including in the coordination of approaches among management entities. In this regard, ICOMOS requested in its Interim Report further information on how the State Party intends to address these challenges.

The State Party replied that impact assessments will be carried out within the framework of the revision of the Plano Director Municipal (Municipal Master Plan). A specific regulation based on the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the already-inscribed property and the nominated extension is being developed. It is expected to be put forward for public consultation in September 2023.

ICOMOS observes that it is of utmost importance that the above-mentioned regulations be finalised and implemented as soon as possible.

The State Party replied to the Interim Report providing details on a number of approved and planned medium- or large-scale projects within the revised buffer zone or in the wider setting.

ICOMOS considers that, in addition to individual Heritage Impact Assessments for planned projects, a comprehensive Heritage Impact Assessment addressing the cumulative impacts of all projects, including the approved ones, on the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its nominated extension would be extremely important and urgent as a management tool to ensure that any future development will consider the sensitivity to change of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.
Visitor management
Adequate facilities and services for visitors and tourists are seen not only in the already-inscribed property but also in the nominated extension. The tourism strategy for 2019-2029 employs digital means for promoting the old town and the heritage of leather tanning. Overall, there seems to be a high level of tourist activity that appears acceptably managed. As ICOMOS requested an update on the planned Couros Zone Interpretation project, the State Party explained in November 2022 that it is a research project which gathered available sources of information on the nominated extension and the already-inscribed property and has proposed circuits for visits. This material has been shared with tourist guide operators to present to visitors. In the future, a communication project is planned to assist residents and visitors in understanding the heritage of Guimarães.

ICOMOS suggests strengthening the collaboration with tourism actors, residents and civil society organisations to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its nominated extension are fully embedded in tourism strategies.

Community involvement
Given that most buildings are in private ownership and inhabited, the local resident community is involved in the management and conservation of the nominated extension. The nomination dossier points to the involvement of the local community both in urban conservation and rehabilitation as well as cultural projects in the nominated extension and already-inscribed property, as attested to in the management plan. ICOMOS requested from the State Party an update on participatory activities since the submission of the nomination dossier.

The State Party replied in February 2023 by referring to a Tourism Plan and to a consistent approach. The aim is to control development to prevent the transformation of the already-inscribed property and its nominated extension into a mono-functional touristic zone.

ICOMOS observes that not much information has been provided on how local communities have been engaged in the nomination process and management development process. ICOMOS recommends that residents and other relevant communities of rightsholders be more involved through regular participatory processes in defining management objectives for the already-inscribed property and the nominated extension and in achieving their implementation.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated extension will be adequate once the designation of the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone as a National Monument is finalised and published in the Official Gazette. ICOMOS further considers that the finalisation of the regulations of the master plan for Guimarães based on the Outstanding Universal Value of the already-inscribed property and of the nominated extension is a necessary protection tool. The protection of the Montanha da Penha for its landscape values is an important step for the historic urban landscape of Guimarães. However, measures to ensure that this additional layer of protection will effectively preserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the extended property need to be set out. The mentioned landscape legibility plan is a key instrument and needs to be promptly developed, including a mapping of sightlines, visibility and intervisibility cones.

ICOMOS considers that governance, coordination and collaboration among the different agencies responsible for the conservation of the urban, built and cultural heritage needs to be strengthened; one vision needs to guide governance, decision-making and management efforts to guarantee that the integrity and authenticity of the attributes of the property to be extended will be sustained in the future. The elaboration of a strategic Heritage Impact Assessment for the masterplan under revision and of individual Heritage Impact Assessments for large-scale projects are crucial steps to ensure that the lively urban dynamics of Guimarães do not risk undermining the integrity and authenticity of the already-inscribed property and its nominated extension. Gentrification pressures need to be monitored through proactive strategy and mechanisms. Improved involvement of residents, rightsholders and local actors in decision-making processes about the property can help in achieving Outstanding Universal Value-based management effectiveness.

6 Conclusion
The present nomination proposes the extension of the Historic Centre of Guimarães, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2001 on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv). The extension being nominated includes an extra muros area comprised of two monastic complexes and a proto-industrial area for leather tanning. For this reason, the whole area came to be known as the Couros Zone.

The State Party has taken this extension as an opportunity to start a thorough reflection on the Outstanding Universal Value of the inscribed property and on the multiple layers of values and attributes that support and complement the approved Outstanding Universal Value in a Historic Urban Landscape perspective.

The State Party has fully harnessed the evaluation process and, through its different stages, has progressively clarified aspects of the nomination that were unclear or inadequately documented.

The augmented comparative analysis and the additional information have demonstrated the pertinence of the nominated extension as it contributes to complementing and amplifying the Outstanding Universal Value of the Historic Centre of Guimarães. The nominated extension fulfils all three criteria under which the original property was inscribed on the World Heritage List. It provides a better
understanding of how the historic city spatially developed throughout the centuries, what was the economic basis that made the wealth of Guimarães by promoting urban development, the flourishing of an elaborate residential architecture and original construction techniques. The latter became a distinct trait of Portuguese colonial architecture.

The boundary of the nominated extension is adequate, although, in ICOMOS’ view, the inclusion of the Largo da República do Brasil and of the Church and Oratory of Nossa Senhora da Consolação e Santos Passos would have strengthened the integrity and the rationale of the nominated extension. The expanded buffer zone is adequate and constitutes a good basis for the necessary added layer of protection for the property and its nominated extension.

The legal protection will be fully adequate once the National Monument designation of the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone is definitely approved. Effective protection would benefit from stronger coordination among all actors responsible for the management of the property, particularly national and local public institutions.

Whilst the inscribed property has been the object of consistent and exemplary urban conservation over several decades, the nominated extension deserves the same attention. ICOMOS observes that the rehabilitation of the Couros Zone is a challenge at the urban scale. It would need thorough consideration, efforts and resources deployed on the part of all local and national institutions to ensure that the attributes of the nominated extension be appropriately conserved, rehabilitated and reused while respecting their role in strengthening the Outstanding Universal Value of the already-inscribed property.

Several important management instruments that have been initiated following the reappraisal of the values and attributes of Guimarães are still under development. ICOMOS encourages the State Party to use the opportunity of the revision of the city’s masterplan to equip it with the set of tools and measures that will facilitate a management of change in the larger and dynamic city, centred on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its attributes.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the extension of the Historic Centre of Guimarães to include the Couros Zone, Portugal, be approved on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Founded in the 4th century CE, the Historic Centre of Guimarães became the first capital of Portugal in the 12th century. Its historic centre, including its extra muros area known as the Couros Zone, is an extremely well-preserved and authentic example of the evolution of a medieval settlement into a modern town, its rich building typology exemplifying the specific development of Portuguese architecture from the 15th to the 19th centuries through the consistent use of traditional building materials and techniques. This variety of different building types documents the responses to the evolving needs of the community, both for residential and proto-industrial purposes. There was developed a particular type of construction in the Middle Ages featuring a ground floor in granite with a half-timbered structure above. This technique was transmitted to Portuguese colonies in Africa and the New World, becoming their characteristic feature.

The Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone is distinguished in particular for the integrity of its historically authentic building stock. Examples from the period from 950 to 1498 include the two poles around which intra muros Guimarães initially developed; the castle in the north and the monastic complex in the south. The town expanded extra muros around the Franciscan and Dominican monastic complexes. The period from 1498 to 1693 is characterised by the building of grand houses, the development of civic facilities and the layout of city squares. While there have been some changes during the modern era, the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone have maintained their medieval urban layout. The continuity in traditional technology, the maintenance and gradual change have contributed to an exceptionally harmonious townscape.

Criterion (ii): Guimarães, with its proto-industrial Couros Zone, is of considerable universal significance due to the fact that specialised building techniques developed there in the Middle Ages were transmitted to Portuguese colonies in Africa and the New World, becoming a characteristic feature.
Criterion (iii): The early history of Guimarães is closely associated with the establishment of Portuguese national identity and language in the 12th century. The Couros Zone bears witness to the wealth that independence brought to Guimarães and that made possible its continuous and harmonious urban and architectural development until the end of the 19th century.

Criterion (iv): The Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone is an exceptionally well-preserved town that illustrates the evolution of particular building types from the medieval settlement to the present-day city, and particularly in the 15th–19th centuries.

Integrity

The boundaries of the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone encompass all the elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value, including a particular type of construction developed in the Middle Ages using granite combined with a timber-framed structure, and a well-preserved historic building stock that represents the evolution of building typologies from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. This development is documented in the rich variety of different building types that have responded to the evolving needs of the community for residential and production purposes. The Historic Centre of Guimarães does not suffer unduly from adverse effects of development and/or neglect, whilst the Couros Zone needs an urgent conservation and rehabilitation strategy. Development pressures and gentrification related to tourism pressures may undermine, over time, the integrity of the property.

Authenticity

The Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone is authentic in terms of its location and setting, forms and designs, and materials and substances. It has succeeded in preserving its historic stratigraphy and territorial integrity. Different phases of development are well integrated into the layout of the property.

Protection and management requirements

The Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone is subject to several legal provisions regarding the protection of historic buildings, including Law No. 107/2001 of 8 September, Decree-Law No. 120/97 of 16 May, and Decree No. 3/98 of 26 January, and to legal provisions regarding town planning, including Decree-Law No. 38/382 of 7 August 1951, Decree-Law No. 445/91 of 20 November, and Decree-Law No. 250/94 of 15 October. Its master plan, which dates from 1994, includes regulations for the protection of the historic centre. The historic centre includes fourteen historic buildings that are legally protected as National Monuments (eight) or as properties of Public Interest (six), according to the Portuguese Law on the Protection of Historic Monuments. Apart from some State-owned properties, most of the building stock is privately owned. The public areas of the historic centre are the property of the Municipality of Guimarães.

Parts of the buffer zone established for the property and its extension remain outside the protection zone. Whilst norms for the protection of the historic centre exist and a designation as National Monument is about to be approved for the Historic Centre of Guimarães and the Couros Zone, these have not been established for the buffer zone.

Management of the historic centre is the responsibility of the Local Technical Office for the Historic Centre of the Municipality (GTL). Any intervention related to listed buildings is under the control of the Directorate General for Cultural Heritage (DGPC). Sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the property over time will require preparing, approving, and implementing the required norms and regulations for the extended property and buffer zone based on the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. A Heritage Impact Assessment approach integrated into urban planning, and the rehabilitation strategy for the Couros Zone are essential for safeguarding the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value in the highly dynamic urban environment of Guimarães.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Finalising the protection of the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone as a National Monument as soon as possible,

b) Finalising the definition of the expanded buffer zone and the related set of protection mechanisms as soon as possible,

c) Preparing individual Heritage Impact Assessments for the planned projects within the extension, the buffer zone and the wider setting to assess whether they have any negative impacts on the attributes supporting the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its extension,

d) Preparing a comprehensive Heritage Impact Assessment in the framework of the revision of the Plano Director Municipal (Municipal Master Plan), to assess the cumulative impacts of all approved, ongoing and planned projects, to determine whether limits to change that can be absorbed by the extension and the property without negative impacts on Outstanding Universal Value have been reached, to guide future planning previsions,

e) Finalising the regulations related to the management of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value and linked to the Plano Director Municipal (Municipal Master Plan),
f) Completing the inventory of sightlines and the landscape legibility plan, complemented by a co-visibility study to guide development in the wider setting,

g) Monitoring development pressures and gentrification related to tourism-related pressures to preserve the integrity and the authenticity of the property,

h) Ensuring that a single vision guides the governance, coordination and collaboration of the agencies responsible for the property,

i) Encouraging the State Party to pursue its efforts in documenting the water management infrastructure,

j) Developing conservation, restoration and rehabilitation strategies for the tanneries,

k) Engaging residents, local communities and relevant rightsholders in the management process and in defining the future of the property and its extension through regular participatory processes,

l) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session;
Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (February 2023)
III Cultural properties

A Africa
  Extension

B Arab States
  New nominations

C Asia – Pacific
  New nominations

D Europe – North America
  New nominations
  Extension
  Nomination deferred by a previous session of the World Heritage Committee

E Latin America and the Caribbean
  New nomination
The Maison Carrée in Nîmes  
(France)  
No 1569rev

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party  
The Maison Carrée in Nîmes

Location  
Department of Gard  
Occitanie  
France

Brief description  
The Maison Carrée erected in the 1st century CE in the Roman colony of Nemausus – today’s Nîmes in France – is an early example of a Roman temple that can be associated with the imperial cult in the provinces of Rome. Dedicated to the prematurely deceased divinised heirs of Augustus, the Princes of Youth, this pseudoperipteral hexastyle edifice promulgated Rome’s control over its conquered territory while symbolically announcing the allegiance of the population of the city of Nemausus to the dynastic line of Augustus. The architectural programme and the carefully elaborated decoration, which reproduced features known from edifices erected in Rome, additionally symbolically communicated the ideological programme of Augustus, who transitioned Ancient Rome from republic to empire, thus opening a new golden age known as Pax Romana.

Category of property  
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a monument.

Included in the Tentative List  
4 April 2012 as “Nîmes, Antiquity in the Present”

Background  
This is a new nomination.

The initial nomination of Nîmes was examined by ICOMOS in 2017. The World Heritage Committee examined the nomination of the Historic Urban Ensemble of Nîmes, France, at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018) and adopted the following decision 42 COM 8B.28:

The World Heritage Committee,  
1. Having examined Documents WHC/18/42.COM/8B and WHC/18/42.COM/INF.881,  
2. Defers the examination of the nomination of the Historic Urban Ensemble of Nîmes, France, to the World Heritage List, in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to develop a thorough comparative analysis on the Roman buildings of the city of Nîmes to bring into focus whether potential significance can be identified and, if a robust case can be made, reconsider the scope of the nomination on this basis;  
3. Considers that any revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the site;  
4. Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:  
   1. Reconsidering the location of the Palais des Congrès and implementing a Heritage Impact Assessment before any development project into the historic core of the city;  
   2. Giving pre-eminence to archaeological considerations in any new development proposal. The approval process should be rearranged for projects that will impact potential archaeological remains, archaeological investigations should be executed early in the planning process so that their findings can inform any decision to approve a development,  
   3. Undertaking an active conservation programme to improve the condition and setting of the Porte d’Auguste and the Porte de France while reducing the factors that can affect them negatively, especially vehicular traffic,  
   4. Preparing a tourism management plan to actively manage tourism and address the potential deleterious effects of tourism upon the proposed property,  
   5. Improving the monitoring program in order to focus on preservation of the built heritage.

Following the decision of the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS provided advice to the State Party from January to June 2019. The current new nomination results from both of these processes.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission  
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 7 to 9 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS  
A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about integrity, comparative analysis, important views/boundary of the buffer zone, protection and new developments.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 7 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested regarding boundary of the property and involvement of communities.

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2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

The Maison Carrée, as it is known since the Middle Ages, is a Roman temple erected between the 2nd and 5th year CE, during the reign of Augustus, in the Roman colony of Nemausus – today’s Nîmes in France.

Designed on the plan of a rectangle, the Maison Carrée is a pseudoperipteral hexastyle building composed of a single cela preceded by a pronaos and surrounded by a colonnade. The Corinthian style temple, made of local limestone, stands on a podium and is accessible through a flight of fifteen steps. The twenty columns on the sides and at the back of the building are engaged, while ten columns in the pronaos are freestanding. All are fluted and adorned with Corinthian bell-shaped capitals, on which rests an entablature composed of a three-fascia architrave with rows of ovolo ornaments between them, a frieze with acanthus rinceaux, and an elaborately sculpted cornice. Decorative bands of heart-and-dart, dentils, and ovolo ornamental motifs are inserted between the frieze and the cornice. The dripcase is adorned with frets and lion muzzles. A gable roof on a wooden frame with imbrex and tegula Roman tiles completes the monument. Both pediments of the temple have been left undecorated.

Historically, the Maison Carrée stood in the forum of Nemausus, the central public space of the city located at the intersection of cardo maximus and decumanus maximus. With a single entrance in its northern façade, it occupied a strategic and symbolic position usually reserved for the Capitol in the Roman cities, facing probably a curia. The forum was delimited by porticoes. Today, the edifice stands in the middle of the place de la Maison Carrée, its entrance facing rue Auguste created in the 19th century.

The Maison Carrée was dedicated to Caius and Lucius Caesar, the grandchildren, adopted sons, and the crown princes of Augustus, his presumptive heirs who died prematurely. A two-line dedicatory inscription in bronze letters, of which only the fitting holes survived, was originally affixed to the front of the temple. It read (translated from Latin): ‘To Gaius Caesar, son of Augustus, consul, and Lucius Caesar, son of Augustus, consul designate; to the Princes of Youth’. The original text has been reproduced on a boundary wall delimiting the square, opposite the edifice. The dedication consecrates the temple to the members of Augustus’ family. It constitutes a pledge of allegiance of the people of Nemausus to Rome represented by Augustus’ dynastic line (domus Augusta). The use of the title Princes of Youth (principes juventutis) in reference to the two deceased heirs sanctified the entire dynasty, thus turning the Maison Carrée into a manifestation of the imperial cult. This religious practice was used by Augustus’ system of imperial propaganda as a tool to foster loyalty of the provinces to the ruler and thus politically unify the Empire.

The nominated property has an area of 0.0474483 ha, and a buffer zone of 72.746167 ha. The boundary of the property corresponds to the base of the edifice. The buffer zone includes the area of the medieval centre of Nîmes (écusson) and, following the street grid, extends west to encompass the Jardins de la Fontaine, with the vestiges of the temple of Diana and the Tour Magne. The boundary reaches on the south the Porte de France, and at the southeastern end includes the area along avenue Feuchères.

Volcae Arecomici, a Gallic people of the Languedoc, arrived to the territory of today’s Nîmes around 6th-4th century BCE, settling in a number of oppida, one of which gave birth to the city of Nemausus. The construction of Via Domitia that linked Italy and Hispania through Gallia Narbonensis in 118 BCE helped Nemausus, positioned strategically along this road, to grow in importance. The Roman colonisation of the region in the late 1st century BCE led to the organisation of the city as a colonia latina, with Latin rights being conferred by Julius Caesar. Under his successor, Colonia Nemausensis became colonia augusta. At that time, the Augusteum with a theatre and the so-called temple of Diana were constructed, together with the city walls and gates. The works on a forum civitas were initiated concurrently. At some point, however, the original design of the forum was modified and a pseudoperipteral temple (later called Maison Carrée) and possibly a curia were added at the opposing ends. In the 5th century CE the Visigoths ended the rule of Rome in Gallia Narbonensis, and the Roman vestiges in Nîmes fell victim to structural and functional transformations. The Maison Carrée was continuously adapted and reused throughout the ages. In the 14th century, the temple was incorporated into the defensive walls of the city and had openings made in its eastern façade. Its interior was divided into floors and a court added. From the 17th century, the Maison Carrée served as a church for the Augustinian convent until the French Revolution, when it became a national property. After several restoration interventions in the 17th and 18th centuries, the edifice was partly refurbished to its original form in the 19th century, with the purpose of serving as the first museum of the city.
Concurrently, the area in front of the temple was opened up and the newly created rue Auguste brought into line with the monument, offering a new panorama towards the temple. A public square was recreated around the monument. In the last decade of the 20th century, the place has been turned into pedestrian-only space, with the temple in its centre. Nowadays, neoclassical façades of buildings face the monument on the north, east and south while to the west the building of Carré d'Art (Museum of Contemporary Art) with its glass façade closes off the space.

**State of conservation**

The process of bringing the ancient temple back to its original form started in the 17th century. The cella of the temple was then emptied and the gothic windows resealed. Many original stones had been restored, modern elements being fastened with plaster to make them distinguishable from the original ones. Further stone replacements were made during the second major restoration campaign in 1778-1781. The third phase of restorations, completed in 1817-1821, included archaeological surveys around the building, which helped locate the porticoes that flanked the ancient forum. At that time also a glass roof was installed in the cella and the ceiling of the pronao replaced. Further archaeological works have been carried out west and north of the temple on the occasion of opening up the space to create rue Auguste. Some vestiges of a building facing the Maison Carrée have been documented. In the 20th century, the Maison Carrée underwent maintenance and conservation works to reinforce its structure. Salvage archaeological excavations around the monument in 1984-1985, 1987 and in 1990-1991 uncovered vestiges of the original forum, planned before the construction of the Maison Carrée, as well as bases of columns from the porticoes. In 1992, the roofing of the monument was replaced to resemble the original, and tiles imitating the Roman ones used for the new roof. Final restoration, accompanied by some archaeological works, was done in 2006-2010. The limestone was then reinforced and cleaned, and the traces of windows resealed in the 17th century were concealed. The space of the cella was refurbished in 2021-2022 to serve as an exhibition and interpretation space. Today, no original elements of the cella are preserved. An inventory of repairs to the Maison Carrée has been completed in 2020 and an inspection of the state of the building done in 2021.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is very good.

**Factors affecting the nominated property**

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are pollution, physical wear, natural erosion and floods. Pollution, including visual and noise pollution, results from traffic along the borders of the place de la Maison-Carrée. Mixed-mode commuting programme is being implemented by the city to reduce the negative effects. To clear the visual axis towards the northern façade of the temple, the State Party plans to turn rue Auguste into a pedestrian boardwalk in 2023. A similar intervention is planned in the vicinity of Porte de France (projected for 2022-2025), in the southern end of the buffer zone, where the project of Palais des Congrès is being currently developed as part of the revitalisation of the area. Constructed in the place that is considered of little heritage value, the Palais des Congrès will host conventions and exhibitions.

With the rising numbers of visitors, the nominated property faces the risk of physical wear and damage to its elements. The monument is open to the public without restrictions but the inflow of visitors is controlled through a tourist management system (Flux Vision).

Among the environmental factors, floods have gravely affected the nominated property in previous years. The city has a flood prevention plan (Plan de Prévention du Risque Inondation (PPRI)) in place and has been implementing a programme of preventive actions (Programme d’Actions de Prévention des Inondations (PAPI)), which include construction of dissipation basins and flood control reservoirs. Fire risks are managed through controls and regular maintenance of installations.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party explained that pedestrianisation of rue Auguste should have no major impact on the existing traffic near the monument but would help reduce noise and visual pollution. Redirection of traffic from boulevard Alphonse-Daudet and boulevard Victor-Hugo may be envisaged in the future as a way of further reducing pressure on the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that independent Heritage Impact Assessment needs to be implemented systematically as part of any development proposal to evaluate possible impacts of the interventions on the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is very good and that factors affecting the nominated property are satisfactorily managed.

### 3 Proposed justification for inscription

**Proposed justification**

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Erected in the forum of the colony of Nemausus between the 2nd and the 5th year CE, the Maison Carrée is an outstanding example of a Roman temple of Corinthian order, modelled on the monuments erected in Rome under Augustus’ administration, which testifies to an important period in the history of Ancient Rome when its
territories were consolidated in the hands of Augustus into an empire.

- Dedicated to Gaius and Lucius Caesar, the quasi-divinised Princes of Youth and prematurely deceased heirs of Augustus, the edifice represents one of the earliest examples of a Roman temple of imperial cult, which has survived to our times in an almost complete form.

- The Maison Carrée is an outstanding testimony to a complex relationship between the Roman regime and the colony of Nemausus, revealing the role the imperial cult played as an ideological tool in the process of romanisation of the vast territory conquered by Rome. By its strategic location, architectural programme and the carefully elaborated symbolic decoration, the edifice metaphorically communicated the authority of Rome over Nemausus and the loyalty of the city to domus Augusta. Through the imperial cult, Augustus managed to politically unify the provinces into an empire, and ensure a period of peace, political stability, and harmony among its inhabitants, known as Pax Romana.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are the structural and decorative elements of the Maison Carrée, the strategic location of the temple in the forum, and the cultic importance of the edifice as the monument dedicated posthumously to the divinised imperial lineage.

**Comparative analysis**

The comparative analysis has been developed around two typological categories: ancient temples in which imperial cult was practiced, and structures that symbolically represent central power in an occupied land. Three parameters were used as a basis for comparisons: quality of the architectural programme, significance of the monument as historical testimony, and symbolic meaning. The comparators within the first typological category were mainly selected within the geo-cultural context of the territory of the Roman Empire and within the period of its existence. The comparators under the second typological category were selected without regard to a historical period or geographical context, based on the quality of properties as testimonies to imperial power. Within these frames, the comparative analysis has examined properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, as well as other properties. No potential comparators among the properties inserted on the Tentative Lists of States Parties have been considered. All of the properties have been analysed using qualitative approach.

Under ancient temples in which imperial cult was practiced, temples dedicated to Augustus or later, erected outside the city of Rome, were considered. The key comparators inscribed on the World Heritage List include the temples of Augustus located within Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna (Libya, 1982, criteria (i), (ii), (iii)); Historic Centre of Cordoba (Spain, 1984, criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)); Historic Centre of Évora (Portugal, 1986, criteria (ii), (iv)); and Archaeological Ensemble of Merida (Spain, 1993, criteria (iii), (iv)). The analysis also includes a great number of temples erected for subsequent Roman emperors in varied places of the Empire. All of these Augustan temples form part of larger historical/archaeological ensembles that have been recognised for different sets of values. Later temples testify to a different political reality.

Among the temples not on the World Heritage List, the analysis includes the edifice dedicated to Augustus and Livia in Vienne (France), the temples of Augustus and Roma in Pula (Croatia) and Ancyra/Ankara (Türkiye), Augusteum in Antioch of Pisidia (Türkiye), and a temple of Augustus in Barcelona (Spain). While some of these temples are comparatively well preserved or represent the same moment of establishing the imperial cult by Augustus, none of them has reached the level of architectural mastery and ornamental quality comparable to the Maison Carrée.

The comparative analysis also considered structures of similar purpose located outside the Roman Empire, erected in different times, which share the way their architectural structure expressed symbolic meanings, but the rationale behind their construction was dissimilar and they functioned under different historical circumstances.

Within the category of structures that symbolically represent central power in an occupied land, the State Party analysed properties on the World Heritage List that (1) testify to either the beginnings or a renewal of an empire, and (2) demonstrate cultural attachment or claim to a central power. None of these properties, located in varied geo-cultural regions, demonstrate both of these aspects together in a way that the Maison Carrée does.

ICOMOS notes that the State Party did not consider in the analysis the potential comparators inserted on the Tentative Lists of States Parties, such as the Hadrianic City of Italica (Spain, Tentative List), Archaeological Site of Sbeitla (Tunisia, Tentative List) or Ancient City of Stratonikeia (Türkiye, Tentative List).

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis within the frameworks established by the State Party has demonstrated that the nominated property’s combination of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and attributes is not yet represented on the World Heritage List. However, evidence of the cult of the ruler before Augustus has not been considered, which seems to suggest that the cult of the emperor or divinised ruler (or any other symbolical representation of the central power in an occupied territory) was not known anywhere before Augustus. Meanwhile, the much earlier evidence of cults that developed, for e.g., in Pharaonic Egypt and Nubia, including the veneration of Alexander the Great and the cult of the Ptolemies, seems to suggest otherwise.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party explained that the Ancient Egyptian temples did not provide enough evidence to the adhesion of the local populations of the conquered territory to the
imperial ideology, or their integrity and authenticity have not been sufficient to convey the proposed values. However, no detailed analysis has been provided to back these statements.

ICOMOS further considers that the comparative analysis does not include examples of the imperial cult that the Roman emperors received in Egypt and Nubia. Portrayed on temple reliefs in line with the local iconographic standards, they became integrated into the Egyptian pantheon, thus continuing the tradition of the Ptolemies. Augustus himself funded an extensive temple building program throughout this part of the Roman Empire. His buildings which predate the construction of the Maison Carrée have not been considered in the analysis. In this light, the claim that the Maison Carrée was one of the earliest and the best-preserved Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult in the Roman Empire is inconclusive.

ICOMOS considers that the Maison Carrée is an early example, and one of the best preserved, of a Roman temple constructed in the Roman provinces that demonstrates the beginnings of transition of Ancient Rome from republic to empire and testifies to the associated process of romanisation of the conquered territory through the means of an imperial cult to ensure political stability and harmony in the consolidated dominion.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criterion (iv).

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Maison Carrée represents one of the earliest and best-preserved examples of a Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult, which testifies to the important period of political unification of the territories conquered by the Romans, and consolidated in the hands of Augustus into an empire. Through the historical circumstances of its construction in the Roman colony of Nemausus, its ideological significance as a place of cult of the divinised imperial lineage, as well as the symbolic architectural and decorative programme, which recalls Augustan monumental architecture in Rome, the edifice represents the values of peace, stability and prosperity promised to the people of the Roman Empire by Pax Romana in the 1st century CE.

ICOMOS considers that the claim that the Maison Carrée is one of the earliest and best-preserved examples of a Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult cannot be confirmed based on the presented comparative analysis. ICOMOS, however, considers that the Maison Carrée can be said to be an early and one of the best-preserved examples of a Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult in the Roman provinces that testifies to the beginnings of Rome’s transition from republic to empire, and reflects the political system and the imperial ideology that underpinned the process of romanisation of this territory. ICOMOS also considers that Pax Romana, which can be seen as a period of relative peace, stability and a golden age of Ancient Rome, rested on the loyalty Rome inspired among its peripheries, including the colonies it established during the time of the Republic, rather than the military power it exercised. Thus, even though it signified a period of sustained Roman imperialism, the culture it created was based on a gradually realised consensus forged and refined in the furnace of conversations between the central authority and the local administration.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iv).

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity
The integrity of the nominated property is based on the wholeness and intactness of the structural and decorative elements of the monument, as well as the setting of the temple within the forum, which played a strategic role in the way the edifice was perceived in ancient times.

The Maison Carrée has been preserved in a very good condition and most of its key elements, including the elaborate decoration, have survived in their original form or have been restored with great attention to detail and respect for authenticity.

The boundary has been drawn to encompass solely the temple. Its original historic setting within the ancient forum has not been preserved due to the evolution of the urban fabric of Nîmes since the Middle Ages. The presumed extent of the forum together with the wider setting has been included in the buffer zone, which has a high level of protection.

Viewsheds are being controlled in order to ensure clear visual perspectives towards the monument and its surroundings. Pedestrianisation of rue Auguste is meant to accentuate the visual axis from the place de la République towards the entrance of the temple.

While the monument suffers from adverse impact of environmental factors and pollution related to road traffic, measures put in place to control these are adequate.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.
Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on its ability to convincingly convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value through its attributes. The Maison Carrée can be said to be authentic in its form and design as well as materials, as reflected in the structural and decorative elements of the temple. The authenticity of the strategic setting of the Maison Carrée has been lost.

The monument has retained its authenticity despite numerous modifications linked to different functions assigned to it through the ages. Key structural elements have been preserved in good state, and the conservation campaigns the temple has undergone helped recover original form and decoration of the edifice. Later uses of the temple or the related additions to its structure have been discreetly marked in the body of the monument. The cella has been entirely reconstructed based on the studies of the temple’s interior, similarly to the roofing of the monument, which has been re-covered with tiles modelled on the Roman originals. The materials used in the reconstructions resemble the original ones.

The temple stands in its original place but the urban fabric around it has changed substantially. Few underground remains of the original setting of the temple within the ancient forum have been preserved. The original context can be partly appreciated through the form and design of the place de la Maison Carrée, which imitates the ancient public square, also by its function as a space for public gatherings. The in situ location of the porticoes that flanked the forum, confirmed through archaeological investigations, is indicated in the stone paving.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated property has been demonstrated, even though the historic setting has been lost beyond recovery.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met.

Boundaries

The boundary of the nominated property includes solely the ancient temple, which is a public property with no inhabitants. In delimiting the buffer zone, the historic setting of the nominated property and the existing protective measures were considered. Accordingly, the buffer zone includes the extent of écusson and all key Roman monuments of Nîmes. Access points to the Maison Carrée and visual axes that highlight the connections between the temple and other Roman edifices were also taken into account. Hence, the place de la République and the area along avenue Feuchères, connecting the SNCF train station with esplanade Charles-de-Gaulle, have been added to the buffer zone. About 6,200 people reside in the buffer zone.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party clarified that all thus far identified viewsheds have been included in the buffer zone.

In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party explained that the extent of ancient forum was not included within the boundaries of the nominated property because the underground remains of this strategic setting of the temple have been disturbed to the point of loss of authenticity, and later changes to the fabric of the city make recovery, even symbolic, of the original forum impossible.

ICOMOS considers that the temple was not an individual monument but part of a set of buildings of public function constructed on or around the Roman forum, to which the archaeological vestiges testify. This strategic historic setting contributed to the cultural values associated with the edifice’s political role. However, ICOMOS recognises that the historical reality of the ensemble of the forum has been lost due to later urban developments and considers inclusion of the presumed extent of this historic setting in the buffer zone as sufficient.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the proposed justification for inscription under criterion (iv) is appropriate. The comparative analysis has demonstrated that the nominated property represents best the combination of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and the attributes to be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. The conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

Documentation of the nominated property, including inventories, archival materials and historical files, is held by the Archives Nationales in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, the Archives départementales du Gard in Nîmes, the Archives municipales of Nîmes, the Bibliothèque Carré d’Art in Nîmes, the Médiathèque de l’Architecture et du Patrimoine in Charenton-le-Pont, the Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées in Montpellier, the Service du Secteur Sauvegardé of Nîmes, and the Service régional de l’Inventaire in Toulouse. Archaeological materials are kept by the Musée de la Romanité. Archaeological documentation is kept by the City of Nîmes through partnership with the Institut National de Recherches Archéologiques Préventives (INRAP). Iconographic files are stored at the Musée du Vieux Nîmes and Musée des Beaux-Arts.

The Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles (DRAC) is currently assembling documentation related to the conservation and restoration of the temple, as well as historical and archaeological records. Once complete (planned for 2023-2024), this dossier will be deposited at the Musée de la Romanité to form the basis for future management and conservation interventions.
Conservation measures

The *Charte de protection et d’utilisation de la Maison Carrée et de ses abords* (Protection and Use Charter for the Maison Carrée and its surroundings), due to be completed in 2023, will define the conservation requirements and determine standards for maintenance of the monument. It will outline the limits and requirements of occasional events organised in the perimeter of the nominated property, including the measures of managing the inflow of visitors to the monument (in line with the tourism management plan). A management/protection plan for the viewsheds is being developed since 2021 with the purpose of enhancing perspectives towards/from the Maison Carrée.

The City of Nîmes is responsible for maintenance and restoration of the Maison Carrée under the technical and scientific control of the Ministry of Culture; the latter being represented at the local level by the DRAC working under the authority of the Prefect of Occitania. The Ministry provides funds for restorations, which are also partly funded from the budgets of the Region, Department and the City itself.

Monitoring

The monitoring system has been developed in relation to the State Party’s management objectives, which include preservation of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property, ensuring appropriate governance, and developing public awareness and sense of ownership of the universal values represented by the Maison Carrée. Change in the urban fabric and development of sustainable tourism are considered within the buffer zone. The City of Nîmes and the Ministry of Culture are in charge of monitoring, with varied institutions responsible for aspects thereof. The *Comité de Bien Maison Carrée Patrimoine Mondial de l’Unesco* (Maison Carrée Unesco World Heritage Property Commission) is to develop relevant indicators and establish baseline data for reference.

ICOMOS considers that the information regarding the monitoring system is very rudimentary. No details have been provided on the physical elements of the monument, the state of which will be monitored, especially in relation to the identified threats. ICOMOS further considers that it is unclear how the proposed indicators, the majority of which are quantitative, will inform concrete actions.

ICOMOS considers that the *Charte de protection et d’utilisation de la Maison Carrée et de ses abords* should be promptly adopted once finalised to ensure relevant level of conservation and maintenance of the property.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is further developed to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and is conceived for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The Maison Carrée is a public property protected as a national historic monument since 1840 (*Code du Patrimoine*, art. L.621-1 to 33). Any modifications to its features or any restoration works need to be authorised by the Minister of Culture or its representative from the Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles. Prior authorisation from the *Architecte des Bâtiments de France* is required for changes to buildings situated within 500m from the monument and in its visibility zone.

Two regulatory protective mechanisms are in place for the buffer zone: *Site Patrimonial Remarquable* (SPR, under the *Code du Patrimoine*) with the related *Plan de Sauvegarde et de Mise en Valeur* (PSMV, under the *Code de l’Urbanisme*), and *Plan Local d’Urbanisme* (PLU) with its IIIUBb protection zone (under the *Code de l’Urbanisme* and the *Code de l’Environnement*).

The SPR, which covers the *écusson*, the esplanade Charles-de-Gaulle and the *square de la Couronne*, regulates land use. Any works inside this zone require the *Architecte des Bâtiments de France* authorisation in line with the PSMV that prescribes conditions of restoration of the existing buildings as well as construction of new ones. The same area further falls under the archaeological presumption zone of Nîmes, established by a zoning by-law, where any planned works must be consulted with the archaeological services of the City and an archaeological survey or excavations may need to be conducted before a new development can proceed.

The PLU, developed by the municipality, defines the rules of local governance, regulates land use and the architectural character of the place, while addressing the matters of heritage and landscaping. Zone IIIUBb created around the SPR reinforces the integration of the historic centre of Nîmes with the heritage of other epochs and the contemporary urban fabric. The IIIUBb zone foreshadows the planned extension of the SPR approved by the Municipal Council of the City of Nîmes in 2022.

In the additional information sent in November 2022, the State Party confirmed that the expanded SPR would cover the buffer zone of the nominated property and the zone IIIUBb, strengthening the existing protection of the monument.

Additionally, within the buffer zone, there are two areas protected as Sites under the *Code de l’Environnement* (art. L.341-1 to 22) – *Jardin de la Fontaine* with *quai de la Fontaine* and *Mont-d’Haussez*, and Historic Centre of Nîmes with *avenue Feuchères*. They cannot be destroyed or modified without the Minister of Culture authorisation. The historic monuments located inside the buffer zone are protected through the *Code du Patrimoine*.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated property is adequate.
Management system
The nominated property management remains at the local level, residing in the municipality of Nîmes and executed in collaboration with the Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles; Direction Régionale de l’Environnement, de l’Aménagement et du Logement; and the Direction Départementale des Territoires. The Comité de Bien Maison Carrée Patrimoine Mondial de l’Unesco has been established as a decision-making organ, chaired jointly by the Mayor of Nîmes and the Prefect of the Gard Department, accountable to the Ministry of Culture. A Technical Committee, relying on the competences of municipal divisions responsible for sectoral policies, acts as an operational body to the Commission. The Committee of Scientific and Technical Experts – a multidisciplinary consultative group – gives advice to the Commission and the Committee.

In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party clarified that a community representative sits in the Comité de Bien Maison Carrée Patrimoine Mondial de l’Unesco, while members of cultural associations, local businesses and education bodies support the official management structure as part of the Club Maison Carrée-Patrimoine mondial (Maison Carrée World Heritage Club), which includes the Mayor of Nîmes and representatives of the Nîmes Tourist Office. The Club members are seen as mediators, who can provide first-hand information on the quality of life and levels of hospitality around the property and in the city more broadly.

The management plan has been developed with a vision of preserving authenticity and integrity of the nominated property as well as expanding knowledge base and raising awareness about the Maison Carrée and its values. A twenty-one-point action plan, which is being implemented (to be completed by 2026), includes development of a research programme for the nominated property, drafting of the Charte de protection et d’utilisation de la Maison Carrée et de ses abords, and a review of the Plan de Sauvegarde et de Mise en Valeur. Tourism master plan (Schéma directeur du Tourisme) for the City of Nîmes is linked to the management plan and currently under review. An integrated risk management plan is in place, addressing key natural and technological threats to the property. Communal Safety Plan (Plan Communal de Sauvegarde (PCS)) was revised in 2021 to ensure that the safety procedures are relevant to the risks that the monument faces.

Financial resources for the management of the nominated property are jointly provided by the City of Nîmes and the relevant divisions of the local government (Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles).

ICOMOS considers that the management structure based on a cooperation of city services and local and regional partners is functional. The management plan considers the heritage values represented by the nominated property and the socio-economic urban context within which it is located. The risk preparedness strategy for the nominated property is in place, supported by the PCS. A disaster/crisis management plan could further enhance protection of the integrity of the Maison Carrée.

Visitor management
The tourism master plan for the City of Nîmes is currently under review. It shall include measures to monitor the influx of visitors, put in place procedures to assess, manage and control visitor pressure on the monument, and create tours that would enable movement of tourists between the historic sites of the city.

The Tourism Office in Nîmes offers a number of programmes and thematic tours to raise awareness of the city’s history. Architecture and Heritage Interpretation Centre assists visitors in learning about the history and the urban development, while the archaeological collections on show at the Musée de la Romanité enable visitors to appreciate the city’s past. The museum plays the role of a liaison between the Roman monuments of Nîmes. In the Maison Carrée itself, the cella has been recently reorganised into an exhibition space.

ICOMOS considers that visitor management is well thought through. It takes into consideration the historical connections between the nominated property and other Roman monuments in Nîmes. A tourism strategy that is being prepared will integrate the principles of responsible tourism with the premises of sustainability.

Community involvement
The nomination has been widely discussed with local residents, education institutions, grassroots organisations, businesses and other stakeholders in a number of initiatives that aimed to raise awareness about the property. A continuous training plan to raise awareness among the municipal officials, such as enforcement officers, community service providers and all those who are in contact with the visitors, is being developed.

Representatives of the city residents, cultural associations and business-owners have a chance to share their opinions and discuss matters related to the protection of the nominated property and its future, including in relation to the development of tourism, in the frame of the Club Maison Carrée-Patrimoine mondial. The views elicited through the Club are considered in the preparation of development projects and the decision-making as part of the joint management process.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated property is adequate and the management structure is functional. The management plan has been developed around protection of heritage values of the nominated property while considering the socio-economic urban context within which it is located. A disaster/crisis management plan could further enhance protection of the nominated property.
6 Conclusion

ICOMOS considers that the most remarkable aspect of the Maison Carrée in Nîmes is the outstanding state of preservation of its structure and decoration, despite multiple reuses of the temple in the past. The commitment to the conservation of this property, which has undergone regular restorations since the 17th century to regain its original form, is particularly noteworthy.

ICOMOS acknowledges the effort made by the State Party in elaborating the nomination dossier. The analysis of the circumstances that brought the Maison Carrée to life is particularly meticulous.

ICOMOS considers that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated, according to criterion (iv), and the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met. ICOMOS recognises that the subterranean remains of the ancient forum which constituted the strategic setting of the Maison Carrée have been severely disturbed by urban developments over the years, hence the recovery of some of the authenticity of the original setting of the temple, which bestowed meaning on the edifice in relation to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, is no longer possible.

ICOMOS further considers that protection and management of the nominated property are adequate, and recommends adoption of the Charte de protection et d’utilisation de la Maison Carrée et de ses abords as soon as it is finalised.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Maison Carrée in Nîmes, France, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iv).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Maison Carrée is a pseudoperipteral hexastyle Corinthian-style temple erected in the 1st century CE in the forum of the Roman colony of Nemausus. It was dedicated to the prematurely deceased presumptive heirs of Augustus – Gaius and Lucius Caesar – who were accorded the title Princes of Youth (principes juventutis), through which the dynastic line of Augustus was sanctified and the edifice turned into a temple of imperial cult.

The strategic and symbolic position of the Maison Carrée in the forum in conjunction with other buildings that in the past hosted key political and religious institutions testify to the significance of the monument as a representation of the imperial authority of Rome in Nemausus and the protection of domus Augusta over the city and its citizens.

Through its architectural design that recalls key edifices from the Augustan period in Rome, and its symbolic decorative programme, the temple testifies to the moment of unification of the territory of Ancient Rome and the transition from republic to empire, which carried the promise of peace, prosperity and stability brought by Pax Romana.

Criterion (iv): The Maison Carrée is an early and one of the best-preserved examples of a Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult in the Roman provinces that testifies to the period of Rome’s transition from republic to empire, reflecting the political system and the imperial ideology that underlay the process of consolidation of the territory conquered by Ancient Rome in the hands of Augustus. Through the historical circumstances of its construction in the Roman colony of Nemausus, its ideological significance as a place of imperial cult, as well as the symbolic architectural and decorative programme, the edifice manifests the values brought to the Roman Empire by Pax Romana.

Integrity

The key elements necessary to express the property’s Outstanding Universal Value are included within its boundary. The structural and decorative elements of the temple have survived in their original form or have been restored with great attention to detail. The cella of the temple has no original elements preserved. The historic setting of the property within the ensemble of the forum has changed due to the evolution of the urban fabric of Nîmes over the years.

Authenticity

Restorations that the temple has undergone since the 17th century helped the Maison Carrée to recover its original form without major structural changes and to preserve its decorative elements. All structural elements of the edifice are original, with the exception of the roofing, the ceiling of the pronaos, and the cella. The materials are still largely original or closely resemble the original local ones. The authenticity of the strategic setting of the Maison Carrée within the space of the ancient forum has been lost. It can be partly appreciated through the form and design of the place de la Maison Carrée, which was created with a view of imitating the historical context.

Protection and management requirements

The property is legally protected as a national historic monument through the Code du Patrimoine (art. L.621-1 to 33). Regulatory protective measures apply to the buffer zone through Site Patrimonial Remarquable mechanism under the Code du Patrimoine, and the relevant planning documents and special zoning restrictions developed under Code de l’Urbanisme and the Code de l’Environnement.

The management structure is based on a cooperation of city services and local and regional partners. Management
of the property remains at the local level, in the hands of the municipality of Nîmes, and is executed in collaboration with the Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles; Direction Régionale de l’Environnement, de l’Aménagement et du Logement; and the Direction Départementale des Territoires. The Comité de Bien Maison Carrée Patrimoine Mondial de l’Unesco has been established as a decision-making organ, and a Technical Committee that relies on the competences of municipal divisions acts as its operational body.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Developing and implementing a Heritage Impact Assessment for development proposals, such as the project of pedestrianisation of rue Auguste or the redirection of traffic from boulevard Alphonse-Daudet and boulevard Victor-Hugo, if envisaged in the future, to evaluate their impacts on the property,

b) Adopting promptly the Charte de protection et d’utilisation de la Maison Carrée et de ses abords once finalised,

c) Developing further the monitoring system to encompass all the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value,

d) Preparing a disaster/crisis management plan to enhance protection of the integrity of the property;
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
III Cultural properties

A Africa
   Extension

B Arab States
   New nominations

C Asia – Pacific
   New nominations

D Europe – North America
   New nominations
   Extension
   Nomination deferred by a previous session of
   the World Heritage Committee

E Latin America and the Caribbean
   New nomination
1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
The Jodensavanne Archaeological Site: Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery

Location
District of Para
Suriname

Brief description
Located on the densely forested banks of the Suriname River, the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site in northern Suriname is a serial property with two component parts that illustrate early Jewish colonisation attempts in the New World. The Jodensavanne Settlement, founded in the 1680s, includes the ruins of what is believed to be the earliest synagogue of architectural significance in the Americas, along with cemeteries and the foundations of brick buildings, boat landing areas, and a military post. The Cassipora Creek Cemetery is the remnant of an older settlement founded in the 1650s which ceased to exist three decades later when its inhabitants migrated two kilometres downstream to Jodensavanne. Unusual for the Atlantic Sephardic diaspora, these early Jewish colonies were not situated in existing urban settings, and were longer-lived than many. Located amidst Indigenous territory, the settlements were inhabited, owned, and governed by Jews who lived there together with free and enslaved persons of African descent. The settlements had the most extensive arrangement of privileges and immunities known in the early modern Jewish world.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of two sites.

Included in the Tentative List
30 June 1998 as “The settlement of Joden Savanne and Cassipora cemetery”

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 5 to 9 September 2022.

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
The nominated property is comprised of two component parts: the remains of the Jodensavanne (“Jewish Savanna”) Settlement on the heavily forested banks of the Suriname River; and the nearby Cassipora Creek Cemetery.

The Jodensavanne Settlement contains two cemeteries, the foundations of brick buildings, boat landing inlets for access from the river, natural (medicinal) springs, Ceiba trees considered sacred by the Indigenous and enslaved West African peoples, and a military post belonging to a ninety-four-kilometre-long military defence line (the Cordonpad) that protected the area’s plantations against attacks and connected the settlement to the Atlantic Coast. The main building of the settlement, the Beraha VeSalom synagogue, is referred to as the earliest synagogue of architectural significance in the Americas. Now in ruins, it was constructed with imported European bricks in a Dutch vernacular style, but details of its design are still unclear.

The second component part of the nominated property is the Cassipora Creek Cemetery, which lies about two kilometres south of the Jodensavanne Settlement. It is the remnant of an older settlement founded in the 1650s and
abandoned in the 1680s when its inhabitants migrated down the river to Jodensavanne. Some scholars have suggested that the move to Jodensavanne may have been due to malaria, or to the search for healthier living conditions, more space, and a better water supply. In contrast to the Jodensavanne Settlement, it was never charted as a village or town. No further information is available at this time concerning the Cassipora Creek Settlement, and only the cemetery is included in the nominated property. The area suspected of being the location of the Cassipora Creek Settlement is included in this component part’s buffer zone.

The earliest cemetery, Beth Haim Velho at Cassipora Creek, has 216 graves with stone markers, but it is estimated that there were more than 400 burials in total. The oldest gravestone is dated 1666 and the most recent 1873, which shows that the cemetery was used beyond the existence of the settlement and in parallel with the Jodensavanne Cemetery. The Cassipora Creek Cemetery is the only Jewish cemetery in Suriname with two prism-shaped gravestones, which were traditionally reserved for rabbis and other community leaders. The gravestones at the cemetery have inscriptions in Hebrew, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and Aramaic, and combinations of these languages; only about 11% show some sort of iconography. Most of the gravestones probably originated in Amsterdam and were incised before shipment to the Americas.

The Jewish burial site in Jodensavanne contains 462 gravestones, with dates between 1685 and 1873. Epitaphs are mainly in Hebrew and Portuguese, with some in Spanish, Dutch, and Aramaic. Some of the texts include combinations of these languages. Only 6.7% of the gravestones show iconography. The graves are generally in an east-west orientation, and some are lined with bricks. It is estimated that some 900 persons were buried in the cemetery, but nearly half of them evidently could not afford gravestones. The wooden markers used instead are now lost, and future work is necessary to locate these graves.

Also included in the Jodensavanne component part is the African-Creole cemetery, Nengre Berpe. Located a relatively short distance from the Jewish burial site, it contains 135 graves with wooden markers, nearly all facing east. It is assumed that there are many more graves, not all of which have been located. The remaining wooden markers have small non-historic metal protective caps. In most cases the epitaphs are faded or unreadable. Some of the graves had wooden frames or fences, very few of which remain. A few graves have horizontal stone slabs, and some are lined with bricks. The oldest identifiable grave at this cemetery dates from 1860 and the most recent from 1959. Archival information indicates that the use of the cemetery by free and enslaved persons who lived and worked at Jodensavanne began before 1794. The African-Creole cemetery’s hybrid burial practices are considered by some scholars to be a typical example of cultural symbiosis.

In the vicinity of the African-Creole burial site lies the Wijngaarde family graveyard, consisting of five modern graves of the Indigenous Wijngaarde family, the most recent dating from 2004.

The area of the two component parts totals 24.8 ha with two buffer zones totalling 19.45 ha, according to revisions of the boundaries submitted by the State Party in February 2023.

In the 17th century, Portuguese or Sephardic Jews fleeing the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition established Jodensavanne as an independent agrarian Jewish settlement within the colony of Suriname. Created under favourable English and later Dutch rule, it prospered for more than 100 years. The settlement, located on high ground in the densely forested frontier zone amidst Indigenous territory, was inhabited, owned, and governed by Jews who lived there with free and enslaved persons of African descent. It had the most extensive arrangement of privileges and immunities known in the early modern Jewish world.

The two settlements are unusual for the Atlantic Sephardic diaspora, since most of the other early Jewish colonies in the Americas were concentrated in existing urban settings, and many were shorter-lived. By the early 1700s, most of Suriname’s Jewish population was concentrated in Jodensavanne and its surrounding plantations. The 575 Jews residing here made this the largest Jewish agrarian area in the world. These Sephardic settlers, engaged for the most part in agriculture and trade, helped the Dutch transform Suriname into the Dutch Republic’s most profitable possession in the Americas.

The plantations, which are not included in the nominated property, produced mainly sugar and coffee. By 1787, the centre of Surinamese Jewry had shifted fifty kilometres north to Paramaribo, due to a crisis in the plantation economy and increased insecurity caused by a series of Maroon attacks and rebellions by enslaved persons. On 2 April 1825, by an Order of the Crown, all the special “privileges, concessions, and exceptions of whatever nature” afforded the Jewish inhabitants were abolished, and their rights reverted to those of other inhabitants. In 1832 the settlement was affected by a fire. In 1865, the Beraha VeSalom synagogue was used for worship for the last time, ending 180 years of serving the Jewish community. Its roof collapsed in 1873 and the building fell into ruin. That same year the last persons were buried in the Cassipora Creek and Jodensavanne Jewish cemeteries. The settlement and the cemeteries were completely abandoned and subsequently overtaken by nature. Today, the nominated property exists as two archaeological sites within a dense forest.

**State of conservation**

During the 20th century several attempts were made to clean the Jodensavanne Settlement site, on some occasions accompanied by detailed documentation of the ruins and even some publications of the results. On 11 October 1971 the Jodensavanne Foundation was created.
with the aim to preserve, protect, and maintain the remains of the former Jewish settlement. Conservation work was done at the ruin of the synagogue in the 1970s to stabilise it and improve its appearance. A small museum was built and visitor facilities were installed. Archaeological explorations at the site in the early 1980s could not establish the original street plan around the synagogue. They also showed that the soil’s acidity had left the human remains in the cemeteries in a very poor state of preservation. A plan to develop a theme park at the site, without a focus on conservation of the cultural heritage elements, failed due to insufficient support.

The civil war (1986-1992) saw the destruction of the visitor facilities and rendered the archaeological site inaccessible. After the war, the Jodensavanne Foundation reopened the site, undertook some maintenance, and started to promote it as a tourism destination. In 1998 and 2000 the World Monuments Fund included Jodensavanne on its World Monuments Watch. In the 2000s the site was surveyed and mapped, and the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust at UNESCO financed the development of a management plan (2008-2012) for the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site. The most recent consolidation work at the synagogue and at some of the brick graves in the Jodensavanne Cemetery was done in 2011. In 2019, a UNESCO-funded conservation project focused on the tropical hardwood grave markers at the African-Creole cemetery. They were given surface treatments and fitted with small metal caps to protect the end grain of the wood.

Conservation activities and maintenance are currently done by two employees and members of the nearby Indigenous village of Redi Doti. The Cassipora Creek Cemetery is more difficult to access and does not get the same level of maintenance as the Jodensavanne component part.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is adequate.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are linked to the climatic conditions of Suriname.

Mean daily temperatures of 27 °C, relative humidity between 80% and 90%, and heavy rainfall cause weathering processes and degradation of the construction materials at the settlement and the cemeteries. Earth movements and tree falls can also affect the elements directly. Biological agents such as lichens, fungi, algae, mosses, and insects also cause direct and indirect damage to the materials.

The most common factors seem to be weathering of the surfaces of the grave slabs and wooden grave markers and movement of the brick and stone elements. Apart from the displacement of built elements (disintegration and tilting), this movement can lead to fractures, as seen on some grave slabs. The movement, fracture, and disintegration of elements can be worse on sloped surfaces (erosion) and areas with vegetative growth and possible tree falls. The State Party considers that the impact of these factors can be minimised by applying the necessary conservation strategies and actions. Most of these factors are well identified and understood, and the necessary actions are being taken.

ICOMOS notes that some of the wooden grave markers and fences were destroyed by a bushfire in the early 1980s. Fire and other factors such as floods, vandalism, development pressures (including potential environmental threats linked to mining activities upstream of the nominated property), and tourism infrastructure (such as the nearby river resort) are not considered by the State Party to have a significant impact on the nominated property or the buffer zones. While it seems that these factors are currently not serious threats, ICOMOS considers that it will be necessary to monitor them closely and to ensure the nominated property’s protective mechanisms are adequate to address any future changes to the situation, for example due to climate change. While the subject of risk preparedness is addressed in several different documents, it would be useful to concentrate all the information in one integral risk preparedness plan.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is adequate and that most factors affecting the nominated property are well identified and controlled. However, aspects linked to possible future threats, especially related to climate change and development pressures, should be closely monitored. The elaboration of an integral risk preparedness plan should be considered.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery together are an unparalleled testimony of a Jewish civilization within the Atlantic Sephardic diaspora. They were the only enduring Jewish settlements in the world that were granted territorial and communal autonomy at the time, and constituted the largest Jewish agrarian region in the world.
- They feature one of the oldest surviving Jewish cemeteries in the Americas, as well as remnants of what is referred to as the earliest synagogue of architectural significance in the Americas.
- The Sephardic settlers helped the Dutch transform Suriname into the most profitable Dutch Republic possession in the Americas.
- They exhibited a strong interchange with enslaved Africans and their descendants, Maroons, and Indigenous people.
Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are the archaeological remains of the Jodensavanne Settlement, including the ruins of the Beraha VeSalom synagogue and other buildings, military repository, boat landing sites, natural springs, Ceiba trees, sand pit, Jewish cemetery, and African-Creole cemetery, and the Beth Haim Velho cemetery at Cassipora Creek.

Comparative analysis
The comparative analysis has been developed around the following parameters for Jewish settlements: the type of settlement; the existence of basic privileges and/or restrictions; the participation of an army or militia; the existence of religious education; the existence of a tribunal, synagogue, and/or cemetery; the existence of a cultural interchange; and the economic base or main business. It has examined properties within the country, the region, and throughout the world inscribed on the World Heritage List, inserted in the Tentative Lists of States Parties, as well as other properties. No geo-cultural region has explicitly been identified, though the Caribbean and its vicinity can be inferred.

The comparative analysis first examines the national context of the Cassipora Creek and Jodensavanne settlements, and reaches the conclusion that they were the only autonomous communities of their kind in Suriname. ICOMOS considers that the nominated property stands apart in important ways from the other autonomous European communities known to have existed in Suriname, based on the information provided.

In the regional and international contexts, the comparisons focus on the Jewish communities that existed in Historic Area of Willemstad, Inner City and Harbour, Curaçao (Netherlands, 1997, criteria (ii), (iv) and (v)); Historic Centre of the Town of Olinda (Brazil, 1982, criteria (ii) and (iv)); Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison (Barbados, 2011, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)); City of Charleston (Nevis island, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Tentative List); Speightstown in Barbados; Recife in Brazil; Kingston and Spanish Town in Jamaica; Pomeroon and Essequibo in Guyana; Oranjestad in Sint Eustatius, Netherlands; Philipsburg in Sint Maarten, Netherlands; Cayenne in French Guiana, France; and, outside the Atlantic region, Livorno (Leghorn) in Italy. All are important in their own ways, but in reference to the chosen parameters they lacked autonomy, were confined to a Jewish quarter or ghetto, shared the urban space with non-Jews, and/or had a relatively short-lived existence. The comparisons make clear that all these early Jewish communities had varying degrees of privileges and restrictions. The Jewish community of Livorno is the only autonomous communities of their kind in Suriname. ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies the nomination property stands out from other autonomous European communities.

In view of the specificities of the Jodensavanne settlement and the parameters chosen for the comparative analysis, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is distinct from other testimonies that illustrate the first attempts of Jewish settlement in the New World.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii) and (iii).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Jodensavanne Settlement was located in a frontier zone amidst Indigenous land and participated in a slave society during the 17th through 19th centuries. In this context, different cultures and ethnocultural groups (Jews, Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, and European colonists) came into contact, collided, and connected with each other, resulting in tangible and intangible interchanges.

ICOMOS recognises that this Jewish community located in a frontier zone formed part of a slave-owning society, leading to interactions with other groups. However, little consideration is given by the State Party to the nature of these interactions. Furthermore, the interchanges of human values between these groups have only had a local impact; moreover, the interchanges for the most part are not expressed in tangible attributes. The State Party has not shown conclusively that these interchanges left an important mark on developments in architecture, technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design. For these reasons, ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site is an exceptional testimony within the Atlantic Sephardic diaspora of a Jewish civilization that was granted territorial and communal autonomy, a Jewish 'state within
a state' that existed successfully from the 17th to the 19th century. The settlement existed in an area adjacent to Indigenous territories, and the Jewish settlers were instrumental in its defence. Several of the material remains in the nominated property are exceptional due to their age (the cemeteries) and their architectural significance (the synagogue). Furthermore, the archaeological evidence at the settlement and cemeteries points towards a coexistence of different cultures and ethnocultural groups, including Jews, Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, and European colonists.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is a testimony to the dispersion of Jewish communities within the Atlantic Sephardic diaspora. The Jodensavanne Settlement and the Cassipora Creek Cemetery are exceptional examples of early Jewish colonisation attempts in the geo-cultural region and are an important chapter in Jewish history. The location of the nominated property in the Americas and its material remains tell the story of an exceptional development of this ‘state within a state’. ICOMOS considers that criterion (iii) has been demonstrated.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iii), but that criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the Jodensavanne Settlement, with the remains of its buildings, the cemeteries, and several other elements that played important roles in the development and daily life of the Jewish community, including the boat landings that connected Jodensavanne with the river, the military post and part of the defences (the Cordonpad), the medicinal springs, the sacred Ceiba trees, and the sand pit. It is also based on the Cassipora Creek Cemetery. The boundary of the Jodensavanne component part includes all the elements mentioned above.

The boundary of the Cassipora Creek component part delimits only the cemetery, leaving out the probable location of the associated settlement. This was the first autonomous Sephardic Jewish community in the colony of Suriname, and precursor of the Jodensavanne Settlement. In February 2023, the State Party extended the Cassipora Creek component part’s buffer zone to include the area most likely to be the settlement’s location. ICOMOS welcomes this extension. Considering the historical importance of the Cassipora Creek Settlement, ICOMOS suggests further exploring the possibility of including its location in the property, through a minor boundary modification request, if this one and its state of conservation can be accurately determined.

The attributes are intact, and the way major pressures on them are managed is adequate.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

Authenticity

The attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are substantially authentic in terms of their forms and designs, materials and substance, and locations and settings. In additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party stressed that ongoing maintenance work is based on the advice of specialists, and is done with great care regarding the original materials and substance.

In general terms, the authenticity of the remains as well as their settings do not raise any serious concerns at the moment. However, ICOMOS highlights the need to strengthen protection of the surroundings of the nominated property’s component parts in order to avoid negative impacts to the authenticity of the nominated property in the future.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have also been demonstrated.

Boundaries

The boundaries of the Jodensavanne Settlement component part were determined by identifying the location of the attributes and then following the limits of adjacent land properties – to the north, the boundary with the former Gelderland plantation (now part of the Indigenous land of Redi Doli), and to the south, the boundary of the Indigenous land (used in part for the Jodensavanne River Resort) – and by following the Suriname River to the west, and the main road to Pierrekondre Kumbasi and Redi Doli villages to the east.

The delineation of the Cassipora Creek component part is based solely on the limits of the cemetery as it was measured and researched during a comprehensive cemetery site survey in 1998. Together, the boundaries of the two component parts are logical in relation to the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

In October 2022, ICOMOS requested additional information from the State Party on the buffer zones. In its response in November 2022, the State Party proposed extending the Cassipora Creek Cemetery buffer zone to include the probable location of the Cassipora Settlement. Located northwest of the cemetery and reaching to the bank of the Suriname River, the probable location was identified during an exploratory archaeological investigation in 2018. In February 2023, the State Party submitted a revised buffer zone that was extended to the north and west
of the nominated property component part, following the outlines of the higher ground on which the cemetery is located. This revision had earlier been approved by the Redi Doti Village Council in November 2022.

The buffer zone of the Jodensavanne Settlement component part is a fifty-metre-wide strip that surrounds the nominated property. While this buffer zone may be sufficient to protect the integrity and the views of the archaeological site in the densely forested areas, ICOMOS considers that the viewsheds on both banks of the river and on the island to the west of the proposed Jodensavanne component part should be better protected against possible negative visual impacts on the Jodensavanne Settlement component part. The State Party informed ICOMOS in the additional information submitted in November 2022 that it has issued a request to designate the far bank of the river (the land of the state-owned former Horeb plantation) and the island in the Suriname River as a Special Protected Forest according to the 1992 Forest Management Act (S.B. 1992 No. 80). In the additional information supplied by the State Party in February 2023, ICOMOS was informed that the final decision on this issue is still pending.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies the consideration of this Jodensavanne archaeological site for the World Heritage List. The nominated property meets criterion (iii), but criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated. The conditions of authenticity and integrity of the whole series and of each of the component parts have been demonstrated. The boundaries as revised in February 2023 are logical in relation to the identified attributes.

### 4 Conservation measures and monitoring

**Documentation**

While the historical and archaeological knowledge about the nominated property is adequate, the documentation, especially on some of the archaeological information including the archaeological artefacts, is not complete nor very well presented. Inventories of grave slabs with their inscriptions and iconography are mentioned, for example, but they are not presented in the nomination. While various maps of the cemeteries are included in the nomination dossier, a definitive and detailed topographical map showing all the attributes referenced in the nomination is missing.

In response to an ICOMOS request for additional information in October 2022, the State Party in November advised that several detailed inventories are in the possession of the Jodensavanne Foundation, and two scientific volumes based on surveys and documentation of the cemeteries have been published. Furthermore, the State Party indicated that online publication of the information on the cemeteries is proposed, following the example of the Jamaican Jewish Cemeteries Preservation Fund. The State Party also presented a more detailed research programme, and mentioned several national and international collaborations to be carried out in the future.

ICOMOS considers that it is important to centralise the dispersed information about the nominated property in an accessible database. ICOMOS further considers that future research should focus on identifying and documenting missing features of the settlements and cemeteries. Detailed records also need to be kept concerning all conservation interventions at the nominated property’s component parts.

**Conservation measures**

The nominated property has passed through several cycles of deterioration, abandonment, and conservation, and is now conserved and presented as an archaeological site. The aggressive environmental conditions (heat, humidity, and many different biological agents) make constant care and maintenance necessary to keep the nominated property from being reclaimed by the forest and suffering further deterioration. The maintenance activities mentioned by the State Party include timely removal of seedlings, plants, and roots; insect and pest control; conservation of wooden grave markers; and regular tree inspections, with the timely removal of old, dead or dangerous overhanging trees.

Some of the degradation processes, such as stone flaking and peeling of surfaces of grave slabs, are considered by the State Party to be natural processes that cannot be influenced. Restoration projects, such as the brick-lined graves (2011) and wooden grave markers (2019), are carried out when necessary and when circumstances and funding allow; most of the funding for activities beyond normal site operation depends on donations.

Of the four persons working on site, recruited from the Indigenous village of Redi Doti, one is focused on ‘green maintenance’. The others are engaged primarily in managerial tasks, as well as ticket sales and maintenance of the visitor and office facilities. For conservation interventions, personnel consists mainly of volunteers with on-the-job training, as was the case in the 2011 training in masonry repair work project for four youths from Redi Doti. While the State Party and especially the Jodensavanne Foundation deserve recognition for the conservation work done, it will be necessary to secure more regular funding in order to strengthen maintenance work and secure the availability of expertise in fields such as stone conservation.

**Monitoring**

The Jodensavanne Foundation is responsible for monitoring the state of conservation of the nominated property. As in the case of conservation measures, the work is done by on-site and office personnel of this agency. The indicators proposed for monitoring the state of conservation of the nominated property do not reflect the whole spectrum of possible threats, nor all the attributes mentioned in the nomination dossier. The aspects to be monitored are, for example, the structural integrity or physical condition of the material remains at the nominated
property, as well as of the visitor installations. These indicators are proposed to be reviewed on an annual basis, mainly through visual inspection and photo comparison. Other aspects monitored are the number of tickets sold and the number of on-site accidents.

In the additional information provided to ICOMOS in November 2022, the State Party included a range of more detailed indicators, mainly concentrated on the graves, most of which can be used in a quantifiable way. While this system allows a somewhat acceptable state of conservation to be maintained, ICOMOS considers that it is necessary to include quantifiable indicators that monitor all the attributes as well as the general environmental conditions and changes to the surroundings of the nominated property. The indicators should not only record damages the nominated property already suffered, such as flaking of the surfaces of grave slabs and site encroachments, but should forewarn of negative impacts on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value before they happen. This type of data would also help detect long-term changes at the nominated property and its surroundings.

ICOMOS considers that the dispersed documentation of the nominated property should be centralised in an accessible database. A definitive and detailed topographical map showing all the attributes referenced in the nomination should be prepared and submitted. ICOMOS also considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is further developed to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value along with the general environmental conditions around the nominated property, and is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire. ICOMOS further considers that regular funding is needed to strengthen maintenance work and secure expertise in fields such as stone conservation.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The two component parts of the nominated property are recognised as archaeological monuments under the Monuments Act of 2002 (S.B. 2002 No. 72). They have been legally protected at the highest level since 2009 through Ministerial Resolution No. 873 regarding the designation of the former Jewish settlement Jodensavanne and Cassipora Cemetery as an archaeological monument.

In 2008, the Jodensavanne Foundation was granted the right of use for rehabilitation, conservation, management, and touristic purposes, and since 2010 it holds the official land rights of the nominated property. The Foundation’s bylaws (Art. 2) state its objectives as preserving, protecting, and maintaining the remains of the site, as well as managing and utilising the monument in the interest of the Surinamese public and tourism.

Furthermore, the local Indigenous peoples are the traditional custodians of the archaeological site, which adds another layer of protection. While the two systems supplement each other, there is no detailed information on the functioning of the traditional protective system mentioned in the nomination dossier. Detailed information showing the ownership and land-use zoning of the areas surrounding the nominated property is also missing. Additional information submitted by the State Party in November 2022 provides written information on this issue, but no detailed maps. The additional information supplied in February 2023 includes maps, but the ownership of some of the areas surrounding the component parts is not clearly indicated.

ICOMOS notes the possibility of additional protection being afforded to the archaeological site and its surroundings by means of a legal decree of Public Land, designation as a Special Protected Forest, and/or use as community forest lands. No mention of these possibilities was made in the nomination dossier. In the additional information submitted in November 2022, the State Party indicates its probable adoption of a Special Protected Forest designation. No detailed information has been given by the State Party concerning the legal implications of such a designation.

Management system

On 11 October 1971, the Jodensavanne Foundation was created to preserve, protect, and maintain the remains of the former Jewish Settlement, and today it is the official management authority of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site. The property is co-managed as part of an agreement with the Indigenous village of Redi Doti. A Memorandum of Cooperation was first signed between the Jodensavanne Foundation and the Redi Doti Village Council on 4 July 2008. The present agreement (2021-2025) establishes that the Indigenous village of Redi Doti is co-responsible for the preservation, protection, and management of the cultural heritage of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site, while the Jodensavanne Foundation recognises its shared responsibility for the sustainable socio-economic development of Redi Doti. The Memorandum of Cooperation is evaluated and signed by the two partners every four years.

The Jodensavanne Foundation provides a ‘development incentive’ of 10% of its annual ticket sales to the local non-governmental organisation, the Khoréro Móthóko Foundation of Redi Doti, as an incentive to support local community activities. The Indigenous population has free admission to the archaeological site. Any changes to the management plan as well as any tourism, recreation or construction projects must be agreed to by both partners.

There are seven persons on the board of the Jodensavanne Foundation, including representatives from the Village Council, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and independent professionals. All maintenance personnel of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site are local inhabitants of Redi Doti. The State Party states that this heritage preservation cooperation model is unique.

The boundaries of the nominated property and the buffer zones are respected by the Village Council. The operators
of the Jodensavanne River Resort, in existence since 2015 and bordering the Jodensavanne component part’s buffer zone, have agreed that no encroachment shall take place in the buffer zone, and a written agreement to this effect was signed on 8 February 2023, according to additional information provided by the State Party. In the additional information supplied in November 2022, the State Party clarified that the resort is located on Indigenous land and is used with the consent of the Redi Doti village.

Operation of the nominated property depends heavily on income from entrance fees and private donations. The four persons from the Redi Doti village who are currently employed for on-site work are considered to be insufficient in number, and ICOMOS notes that only two are permanent staff, due to a shortcoming in funding. In order to improve the financial situation of the nominated property, prices have been raised as of November 2022, doubled in the case of non-residents. As stated in the additional information submitted by the State Party in November 2022, efforts are being made to add six additional persons from the village as on-site staff, financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. A formal request was submitted to the Government of Suriname in February 2023 for an annual subsidy to help cover the operational and management costs of the nominated property.

The Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery Management Plan 2020-2025, which is an update of the 2008-2012 management plan, gives guidance for the management, protection, conservation, and promotion of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site. There is no budget presented for the projects proposed in the management plan, but specific conservation and tourism-related projects are intended to be financed through donations.

A traditional management and protection system is mentioned by the State Party, which seems to be based principally on Indigenous traditional knowledge of diverse aspects of the relationship between people and nature. No formal agreements are mentioned.

The State Party highlights that the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site complies with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UNESCO policy on engaging with Indigenous Peoples.

Visitor management
The Jodensavanne Archaeological Site yearly receives about 6,500 visitors, including students. The installations for visitors include a visitor’s centre, two lavatories, two basic shelters, a guardhouse, several information boards, and a modernised stairway from the waterfront to the settlement’s plaza. In 2001, the Jewish Heritage Program of the World Monuments Fund granted the Jodensavanne Foundation funds for signage to provide visitors with a self-guided tour. While the installations are adequate for the current level of visitation, they would have to be reviewed if there is a substantial increase in the number of visitors. The State Party declares that most of the potential negative effects of higher visitor numbers can be mitigated through efficient management actions. In additional information submitted in February 2023, the State Party notes that a carrying capacity study is currently being elaborated by a graduate student of Tourism Management at the HZ University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. Based on an evaluation made during a recent UNESCO workshop entitled ‘Sustainable Tourism Strategy for World Heritage Properties in Suriname’ (Japanese Funds-in-Trust, July 2022), the number of visitors is expected to remain limited for the foreseeable future. Currently, donations from four corporate donors are being used for a ‘Rehabilitation Touristic Infrastructure Project of Jodensavanne’.

Some of the visitor facilities at the Jodensavanne Settlement component part are located near the plaza and synagogue grounds. The State Party does not consider a relocation of these facilities to be necessary or useful at the moment, but indicated in the additional information it supplied in February 2023 that this might be reconsidered in the future. ICOMOS considers that this possibility indicates the need for an integral land-use plan and regulations for the Jodensavanne component part, as well as clear guidelines in the case of the Cassipora Creek Cemetery component part, which at the moment has no installations apart from an information panel.

A National Strategic Tourism Plan (2018-2030) exists, and further Strategic Tourism Plans at the district level will be developed.

Community involvement
The State Party stresses that the Jodensavanne Foundation has been working together with the Indigenous village of Redi Doti (population 120) since the nominated property’s inclusion on the Tentative List in 1998. The community has been involved in the process of preparing the nomination dossier, for example through an online presentation (due to Covid-19) in November 2021. In the community there are positive expectations about the possibility of the nominated property being inscribed on the World Heritage List, including the conservation of the cultural heritage and the tourism potential of the property.

The nominated property is considered to be a place of memory by both the Jewish Surinamese and the Afro-Surinamese. Events have been commemorated at Jodensavanne, such as the 325th anniversary of the Beraha VeSalom synagogue in 2010 and the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the death of community leader Abraham Garcia Wijngaarde in 2015. There is also a current request from Maroon dignitaries to visit Jodensavanne.

The multi-year Memorandum of Cooperation signed by the Jodensavanne Foundation and the Redi Doti Village Council, as mentioned above, involves the local community in the decision-making processes at the nominated property. Furthermore, the on-site staff and many of the workers for projects at the nominated property are recruited from the local village. The Jodensavanne Foundation also recognises its shared responsibility for the sustainable socio-economic development of Redi Doti.
The Indigenous people of the Redi Doti village are valued as stakeholders, rights-holders, and partners in conserving, protecting, managing, and interpreting the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site. Their traditional and Indigenous knowledge of the site and its surroundings is considered to be of central importance to understanding, conserving, and managing the site.

Capacity building of local personnel is done in situ by students from the universities, by local archaeologists who are involved in conservation activities, and through internships. Representatives of the community are also involved in awareness-raising and capacity-building activities planned by international organisations such as UNESCO, Crucian Heritage and Nature Tourism, the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery, and the Smithsonian Institution.

It is very clear that the focus of the Jodensavanne Foundation’s collaborative efforts is on the local village. It is less clear whether there are any other groups that should be included in the decision-making processes concerning the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site. The Chair of the Jewish Community of Suriname has stated that the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site is a very important part of Jewish history, mainly for Sephardic Jews, and has asked to be informed about activities and projects in the future. In this context, it is important to recognise that the history of the nominated property is complex and that, while there seems to be general interest, it remains unclear as to what degree the nomination is supported by the descendants of the formerly enslaved peoples.

### Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS observes that the nominated property has the highest-level legal protection at the national level. A management plan exists by which the local Indigenous population is co-responsible for the nominated property’s management. A traditional management and protection system is mentioned. The collaboration between the Redi Doti Village Council and the Jodensavanne Foundation through a renewable four-year Memorandum of Cooperation is evidently harmonious. No information is provided concerning the possible involvement of other groups of stakeholders. ICOMOS considers that an adequate and stable budget for the investigation, operation, maintenance, conservation, and presentation of the nominated property is essential.

### 6 Conclusion

The Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery play a special role in the history of the Atlantic Sephardic diaspora, based on its early establishment, duration, rural context, and the privileges and immunities that collectively set it apart from many other early Jewish colonisation attempts in the New World.

There is an evident commitment to the conservation of the nominated property by the State Party and the local community. The Memorandum of Cooperation between the Jodensavanne Foundation and the Redi Doti Village Council is an important element for its co-management.

ICOMOS considers that the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site meets criterion (iii). The archaeological remains, together with historical documentation, allow an exceptional story to be told of the centuries-long development of this Jewish ‘state within a state’.

Several important aspects require further attention by the State Party. Of great importance is the acquisition of adequate and stable funding for the operation and maintenance of the nominated property. The designation of a Special Protected Forest zone also needs to be finalised.

The documentation of the archaeological site should be collected in an accessible database in order to serve, in part, as baseline data for the monitoring process. Quantifiable indicators should give information about the state of conservation of all the attributes of the nominated property, as well as general environmental conditions and changes to its surroundings.

While development pressures are currently not considered by the State Party to be serious threats, they need to be monitored closely and the nominated property’s protective mechanisms need to be capable of addressing any future changes to the situation. For that reason, an integrated risk preparedness plan is recommended. In order to prepare the nominated property for an increase in tourism, it is important to conclude the study on carrying capacity and to complete a land-use plan.

Looking to the future, the State Party may wish to explore the possibility of including the archaeological remains of the Cassipora Creek Settlement within the property’s boundaries.

### 7 Recommendations

**Recommendations with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that The Jodensavanne Archaeological Site: Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery, Suriname, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iii).

**Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

**Brief Synthesis**

Located on the densely forested banks of the Suriname River, the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site in northern Suriname is a serial property with two component parts that illustrate early Jewish colonisation attempts in the New World. The Jodensavanne Settlement, founded in the 1680s, includes the ruins of what is believed to be the
earliest synagogue of architectural significance in the Americas, along with cemeteries and the foundations of brick buildings, boat landing areas, and a military post. The Cassipora Creek Cemetery is the remnant of an older settlement founded in the 1650s which ceased to exist three decades later when its inhabitants migrated two kilometres downstream to Jodensavanne. Unusual for the Atlantic Sephardic diaspora, these early Jewish colonies were not situated in existing urban settings, and were longer-lived than many. Located amidst Indigenous territories, the settlements were inhabited, owned, and governed by Jews who lived there together with free and enslaved persons of African descent. The settlements had the most extensive arrangement of privileges and immunities known in the early modern Jewish world.

Criterion (iii): The Jodensavanne Archaeological Site is an exceptional testimony within the Atlantic Sephardic diaspora of a Jewish civilisation that was granted territorial and communal autonomy, a Jewish 'state within a state' that existed successfully from the 17th to the 19th century. The settlement existed in an area adjacent to Indigenous territories, and the Jewish settlers were instrumental in its defence. Several of the material remains in the property are exceptional due to their age (the cemeteries) and their architecture. Furthermore, the archaeological evidence at the settlement and cemeteries points towards a coexistence of different cultures and ethnocultural groups, including Jews, Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, and European colonists.

Integrity

The integrity of the serial property is based on the Jodensavanne Settlement component part, with the remains of buildings, cemeteries, and several other elements that played important roles in the development and daily life of the Jewish community, including the boat landings that connected Jodensavanne with the river, the military post and part of the defences, the medicinal springs, sacred Ceiba trees, and a sand pit. The Cassipora Creek Cemetery component part’s gravestones have inscriptions in Hebrew, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, Aramaic, and combinations of these languages. The Cassipora Creek Settlement, the first autonomous Sephardic Jewish community in the colony of Suriname and precursor of the Jodensavanne Settlement, is not yet located, but its probable location is included in the buffer zone.

Authenticity

The attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value are substantially authentic in terms of their forms and designs, materials and substance, and locations and settings. Ongoing maintenance work is based on the advice of specialists, and is done with great care regarding the original materials and substance.

In general terms, the authenticity of the remains as well as their settings do not raise any serious concerns at the moment. There is a need to strengthen protection of the surroundings of the property’s component parts in order to avoid potential negative impacts to the authenticity of these settings in the future.

Protection and management requirements

The two component parts of the property are recognised as archaeological monuments under the Monuments Act of 2002 and have been legally protected at the highest level since 2009 through Ministerial Resolution No. 873. The Jodensavanne Foundation, created in 1971, is the official management authority of the property. It has the right of use for rehabilitation, conservation, management, and touristic purposes, and holds the official land rights of the property. Local Indigenous peoples are the traditional custodians of the archaeological site, which adds another layer of protection. The property is co-managed by the Indigenous village of Redi Doti, A Memorandum of Cooperation between the Redi Doti Village Council and the Jodensavanne Foundation establishes that the Indigenous village of Redi Doti is co-responsible for the preservation, protection, and management of the cultural heritage of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site, while the Jodensavanne Foundation recognises its shared responsibility for the sustainable socio-economic development of Redi Doti. Any changes to the management plan as well as any tourism, recreation or construction projects must be agreed to by both partners. The Memorandum of Cooperation is evaluated and signed by the two partners every four years.

The Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery Management Plan 2020-2025 gives guidance for the management, protection, conservation, and promotion of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site. Operation of the property depends heavily on income from entrance fees and private donations. An annual subsidy from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is being pursued to help cover the operational costs of the property.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Obtaining adequate and stable funding for the operation and maintenance of the property,

b) Finalising the designation of the Special Protected Forest zone,

c) Preparing and/or centralising the inventories of archaeological finds and the accompanying information, and presenting this information on detailed topographical maps and/or in a Geographical Information System (GIS),

d) Identifying quantifiable indicators for monitoring the state of conservation of all the attributes of the property, as well as general environmental conditions and changes to its surroundings, in order to help detect long-term developments at the property and its surroundings.
e) Elaborating an integrated risk preparedness plan for the two component parts,

f) Evaluating the current land use (e.g., location of visitor installations) with the objective of developing a land-use plan for the property,

g) Exploring the possibility and relevance of including additional interest groups and stakeholders in the property management process,

h) Determining the carrying capacity of the property,

i) Further exploring the possibility of including the remains of the Cassipora Creek Settlement in the property’s boundary, through a minor boundary modification request, if its location and state of conservation can be accurately determined,

j) Undertaking research on the interrelations between the different groups (Jewish people, local African descendants) that were living together in Jodensavanne in order to further the understanding of the property,

k) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session;
Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated component parts (February 2023)
IV Mixed properties

A Asia – Pacific
New nomination

B Europe – North America
New nomination
Highlands of the Mongolian Altai (Mongolia)  
No 1672

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Highlands of the Mongolian Altai

Location
Ulaankhussoum, Tsengelsoum and Sagsaisoum
Bayan-Ulgii aimag (province)
Mongolia

Brief description
Highlands of the Mongolian Altai is a mountainous, steppe-like landscape located in the Altai Range, at the northwestern edge of Mongolia, at the border with China and the Russian Federation. The nominated property is a series of two component parts – the Altai Tavan Bogd National Park and one section of the Siilkhem Mountain National Park. The nominated series exhibits different habitats and preserves a rich stratification of archaeological remains dating back to the Palaeolithic, through the Eneolithic, Bronze and Iron ages, to the Turkic, Uygur and Mongolian periods. The landscape is still used by semi-nomadic herder communities.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of two sites.
In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021), paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

[Note: the property is nominated as a mixed cultural and natural property. IUCN will assess the natural values, while ICOMOS assesses the cultural values.]

Included in the Tentative List
19 December 2014

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

A joint ICOMOS-IUCN technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 14 to 22 August 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A joint ICOMOS-IUCN letter was sent to the State Party on 10 October 2022 requesting further information about the comparative analysis, involvement of local communities, development plans and projects, management, documentation and protection.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 14 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: clarifications about the changes to the proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, documentation and cartography, integrity, and involvement of local communities.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report only briefly summarises the most relevant aspects.

Description and history
Highlands of the Mongolian Altai is a serial site comprising two component parts: the Altai Tavan Bogd National Park (ATBNP) and the Section A of the Siilkhem Mountain National Park (SMNP). The nominated serial property is located at the borders between Mongolia, Russian Federation and China, and borders several protected areas in these countries: the Kanas Natural Reserve in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (China), the Ukok Quiet Zone, which is part of the “Golden Mountains of Altai” World Heritage Property (Russian Federation) and the Sailugem Range National Park in the Altai Republic of Russia (Russian Federation). The Mongolian Altai ranges resulted from subsequent orogenic upthrusts, the latest of which occurred in the Quaternary Period. Glaciations have carved the mountains into rugged shapes, modelled the valleys and scoured the rock surfaces. This complex geological history is revealed by the difference in altitude and orography that combine rugged, steep peaks with softer and lower mountain ridges. In between the ridges, recent and unconsolidated deposits form a steppe landscape. Hydrology is complex, with several rivers crisscrossing and framing the mountain ranges. The climate is severely continental with short summers, and the precipitation rate...
is low due to the orography, which blocks northern and western moisture-laden air.
The landscape has witnessed human occupation since the Palaeolithic era. Today, it is still used by nomadic herding communities.

The complex human history of the Altai region is attested to by a wealth of archaeological sites, which still await documentation and study to yield crucial information necessary for a better understanding of patterns of human occupation and movement in the Altai and neighbouring regions.

Below a broad periodisation of the region is presented, to facilitate understanding of the description of the archaeological sites.

In the Mongolian Altai, the earliest human traces found date back to the Late Palaeolithic (14000–10000 BP): these peoples were hunters, fishers, and gatherers. With the retreat of glaciers, early foragers moved into the river valleys establishing temporary settlements and leaving rock art sites and pecked imagery at Aral Tolgoi, to the west of Khoton Nuur and Baga Oigor.

The Early and Middle Holocene periods (10000–5000 BP) brought climatic changes in the region, with significant modifications to the environment, due to glacier melting. No human remains have been found from this period; hence it is thought the region was relatively inaccessible.

During the Late Holocene and Early Bronze Age (4500–3500 BP), the climate and the environment changed further, resulting in the dry landscape of today. The region experienced major demographic shifts, possibly in response to climate change, with migrations from the west of the Afanasievo, an Eneolithic culture. In the Early Bronze Age, the region witnessed the emergence and succession of different cultures.

The Late Bronze Age (3400–2700 BP) witnessed the spreading of mobile equestrian pastoralism in the region and greater social interaction and growing societal complexity and long-distance networks. Horses also began to play a central role in changed rituals and belief systems, as attested to by findings at several sites.

It is during the Bronze Age that monumental construction developed in Mongolia and major archaeological sites have been found both in the Russian and the Mongolian Altai. These include mounds, standing stones, high terraces, khirigsuur and deer-stone monuments, and rock-art, such as that preserved in the World Heritage property Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai.

During the Iron Age (2500–2200 BP) a specific Scythian-type culture, the Pazyryk culture, flourished in the region. This was a nomadic or semi-nomadic culture whose subsistence system was based on animal husbandry and hunting. The rich funerary goods, extraordinarily preserved thanks to the permafrost, have shed light on the cultural traditions and skills possessed by the Pazyryk.

The Late Iron Age (2200–1500 BP) and later periods (1500–1200 BP) witnessed the spread of Turkic and Uyghur nomadic populations, horsemen and ironsmiths, who left ritual altars and standing image stones (or manstones) in the area.

According to the nomination dossier, the Turks’ and Uyghurs’ nomadic traditions continued into the cultural practices of present-day Mongol and Kazakh populations.

Some of the sites contained within the boundaries of the nominated serial property, namely in the ATBNP component part, form the serial World Heritage property Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2011 under criterion (iii). They are:

- the Petroglyph Complexes of Tsagaan Salaa – Baga Oigor;
- the Petroglyph Complexes of Upper Tsagaan Gol (Shiveet Khaikhân); and
- the Petroglyph Complexes of Aral Tolgoi.

Tsagaan Salaa – Baga Oigor and Aral Tolgoi preserve a large concentration of carved imagery dating back to the Late Pleistocene and Middle Holocene (9000–4000 BCE) which includes ancient mammals, such as mammoths, aurochs, horses, rhinoceros, ostriches, as well as later rock art. At Upper Tsagaan Gol, petroglyphs, Pazyryk burial mounds, khirigsuur, and Turkic stone images and altars are preserved.

The nomination dossier briefly describes some further archaeological sites that the State Party considers among the most important ones. They are:

- Image stone and petroglyph complex of Khar Yamaat
- Pazyryk burial and ritual complex of Oolon-Guurin Gol
- Khrigsuur – Deer Stone complex of Tsagaan Asga
- Petroglyph complex of Dâlan Turgênni Khos Tolgoi
- Pazyryk cultural heritage complex of Syrgal-Baga Turgênni Gol
- Image stone complex of Khulbain Aral–Baga Turgênni Gol
- Image stone complex of Dayan Lake.

Upon ICOMOS’ request to expand the information on the archaeological sites mentioned in the nomination dossier, the State Party provided in February 2023 a more informative description of the sites completed by photographic documentation and summary tables indicating the periods covered by each site.

The site of Khar Yamaat contains thousands of well-preserved rock art images, dating back to the transition between the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age. The site also preserves tombs from the Eneolithic and the Early Bronze Age. At this site, a stone-man monument, related to sacrificial structures and burials of the Pazyryk and Turkic periods, is also found. The man-shaped monument is further carved with human and horse figures; the complex
also integrates earlier petroglyphs and burials, showing continuity in cultural traditions.

The site of Tsagaan Asga is located along ancient migration and transhumance routes, at the confluence of two rivers. The Khirigsuur-Deer Stone complex of Tsagaan Asga is a repository of archaeological vestiges from different occupation periods and cultures, including Bronze Age burial mounds, khirigsuur, deer stones, Pazyryk burial mounds and altars as well as Turkic altars.

Bronze Age funerary monuments provide evidence for major demographic changes in the region, possibly linked to climatic shifts and related environmental modifications, and the introduction in the Altai of animal husbandry, which became the main form of livelihood in the region.

Significant changes in the socio-economic base and lifestyle of the populations through the Middle and Late Bronze Ages are further attested at Tsagaan Asga and Khulbain Aral by traces of massive horse sacrifices.

Khirigsuur are structures including a central mound and a round or square surrounding circuit of stones, sometimes with radial subdivisions aligned with the cardinal directions. Small circular altars can be found outside the stone circuit in the cardinal directions. Mounds of unknown functions accompany many khirigsuur. Within the Altai–Sayan region, their function is uncertain – funerary, memorial or related to other ceremonies. Khirigsuur structures date to the Bronze Age; in Tsagaan Asga, seventy-five khirigsuur have been documented, whilst in the nominated property, more than 2,300 khirigsuur have been found at 297 sites in twelve soums.

Deer stones are massive human-shaped standing stones; generally associated with the khirigsuur, they are among the most prominent Late Bronze Age monuments in the Eurasian steppe, spreading to the Pontic Steppe, Crimea, northern Caucasus and the Balkans. At Tsagaan Asga they are carved with stylised stags.

Late Bronze Age Deer Stones and Khirigsuur complexes at Tsagaan Asga, Dalan Turgenii Khos and Tolgoi Rock Art site are illustrative of the development of ‘animal style’ art, the expansion of horse-mounted nomadism and signs of early state formation.

The Pazyryk burial and ritual complex of Olon-Guurin Gol preserves burials from the Early Iron Age and funerary sites from the Pazyryk period. One of these burials was excavated in 2006 and yielded abundant artefacts made out of organic material that shed light on this culture and attested to its presence also in this area. Other Pazyryk-period burials in the same valley suggest that nomadic groups frequented this area.

Dalan Turgenii Khos Tolgoi is located within ATBNP, north of Khoton Lake, on twin hills; it preserves rich petroglyph imagery of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, depicting a variety of wild and domestic animals, hunting subjects, and the daily life of herders. The site also includes a panel carved with horsemen, probably from the Turkic period.

Syrgal – Baga Turgenii Gol is located in the Syrgal plains and preserves monuments from the Pazyryk period, burial mounds and associated altars. Archaeological excavations have revealed rich grave goods that show similarities with that of the burial in Olon-Guurin Gol. Within the nominated series, more than 200 Pazyryk-type tombs have been found. Within Mongolia, 362 tombs have been documented so far.

Khulbain Aral – Baga Turgenii Gol preserves several stone images from the Uyghur and Turkic periods (500–800 CE) and includes at least one stone from the Bronze Age, which has been re-carved.

Near Dayan Lake, one carefully carved stone image from the Uyghur period is preserved.

The nomadic traditions have continued until the present day and said to be practiced in the nominated property and Mongolian Altai by several ethnic groups, including Khalkha, Uriankhai, Durvud, Kazakh and Tuvans.

Migration paths were marked by sacrificial cairns (ovoo) at noteworthy points such as passes, ridges, and summits; these stones are said to be still renewed, demonstrating a remarkable persistence of ancient cultural traditions. Rituals and beliefs of shamanistic and Lamaistic origin are still alive as well as traditional craftsmanship, food processing (airag from mares’ milk), wool processing and felt making, and ethno-medicine. Performing arts such as ritual songs, accompanied by traditional instruments, are still performed.

The Mongolian traditional art of Khöömei, the traditional music of the Morin Khuur and the traditional music of the Tsur are inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Heritage of Humanity, as well as other intangible expressions of Mongolian nomadic cultural tradition.

In 2012, the President of Mongolia decreed that the sacred Altai Tavan Bogd Mountains would be worshipped as Sacred State Mountains. In 2013 a reconsecration ceremony took place, which was repeated in 2019.

Archaeological studies began in the Mongolian Altai in the late 19th century, with the first identification and description of cultural heritage. The first studies carried out independently by Mongolian scholars started in the 1950s and continued in the 1960s with a joint Soviet–Mongol expedition.

A systematic inventory of archaeological heritage in the region was initiated in 1989-1991. This was followed by a flourishing period for Altai archaeology, with international projects implemented between 1994 and 2014. A second systematic inventory campaign was carried out in 2005-2007, and major excavations have been implemented at Pazyryk sites since 2005 by a Mongol–French joint project and by joint Mongol-Russian-German expeditions, yielding abundant finds that form a good basis for further studies.
Further research projects have been carried out since 2010 on rock art and Pazyryk funerary sites, the latter continued through a Mongol–Korean expedition in 2016–2018.

The area of the two nominated component parts totals 457,437.98 ha, with buffer zones totalling 314,330.27 ha.

**State of conservation**
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is overall good. Remoteness and absence of industrial activities have preserved this landscape. Deterioration due to human factors is largely under control; however, continued monitoring and awareness-raising are critical to ensure that human-induced degradation is stopped, and, at the same time, herders and users of the landscape can be involved in monitoring activities.

**Factors affecting the nominated property**
At the time of the inscription on the World Heritage List of the Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai, key factors affecting the petroglyphs included extreme environmental conditions and related phenomena, bird droppings (on the stelae), mining, unplanned road construction, unregulated access and possible looting, graffiti, the impact of climate change, and the fact that contrasting measures did not suffice to address the impacts of these factors.

The State Party has confirmed that no mining activities are carried out within the nominated property; extraction of tungsten from a mine 10km away from the Specially Protected Area was terminated six years ago. It was not included in the nominated serial property.

The Erdeneburen hydroelectric power plant is planned 300 km south of the proposed nominated property, at Shizhigti Gorge. It will provide energy to five western provinces and, according to the State Party, will not have any negative impact on the nominated property.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property include climate change, increased tourism, unplanned road construction and globalisation. These factors affect traditional nomadic pastoralism and associated traditions, which has become a challenging lifestyle. Research and discussion on how to sustain this way of life and its adaptation to future challenges seem necessary, also to safeguard the steppe ecosystem, which has been shaped by millennia-long animal grazing. An increase in tourism may offer some opportunities to herders’ communities, but this would require careful visitor management to avoid the possibility that non-regulated access can exacerbate negative impacting factors.

Climate change has become a significant threat to archaeological remains as permafrost has for millennia preserved underground the remains of ancient cultures, and increased temperatures are modifying the special below-ground cold microclimate, which has been instrumental for the safeguarding of archaeological remains of organic origin. Other affecting factors include vegetation growth and bird droppings; apparently, graffiti-making ceased at the beginning of the 21st century.

A number of the above-mentioned factors demand further research to establish appropriate responses.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation, overall, is good and that factors affecting the nominated property are climate change, increased tourism, unplanned road construction and globalisation.

### 3 Proposed justification for inscription

**Proposed justification**
The nominated serial property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The nominated serial property testifies, through the wide, rich and varied arrays of archaeological and cultural sites, of the ancient human occupation of the region from the Palaeolithic through to the Turkic and Mongolian periods. Rock art sites attest to Palaeolithic hunters, fishers and gatherers; burial mounds, standing stones, khirigsuur and altars bear witness to the presence of nomadic pastoralists in the Bronze Age. Kurgans and ritual complexes attest to the Iron Age Pazyryk culture of mounted nomads; these sites are further complemented by human-shaped standing stones produced by the Turkic and Uyghur peoples.
- These archaeological and cultural sites are embedded in a largely intact steppe landscape dotted with ritual stones and other tangible traces of the continuing tradition of nomadic pastoralism; natural features are endowed with intangible meanings and sacredness related to worshipping practices of natural features and beliefs.
- The landscape of the nominated serial property illustrates strikingly the integration of natural and cultural attributes that results from a millennia-long interaction of successive cultures that have maintained a nomadic herding- and hunting-based way of life.

ICOMOS notes that during the evaluation period, the State Party changed the proposed justification for inscription included in the nomination dossier and the proposed criteria from (ii), (iii), (iv), (v) and (x) to (iii), (v), (vi) and (x). The above synthesis considers the content of both proposed justifications.

**Comparative analysis**
The comparative analysis has been developed in the nomination dossier separately for the natural and cultural criteria. The nomination dossier has considered the following parameters: long-lasting cultural tradition based...
on nomadism, attested to by several archaeological sites and monuments dating to as early as the Bronze Age up to the Turkic and Uyghur and Mongol Empires; and the continuity of the nomadic herding tradition, which has shaped the steppe-mountain landscape. The comparison has examined World Heritage properties within Mongolia and at the global level, but it has not considered properties on the Tentative Lists of States Parties from the same geo-cultural region, nor has it considered the possible cultural attributes of World Heritage properties from the region that have been inscribed for their natural values.

In October 2022, ICOMOS and IUCN requested an expansion of the comparative analysis. The State Party provided a concise but robust comparison with sites from the same geo-cultural region, some of which are in the tentative lists of neighbouring States’ Parties. It highlights the differences between the values and attributes of the nominated serial property and these sites: the type of cultures that occupied the area, as reflected by the archaeological sites, the time-depth of the human presence and cultural development in the nominated property, the intactness of the landscape, and the archaeological vestiges.

The additional information provided by the State Party in November 2022, and the outcome of the comparison, suggests that the nominated serial property may have the potential to justify consideration for the World Heritage List but only in relation to the archaeological landscape and to how ancient cultures have shaped this area. However, further documentation of the archaeological sites and the overall archaeological landscape of the serial nomination would be needed to confirm the potential. At this stage, information and documentation are presented only for ten archaeological sites within an expansive landscape.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis has the potential to justify consideration of this property for the World Heritage List, with a focus on the archaeological landscape, rather than on the living herding traditions. However, further documentation of the archaeological sites and landscape would be needed to confirm the potential.

**Criteria under which inscription is proposed**

The property was originally nominated on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii), (iv), and (v) for its cultural values and criterion (x) for its natural values. The comments below relate to the justification of the cultural criteria.

A revised justification for inscription was shared by the State Party on 10 September 2022 through the mission expert and officially confirmed in February 2023. This revised justification proposes different criteria, namely the removal of criterion (ii) and (iv) and the inclusion of criterion (vi).

ICOMOS will be discussing all proposed criteria.

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated serial property offers a unique example of the interchange of different traditions over a millennia-long period. Massive standing stones, burial mounds, khirigsuur and deer stones from the Bronze Age particularly well illustrate this interchange, as they relate to different cultural groups that came to this region from different directions, nurturing the blending of traditions. Scythian and Turk burial mounds, altars, and image stones reflect the traditions of these peoples who extended their control over long-distant lands, thus activating long-lasting cultural exchanges.

ICOMOS considers that, whilst this landscape has been indeed the theatre of important cultural exchanges, these cannot be said to be evident in the shaping of the landscape. The information and the level of detail provided by the nomination dossier on the archaeological monuments, particularly those dating back to the Bronze Age, do not suffice to prove this claim. An explanation would be needed of how these monuments are the outcome of cultural interchange. The relict and organically-evolved landscape cannot be seen as the tangible representation of cultural interchange. ICOMOS further observes that Bronze and Iron Age monuments can be found also in other areas of Mongolia, Southern Siberia and Central Asia. However, the nomination dossier and the additional information have not clarified how the monuments in the nominated property compare to those located in other areas in terms of illustrating value interchange. Hence, ICOMOS does not consider that the nominated property makes a compelling case for criterion (ii).

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated serial property represents an exceptional witness to nomadic cultural traditions that emerged millennia ago and continue to be practiced by ethnic groups indigenous to the Altai region. Rock art complexes, burial mounds, ritual altars, and standing stones in the landscape all testify to subsequent cultural traditions that preserved remarkable continuity in practicing herding nomadism and that have either continued or revived ancient beliefs and other intangible cultural expressions.

ICOMOS considers that, altogether, the two component parts forming the nominated cultural landscape, which includes within its boundary the serial World Heritage property of the Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai (2011, Mongolia, (iii)), may have the potential to justify this criterion. ICOMOS, however, considers that further systematic work on the documentation of the archaeological remains spread over the nominated areas...
would be needed to demonstrate this criterion. At this stage, only ten sites have been presented by the State Party to support this criterion and they, although important, present a rather limited assemblage compared to the size of the overall nominated property. ICOMOS considers that there is potential for this criterion to be justified for the civilisations that have disappeared, rather than for the living cultural traditions, which are important for management purposes. ICOMOS would need to receive more information on the inventories, research and documentation already carried out in the area for a better understanding of the overall archaeological landscape.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated cultural landscape with the heritage sites preserved within it outstandingly illustrates the human presence and development of cultures from ancient times until the present. According to the nomination dossier, several archaeological and cultural sites attest to different stages in human history and subsequent cultures, from the Palaeolithic, through the Bronze and Iron Ages with the Scythian and the Pazyryk, the Hunnu, the Turkic and Uyghur peoples, and the Mongols. The combination of archaeological and cultural heritage with intangible cultural expressions, a web of sacred meanings and beliefs which connect the nomadic indigenous communities with their landscape, reflects the complete integration of humans with their environment over millennia.

ICOMOS considers that the first part of the justification for this criterion could be better reflected in the justification for criterion (iii) and limited to the earliest periods of human presence in the nominated property. The comparative analysis has demonstrated that the nominated property has the potential to be considered outstanding as an extensive archaeological landscape under this criterion. However, ICOMOS observes that further information is necessary to understand what has survived in the landscape beyond the ten identified sites and to clarify what could be the significant and defined stage(s) in human history. In this regard, ICOMOS does not consider that the nominated property can be seen as an outstanding example of a landscape shaped by the most recent stages of history.

ICOMOS does not consider that a strong case has been presented to justify criterion (iv).

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

In the justification of this criterion, the State Party considers that the nominated serial property is an outstanding example of nomadic pastoral use and natural resource management of the landscape. The millennia-long animal husbandry traditions, the traditional knowledge, the traces of seasonal movements and the socio-economic patterns that have emerged from this remarkably continuous way of life are all tangibly reflected in the landscape and the intangible manifestations of the nomadic people that inhabit and use the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the justification for this criterion is very general and some of the proposed arguments can be better reflected by criterion (iii). From a cultural perspective, the nomination dossier has focused primarily on the testimonial value of the nominated property as conveyed by the archaeological remains from different periods. In ICOMOS’ view, the combination of values and attributes of the nominated property as presented in the nomination dossier and in the additional information points towards the potential justification of criterion (iii) rather than of criterion (v).

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;

This criterion is justified by the State Party in conjunction with criterion (v), as the nominated serial property is directly associated with the living tradition and beliefs of worshipping sacred natural sites, which are seen as having outstanding universal significance.

ICOMOS observes that this criterion was only mentioned in the additional information provided by the State Party on 10 September 2022 and repeated in the State Party’s response to ICOMOS Interim Report in February 2023, but not in the initial nomination dossier. The justification does not elaborate sufficiently to provide a robust case as to whether the living traditions and beliefs bear outstanding universal significance, whether the whole nominated property is directly and tangibly associated with these traditions and beliefs, and through which attributes. In addition to the weaknesses of the proposed justification, in ICOMOS’ view, criterion (vi) does not appear to have the potential to be demonstrated because other already-inscribed properties better reflect nature worship.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has the potential to justify criteria (iii) and (iv) as an archaeological landscape rather than as a living landscape. However, for these criteria to be demonstrated, further information on survey work already carried out in the landscape and on the existing accumulated knowledge of the archaeological remains and of the wider landscape are indispensable. At this stage, only ten sites appear to be mapped and documented within a very large area and not enough is explained about the whole landscape and its archaeological vestiges beyond these sites. Criteria (ii), (v) and (vi) are not demonstrated at this stage and do not present significant potential to be justified in the future.
Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The State Party justifies the conditions of integrity by explaining that the nominated serial property exhibits high geographical and ecological integrity and a long tradition of protecting sacred mountains. Both component parts include a wealth of cultural sites attesting to the long history of human occupation and use by several human groups and cultures throughout millennia. The nominated property also includes pasturelands and elements important to the continuity of the nomadic herding traditions.

The landscape is overall intact due to its remoteness; however, climate change threatens the sustenance of nomadic life. Rock art has suffered from the weathering phenomena of this harsh climate but has nevertheless survived until the present day. Graffiti, on the contrary, has continued to be studied and have provided an understanding of the place's original setting, form, design, material, and spirit. Archaeological sites have been largely archaeologically excavated and have yielded important information that sheds light on the cultural values of the nominated property.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested clarification about whether the entirety of the three component parts of the World Heritage property Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai are included within the boundaries of the nominated serial property or not. The State Party replied in February 2023 by providing adjusted boundaries for the nominated property and of the buffer zone so as to ensure that the above-mentioned serial property is fully included therein.

The additional information provided in response to the Interim Report has been very useful for the assessment of this nomination. However, it is evident that, at this stage, the documentation covers only some archaeological sites where a concentration of archaeological vestiges from different periods have been found, and it is unclear what is their extent and density throughout the two nominated component parts. Therefore, ICOMOS observes that, at this stage, it is not clear whether sufficient attributes survive, and if so, where they are located, to support that the whole serial nominated property demonstrates Outstanding Universal Value from a cultural perspective as an archaeological landscape. ICOMOS considers that further documentation of the archaeological vestiges in the nominated landscape is necessary to justify criteria (iii) and (iv).

Measures to counteract degradation and its underlying causes only appear to be sometimes in place but need to be more adequate to the scale of the challenge. Visual negative impacts of recent developments are rare but not always well managed; this is the case, for instance, of the Border Security camp, which, in ICOMOS’ view, needs to be mitigated and should not set a precedent for further such developments.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated at this stage, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be confirmed, and integrity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated at this stage.

Authenticity

According to the nomination dossier, the nominated property exhibits a high degree of authenticity in terms of the place’s original setting, form, design, material, and spirit. Archaeological sites have been largely archaeologically excavated and have yielded important information that sheds light on the cultural values of the nominated property.

ICOMOS observes that, although archaeological sites continue to be studied and have provided an understanding of the chronology of human occupation from the Late Pleistocene through to the Uyghur period (6th to mid-9th century CE), the archaeological sites so far documented are limited in number and extent to support credibly the proposed justification for inscription under any of the proposed criteria. For criteria (iii) and (iv) to be demonstrated by the nominated property as an archaeological landscape, more documented evidence of the spread of archaeological remains and sites in the nominated serial property is needed.

Since the criteria for justifying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value have not been demonstrated at this stage, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value cannot be confirmed and authenticity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, is not demonstrated at this stage.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole nominated series and individual component parts have not been met at this stage. Not enough information on the archaeological landscape and potential archaeological sites and remains beyond the ten described sites has been presented to support the justification of the criteria, as the justification would need to revolve around the archaeological dimension of the serial landscape. At this stage, only ten sites are clearly described and mapped in the additional information provided by the State Party in February 2023. Furthermore, the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the archaeological sites are vulnerable to climate change, environmental pressures, unregulated access, and potential development.

Boundaries

The boundaries of the nominated serial property are contained within the perimeter of the Altai Tavan Bogd National Park (ATBNP) and of Section A of the Siiikhem Mountain National Park (SMNP). The buffer zones are also included within the boundaries of ATBNP and SMNP or coincident with them.
In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party explains that the area between sections A and B of the SMNP, not included in the nominated property, is planned to be developed as a free economic zone and that a silver deposit—Asgat Silver Deposit—is expected to be exploited in the future; hence section B of the SMNP was not considered for the nomination.

ICOMOS noted that only the smallest of the component parts of the World Heritage property Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai were fully included within the nominated serial property. The Upper Tsagaan Gol component part was only partly included in the nominated property. At the same time, part of it is in the buffer zone (ATBNP), and the part along the river is outside the nominated property and the buffer zone.

ICOMOS requested clarification in this regard in its Interim Report and the State Party responded in February 2023 by expanding the nominated ATBNP component part and its buffer zone to include completely the Upper Tsagaan Gol site.

The Petroglyph Complex of Tsagaan Salaa—Baga Oigor is mostly contained within the nominated SMNP component part, whilst a small section is in its buffer zone.

ICOMOS observes that the expansion of the boundaries of the nominated ATBNP component part and its buffer zone is an important step towards ensuring the integrity of the nominated property from a cultural perspective. However, at this stage, due to limited information about the density and distribution of archaeological sites within the nominated component parts outside the ten documented sites discussed in the nomination dossier and in the very informative additional information, it is difficult to understand whether the boundaries would be adequate from a cultural perspective.

ICOMOS further observes that no buffer zone exists along the international borders; therefore, international cooperation mechanisms seem to be essential.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

The nominated serial property has been presented as a combination of archaeological landscape with persistent living pastoral traditions. On the basis of the nomination dossier, the expanded comparative analysis and the additional information, ICOMOS does not support the proposed dual approach but considers that the archaeological landscape has the potential to demonstrate that it is an outstanding example of an archaeological landscape that has the potential to demonstrate that it is an outstanding example of an archaeological landscape bearing exceptional witness to civilisations that have disappeared and illustrating defined past significant stages in human history. Therefore, out of the five criteria presented, ICOMOS considers that the nominated series has the potential to demonstrate criteria (iii) and (iv). The cultural interchanges that occurred in this area throughout the millennia are not evident in how the landscape has been shaped; and the arguments presented to support criterion (v) for the archaeological landscape seem to better support criterion (iii). Finally, the associative values related to nature worship are better reflected by other properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List, including in Mongolia. At this stage, insufficient information about the overall archaeological landscape and its archaeological remains has been presented. Only ten sites have been described and more information and documentation would be needed beyond these ten archaeological sites to confirm the potential that emerges from the comparative analysis and the additional information.

### 4 Conservation measures and monitoring

**Documentation**

Documentation of the historical, cultural, and archaeological heritage in the area began in 1957; in 1994 a joint US-Russia-Mongolia research project conducted a large-scale survey of the rock art in the Mongolian Altai. Other inventory and research campaigns have been carried out over the years.

However, despite the work already carried out, the level of inventorying and documentation of the archaeological sites within the nominated serial property remains insufficient at this stage.

Gathering all the outcomes of research carried out by Mongolian and international teams would be a good basis to firstly carry out a rapid survey of the region, mapping and inventorying archaeological sites within the nominated property to populate the cartography of the nominated areas with archaeological resources. This will make it possible to identify further zones with a higher density of cultural sites and start mapping their distribution. In this way, a clearer idea of the quantity and location of archaeological vestiges within the nominated area can be formed. Documentation of the identified sites will then follow, based on research-based prioritization.

The centralisation of the archives of existing and future documentation is to be established according to international archival standards.

Mapping and documentation of archaeological sites are essential, particularly for those more vulnerable in terms of the impacts of climate change, namely the Bronze and Iron Age tombs, which preserve a wealth of artefacts produced with materials of organic origin.

Systematic mapping of frozen tombs and research addressing conservation issues of these sites in the face of climate change is extremely urgent. An international programme with the participation of several academic institutions and UNESCO began in 2005, and more than 8,000 burials were identified. With the establishment of a World Heritage Administration Office for the Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai, the compilation of existing information has begun to be implemented but further work is needed.
Herding communities may also be of help in the inventorying of the archaeological sites within the nominated property.

**Conservation measures**

Archaeological sites and their artefacts have been preserved for centuries and millennia by the remoteness of the area and the limited accessibility to humans. However, climate change and increased tourism demand a more proactive approach to new conservation issues.

Research on conservation options for the burial chambers affected by permafrost melting has become urgent; meanwhile, careful monitoring of the situation should continue. Solutions to address this problem will have to be weighed through a rigorous assessment with the involvement of high-level expertise and possibly international research centres. The international research project that began in 2005 with the mapping of several tombs should continue.

ICOMOS considers that monitoring the state of conservation of the tombs and their inventorying and documentation are the most urgent preliminary measures to prepare for future conservation based on a clear plan and agreed priorities.

**Monitoring**

The monitoring is planned to be carried out by different institutions under the coordination and supervision of three Ministries. The nomination dossier provides a table of proposed indicators concerning natural and cultural aspects of the nominated property.

ICOMOS notes that some of these indicators seem relevant for monitoring the conditions and trends of the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, whilst for others, e.g., those related to development, their objective needs to be clarified. Furthermore, the periodicity of the monitoring and the institutions responsible for each monitoring sphere need to be provided. ICOMOS observes that the Administration Office has engaged with local communities and hired ‘local protectors’ who know what goes on in their areas. A monitoring exercise for the petroglyphs is carried out by an expert team under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture every three years.

ICOMOS considers that it is essential to gather, compile and appraise all existing information and knowledge about the archaeological landscape and detected archaeological remains beyond the ten documented sites within the nominated serial property, as a basis to confirm the potential of the nominated property to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS also considers it necessary to continue with the systematic mapping and inventorying of archaeological sites to better understand the quantity, density, distribution, and characteristics of the archaeological resources in order to improve the understanding of this archaeological landscape and to serve as a basis for monitoring and conservation. In this regard, developing a programme for inventory, documentation and research of the archaeological vestiges in the landscape would greatly assist the State Party in improving the knowledge of the archaeological dimensions of this landscape and shed further light on the civilisations that inhabited this region.

**5 Protection and management**

**Legal protection**


The Altai Tavan Bogd National Park has enjoyed Special Protected Area Classification since 1996 (Parliament Resolution 43/1996), whilst the Silkhem Mountain National Park was established by Parliament Resolution 29/2000. This designation is also granted to properties listed on the World Heritage List; it entails that all levels of government are to participate in protecting the area.

Not all rock art site complexes are protected at the national level; some are only protected at the provincial level. ICOMOS observes that all archaeological sites that are attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription would need to be covered by the strongest level of protection afforded by the national legislation.

The implementation of the protection provisions is guaranteed by the State Special Protected Area Protection Administration, which is responsible for ATBNP, and by the Administration Office for the World Heritage property Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai.

The nomination dossier informs that if the nominated property is inscribed on the World Heritage List, a new management entity will be created to ensure the protection and management of the two component parts.

The nominated property enjoys some forms of traditional protection in relation to the sacredness to the people of the landscape, the petroglyphs, and certain mountains. These are complemented by Rules issued in 2004 and 2010 concerning the procedure to be followed for State Worship Ceremonies.

The nominated component parts are covered by the Bayan-Ulgii aimag’s action plan (2017–2021) and the Tsegelsoum’s and Ulaankhussoum’s development plan (2014–2024). Planning provisions include measures to address key affecting factors and challenges of the area.

**Management system**

The natural values of the ATBNP and SMNP are protected and managed by Mongol Altai Nuruu Specially
Protected Areas Administration. The newly-created World Heritage Administration Office of the Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai will be responsible also for the cultural sites within the nominated mixed property.

Elements of a management system are in place and refer to a preliminary draft for a management plan of the nominated property. The document is based on the management plans for the ATBNP and SMNP and the plans of the aimag (provinces) and soums (districts). The management plan aims to preserve the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated serial property. It sets out the main objectives and the scope of the activities and includes long-term (2021–2029) and short-term (2021-2025) measures addressing key factors and objectives for the long-term conservation of the nominated property. A 10-year conservation plan for the petroglyphs is under development which envisages the involvement of local communities in the documentation and monitoring of the cultural sites.

In the short term, the key action to be implemented is establishing the World Heritage Protection Administration Office for the nominated property, which will be responsible for management implementation, and defining roles and coordination with the existing management entities.

The implementation of the management plan will be a joint responsibility of all actors that have taken part in its development: the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism; the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Science; the Institute of Archaeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences; the Mongolian Commission for UNESCO; accredited NGOs; the Mongol Altai Nuruu Specially Protected Areas Administration; provincial and local administrators; and organisations.

The future World Heritage Administration Office will seek forms of collaborative management to improve the participation of communities and management sustainability.

Disaster risk considerations are addressed in the 2021-2025 Action Plan of the draft management plan; however, these need to be further developed to include risk management measures.

Visitor management
Tourism development and promotion plans are mentioned in the nomination dossier, but it seems that a comprehensive visitor management strategy or plan still needs to be prepared. Although the numbers of visitors are still low, there might be changes in trends. In this regard, a visitor and tourism management plan based on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value would need to be prepared. This plan would also need to address the tourism-related infrastructure.

Community involvement
Public forums with the participation of regional environmental councils, residents and herders, and government officials, according to the Law of Administrative and Territorial Units, are held twice a year. In preparation for the nomination, seven meetings were held over six years with the local communities to exchange views on the nomination. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party states that the views of the locals were incorporated into the nomination dossier and that thirteen agreement letters were signed in support of the nomination. These have been shared with ICOMOS, but their content is not accessible as they are provided in the original language, in some cases also handwritten.

Herders and residents are granted the right to collect hay or grass from their land to last over the winter season. The soum’s Governor accords grazing rights to the herders, who can also obtain a certificate of ownership for the land around their winter settlements.

Collective agreements are signed by the governors of soums and local herders according to the Constitution of Mongolia and the law mentioned above to collaborate in ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of natural and cultural heritage. A collaborative study on maintaining ecological balance involving also local herders is ongoing. Members of the local communities are involved also as local inspectors to protect the ecology, forests, and wildlife of the Altai highlands.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
The protection designations seem clearer for natural values; however, the situation for the archaeological sites and the landscape is less clear. ICOMOS underlines the importance of ensuring an overall layer of protection of the landscape for its archaeological values and potential, with protective measures that ensure the preservation of all archaeological remains within the boundaries of the nominated property and in the buffer zone, in particular in relation to planning provisions for infrastructure and new developments.

The management system is basic but seems overall suited to the local conditions. Providing the new or expanded Administration Office with human, financial and instrumental resources is crucial for its effectiveness. However, some further clarifications with regard to the governance system and decision-making would be needed in order to have a better understanding of how different branches of the national, provincial and local administrations communicate, coordinate and collaborate with each other in management implementation and in ensuring that development proposals do not impinge on attributes supporting cultural values and the potential Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS observes that the actual World Heritage Administration Office of the Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai will have to implement the protection, conservation, management and monitoring of the entire archaeological landscape and not only of the ten sites presented so far in the nomination dossier.
The current management plan (2021–2025) includes general objectives and actions, with a specific focus on the living cultural landscape, but would benefit from being further developed to become a more operational tool. A management plan for the petroglyphs is being developed, according to the additional information provided in November 2022. However, ICOMOS underlines that such a plan should extend to all archaeological remains and not only the petroglyphs; management mechanisms and measures would also be needed for the archaeological landscape as a whole. The involvement of the communities using and inhabiting the nominated property will be crucial for effective protection and management and steps undertaken in that direction need to be supported and further developed. Finally, the links and hierarchy between the management plans and other plans applying to the nominated series and their buffer zone will need to be set out.

6 Conclusion

The mixed property of Highlands of the Mongolian Altai has been nominated from a cultural perspective, as a combination of an archaeological landscape with persistent living pastoral traditions.

The information provided in the nomination dossier needed further development and expansion to allow ICOMOS to make a proper assessment of the potential of the property to justify consideration for the World Heritage List for cultural values. The State Party has harnessed the dialogue with ICOMOS throughout the evaluation process and this has allowed ICOMOS to clarify under what theme the nominated landscape can have the potential to be considered outstanding.

On the basis of the nomination dossier, the expanded comparative analysis and the additional information, ICOMOS considers that this landscape has the potential to demonstrate being an outstanding example of an archaeological landscape bearing exceptional witness to civilisations that have disappeared and illustrating defined past significant stages in human history. However, ICOMOS does not see the potential of the living traditions to fulfil any of the World Heritage criteria, although herder communities play a key role in the preservation of this landscape. More specifically, out of the five criteria put forward by the State Party – (ii), (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi) – ICOMOS considers that the nominated series has the potential to demonstrate criteria (iii) and (iv). However, at this stage, insufficient information has been presented about the overall archaeological landscape and the archaeological remains in it. Only ten sites have been described and more information and documentation would be needed beyond these ten archaeological sites to confirm the potential that emerges from the comparative analysis and the additional information.

To this purpose, ICOMOS considers it essential to gather, compile and appraise all existing information and knowledge about the archaeological landscape and detected archaeological remains beyond the ten documented sites within the nominated area in order to understand better the quantity, density, distribution, and characteristics of the archaeological resources. ICOMOS further considers it necessary to continue with the systematic mapping and inventorying of archaeological sites to improve the understanding of this archaeological landscape and to serve as a basis for monitoring and conservation. In this regard, developing a programme for inventory, documentation and research of the archaeological vestiges in the landscape would greatly assist the State Party in improving the knowledge of the archaeological dimensions of this landscape and shed further light on the civilisations that inhabited this region.

Given the lack of sufficient information on the density and distribution of archaeological sites and remains beyond the ten documented sites presented in the nomination dossier and in the additional information, it is difficult for ICOMOS to ascertain whether the delineation of the boundaries of the nominated component parts is adequate from a cultural perspective.

ICOMOS observes that the protection should be extended beyond the ten documented sites to cover the entire archaeological landscape. Protection designation should be equipped with measures that ensure the protection of all archaeological remains and of the archaeological potential of the landscape, to guarantee that this crucial repository of information on the human history of this region is preserved for future research.

The management system would benefit from clarification concerning governance and decision-making. In particular, clarifying the role of each administration at the central, provincial or local level in the management of the nominated property and how they communicate, coordinate their decisions and collaborate to ensure that attributes of the potential Outstanding Universal Value are not threatened, would be important.

The current World Heritage Administration Office of the Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai will need to be strengthened in terms of human, financial and equipment resources, to be able to implement effective protection, monitoring and management over a much larger area than the one inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2011.

The management plan being developed for the petroglyphs will have to be expanded to include objectives, provisions and actions for the management plan for the archaeological landscape and will have to include measures for the management of the archaeological landscape. Provisions of the management plan will have to be integrated into other relevant spatial or development plans applying to the nominated property to ensure that no activity may impact negatively on the attributes of the potential Outstanding Universal Value.
7 Recommendations

ICOMOS recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopts the following draft recommendations, noting that this will be harmonised as appropriate with the draft recommendations of IUCN regarding their evaluation of this mixed site nomination under the natural criteria and included in the working document WHC/23/45.COM/8B.

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of Highlands of the Mongolian Altai, Mongolia, to the World Heritage List be deferred in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to:

- Gather, compile and appraise all existing information and knowledge about the archaeological landscape and detected archaeological remains beyond the ten documented sites as a basis to confirm the potential of the nominated property to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value;

- Develop a programme for systematic inventorying and documentation of archaeological remains and features of the archaeological landscape;

- Revise the nomination dossier and refocus the narrative of the nomination on the archaeological dimensions of the landscape;

- Consider whether the currently proposed boundaries for the nominated property are adequate on the basis of the above-mentioned appraisal and if needed, revise them.

Any revised nomination should be visited by a mission to the site.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Ensuring that the entire archaeological landscape is covered by protection designations that include protection mechanisms to protect archaeological sites and remains and preserve the potential for future archaeological research;

- b) Clarifying the governance of the nominated area and the role of all relevant administrations to ensure that decision-making about activities within the nominated property, its buffer zones and wider setting takes into account the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property;

- c) Reinforcing the World Heritage Administration Office of the Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai in terms of resources to enable it to manage effectively the whole archaeological landscape;

- d) Expanding the management plan being prepared for the petroglyphs to cover all archaeological remains and the archaeological landscape as a whole;

- e) Ensuring that spatial and development plans align with the objectives of the management plan so as to avoid possible future developments harming the attributes of the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property;

- f) Continuing the efforts undertaken to involve the communities using and inhabiting the nominated property to ensure its effective protection and management;
Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated component parts (February 2023)
IV Mixed properties

A Asia – Pacific
New nomination

B Europe – North America
New nomination
Zagori Cultural Landscape  
(Greece)  
No 1695

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party  
Zagori Cultural Landscape

Location  
Municipality of Zagori  
Regional Unit of Ioannina  
Region of Epirus  
Greece

Brief description  
Zagori Cultural Landscape is located in the mountainous Epirus region of northwestern Greece. It consists of a rural landscape where small villages known as Zagorochoria or Zagori villages extend along the western slopes of the northern part of the Pindus mountain range. In this remote area characterised by a diversity of geological formations, flora, and fauna, these traditional settlements underwent a transformation influenced by remittances sent by expatriates to fund private and public infrastructure during the 18th and 19th centuries. A network of stone-arched bridges, stone cobbled paths, and stone staircases linking the villages in the present Municipality of Zagori formed a system that served as a political and social unit connecting the communities of the Voidomatis River basin. These traditional villages, typically organised around a central square containing a plane tree and surrounded by sacred forests maintained by local communities, showcase a traditional architecture of limestone masonry and drystone cobbled pathways adapted to the mountain topography.

Category of property  
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a site.  

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2021), paragraph 47, it has also been nominated as a cultural landscape.

[Note: the property is nominated as a mixed cultural and natural property. IUCN will assess the natural values, while ICOMOS assesses the cultural values.]

Included in the Tentative List  
16 January 2014 as “Zagorochoria – North Pindos National Park”

Background  
This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission  
Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 3 to 8 October 2022. This mission was conducted jointly with IUCN.

Additional information received by ICOMOS  
A joint letter with IUCN was sent to the State Party on 14 October 2022 requesting further information about communities’ involvement, management, the UNESCO Global Geopark, boundaries, buffer zone, comparative analysis, state of conservation, factors affecting the nominated property, and maps.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 14 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report, including boundaries, documentation, conservation, and protection.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report  
10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history  
Zagori Cultural Landscape is located in the Region of Epirus in northwestern Greece. It consists of a rural landscape where traditional settlements extend along the western slopes of the northern part of the Pindus mountain range. Zagori, a name of Slavic origin meaning “the place behind the mountain”, is bordered by Mount Tymphi to the north and Mount Mitsikeli to the south, near the border between Greece and Albania. The nominated property covers a variety of geomorphological formations such as mountains, a gorge, and plains, with forest ecosystems and shrubland.

Challenging the steep slopes of this remote mountain region, small settlements known as Zagorochoria or Zagori villages formed a network that was consolidated in the 18th century. Established along the Voidomatis River basin, the villages are connected by cobbled paths, stone-arched bridges, and steep stone staircases. According to
the State Party, these very small settlements underwent an urbanisation process that was influenced by outmigration remittances and benevolence sent by the diaspora of the region to fund private and public infrastructure here during the 18th and 19th centuries. This process generated a village system that functioned as a political and social unit.

The nominated property encompasses twenty of these villages in three municipal units of the present Municipality of Zagori: Central Zagori, Tymphi, and Pápigo. In Central Zagori, the nominated property includes the traditional villages of Arísti, Áno Pedíná, Káto Pedíná, Dikorfo, Dilófo, Elafótoupolis, Eláti, Monodéndri, Vikós, and Vítsa. In Tymphi, it includes the traditional villages of Fragádes, Kapésovo, Koukoúli, Kípoi, Negádes, Skamnéli, Tsepélovo, and Vradéto. And in Pápigo, it includes the traditional villages of Pápigo and Mikró Pápigo. These traditional villages have been protected since 1979 by means of a Presidential Decree.

The traditional villages are typically organised around a central square containing a plane tree. Each showcases drystone cobbled pathways adapted to the topography, and some are still surrounded by sacred forests maintained by local communities. The central square is dedicated to community life, and functions as a centre for social gatherings and religious events. Plane trees are surrounded by lotzias, circular, square or hexagonal ledges that create a protective space and serve for sitting. In the past, these seats were reserved for respected elders. Emblematic plane trees are still standing in Koukoúli, Áno Pedíná, Monodéndri, Kapésovo, Vítsa, Vradéto, Kípoi, Dilófo, and Negádes.

The central squares also usually feature a church, a fountain or a cistern, and an amelikó built during Ottoman rule (mid-15 th to early 19 th centuries) to host visitors such as merchants and craftspeople. Those that have survived have been converted into community spaces, offices for cultural associations or hostels. Other important buildings located in the central square can include schools built in the 19 th century and operated at the expense of their benefactors, and religious buildings such as monasteries.

Steep staircases are still maintained in Vradéto, Vítsa, Kípoi, and Koukoúli. Sacred forests hold spiritual meanings but are also managed to protect the settlements from landslides, rock falls or avalanches. Traditional houses and mansions funded by remittances are built of stone, two to three storeys high and with slate roofs. Some retain ornate wooden ceiling, painted reception areas, and crafted and painted wooden room partitions that reflect the financial status of the builder.

The nominated property has an area of 41,109 ha and a buffer zone of 58,046 ha.

Mount Tymphi and the Vikós gorge were used as temporary habitations by hunters during the Upper Paleolithic. The rock shelter at Klíthi at the mouth of the Voidomatis gorges presents traces of the habitation of this area 20,000 years ago, and burial findings in the plain of Áno Pedíná and Káto Pedíná establish human activity in the Late Bronze Age (1300-1100 BCE). Slavic tribes are believed to have inhabited the area in the 6 th century CE, owing to the place names of Slavic origin.

Permanent residence of this area is recorded more concretely in the 14 th century, when the villages of Zagori are first mentioned in documents. Remnants from the Byzantine period still standing include the Monastery of Agia Paraskevi in Monodéndri and the Agios Nikolaos in Elafótoupolis, both built in the 15 th century. During Ottoman rule in the 17 th century, Zagori became the Koinon (Commons) of Zagorians, maintaining its autonomous status. The first systematic construction of churches and monasteries in the area started then, examples of which survive in Elafótoupolis, Káto Pedíná, and Vítsa.

The rural landscape was formed by using controlled fires to clear forests to gain agricultural land, and by building drystone terraces at higher altitudes to grow crops, including wheat, barley, oats, rye, and corn. Threshing floors and thatched stone huts for hay storage are visible in Kató Pedíná as a testimony to the production of cereals. Animal husbandry was undertaken in the larger area of the Pindus mountain range by nomadic Sarakatsani sheep and goat breeders who moved seasonally between mountains and plains; by Vlach (Aromanian) livestock breeders and muleteers active in the Balkan region who settled in eastern Zagori; and by local farmers who ran livestock farms and practiced agriculture in the villages. Zagorians practiced transhumance, traveling in winter to lower lands outside the region, and in summer to pastures in the highlands.

The foodstuffs produced in the region were nevertheless insufficient, and food had to be imported. As a solution for this shortfall, Zagorians practiced temporary migrations to obtain additional resources. Emigration started in the 12 th century, but is recorded mostly after the 15 th century. Male Zagorians went to Romania, the Balkan countries, Central Europe, Russia, Asia Minor, and Constantinople to work as bakers, innkeepers, merchants, painters, and healers. The women, children, and elderly remained in the Zagori villages to continue livestock and farming activities. Beneficence and the institution of fraternities and associations developed amongst the diaspora, through which remittances and funding were sent back to Zagori to help build the villages’ public infrastructure and to improve individual residences. In this context, the first large stone bridges were built in the mid-18 th century.

By the 19 th century, modernisation of the Ottoman Empire had resulted in the end of privileges for Zagori and an increase in taxes. From the end of the 19 th century onwards, especially after the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922), which isolated this region, Zagorians migrated even farther, beyond the Atlantic or to Africa. During the Second World War, destructive attacks were carried out on some of the traditional villages of Zagori, razing many of them almost to the ground. With the consolidation of nation states in
the 20th century, temporary migrations and the institutions of beneficence and remittances gradually faded and the population of Zagori declined, as did its farming and livestock-raising activities. Vikos-Aoos National Park was established around the Vikos gorge in 1973. Arable lands were categorised as forests and part of nature reserves because of increasing reforestation due to the general abandonment of agropastoral practices. In 2005, the North Pindus National Park was established in its current outline, connecting Vikos-Aoos and Pindus National Parks. At present, the protected area and traditional villages have become tourist attractions, and Zagorians are increasingly occupied with providing services to visitors.

State of conservation
The state of conservation of the nominated property varies. Conservation measures have not been applied comprehensively, since different elements are under different ownership. ICOMOS considers that most of the selected twenty traditional villages are in a very good or good state of conservation. However, ICOMOS notes that the village of Skamnéli was burned down during the Balkan Wars and subsequently rebuilt. Based on this assessment, ICOMOS considers that Skamnéli should be included in the buffer zone rather than the nominated property.

Additional information on the state of conservation of the traditional villages that have been proposed as attributes was requested by ICOMOS in October 2022, including maps, plans, and photographs that could clarify how these villages have changed over time. In November 2022 the State Party provided architectural plans and photographs that illustrate changes at the larger landscape level, where reforestation around the villages is evident.

In its interim report, ICOMOS requested further documentation on the structure and historical development of the villages during the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as documentation on the architectural typologies of the traditional buildings. In the additional information submitted in February 2023, the State Party provided brief sheets on each of the twenty villages proposed in the nominated property. ICOMOS noted that Skamnéli, Fragádes and Eláti have been totally or partially destroyed and reconstructed. In the case of Fragádes, the historical urban grid has been maintained, but in the case of Eláti, neither the historical urban grid nor the traditional houses typology are evident. Based on this information, ICOMOS considers that Eláti should also be included in the buffer zone.

Depopulation of the area during the second half of the 20th century resulted in the abandonment of several traditional agricultural activities, causing deterioration of the drystone agricultural heritage and changes in construction materials. Meadows and farms surrounding the traditional villages, including former farming terraces on slopes, are being overtaken by forests. Several conservation initiatives focused on rural heritage have been implemented at the local, national, and European levels. Nevertheless, according to the State Party, the rural heritage needs protection and conservation.

The state of conservation of ecclesiastical monuments varies. Some religious buildings such as churches in Káto Pedíná and Tsepelóvo were affected by an earthquake in 2016. Restoration works and rescue interventions have been carried out for several of these religious monuments. Conservation interventions have also been undertaken for the mansions and stone bridges, though details on the dates of these interventions have not been provided by the State Party. In February 2023, the State Party provided architectural plans and photographs of fifteen houses located in six of the traditional villages of the nominated property, detailing their period of construction and interventions.

ICOMOS notes that even though some traditional houses and mansions have been maintained, systematic information about the traditional architecture in the villages needs to be assembled in order to establish a baseline for the conservation of the nominated property.

Factors affecting the nominated property
Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that, overall, the state of conservation of the nominated property is fair.

Regarding socio-cultural factors, the abandonment of traditional practices as a consequence of demographic changes is having an impact on the landscape, leading to reforestation. A general lack of youth involvement compounds the issue, as traditional knowledge and intangible cultural heritage practices are becoming increasingly vulnerable with the depopulation of the area. The lack of materials for the maintenance of traditional architecture is also concerning, since quarrying in the National Park, where the nominated property is located, is not permitted, and the availability of authentic traditional materials and relevant skills is decreasing.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested further information regarding the strategy of the State Party to address the long-term continuance of traditional practices in order to ensure the sustainability of the traditional architecture and of the nominated property as a whole. ICOMOS also requested information about how many houses are permanently inhabited in each of the traditional villages, how many are vacant or abandoned, and how the State Party intends to address depopulation in the villages as regards preservation of the houses.
In its response in February 2023, the State Party indicated that the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports and the local authorities envisage the establishment of a local school of stone carving in one of the villages of Zagori. Furthermore, the State Party asserted that the materials needed to maintain the traditional architecture of Zagori are available in neighbouring areas. In addition, the State Party informed that the inhabitants of Zagori who migrated to bigger cities have not abandoned their houses, using them instead as holiday houses.

ICOMOS considers that it is of utmost importance to create a sustainability strategy for traditional masonry, and to address as well the impermanent occupation of the traditional houses of the nominated property in order to maintain the traditional villages over the long term.

Tourism has become the most important economic activity in the nominated property. At the village level, hydro and telephone lines and poles, informational and directional signage, and advertising boards affect their traditional character. Waste management is also an issue on the traditional villages and the natural environment, nominated property.

Tourism has become the most important economic activity in the nominated property. At the village level, hydro and telephone lines and poles, informational and directional signage, and advertising boards affect their traditional character. Waste management is also an issue of concern. Increased tourism is having a negative impact on the traditional villages and the natural environment, especially in high seasons and in certain parts of the nominated property.

Natural reforestation in the mountains and in proximity to the villages increases their exposure to fire and wildfires. In the context of increasing temperatures and drought in summer caused by climate change, wildfires may have serious impacts on the landscape, the rural heritage, and the traditional villages. Furthermore, climate change is causing unpredictable and heavy rainfall that is leading to flooding, which may have negative impacts on the stone bridges that span the rivers.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is fair, and that the factors affecting the nominated property are socio-cultural and environmental, particularly depopulation, tourist pressures, natural reforestation, and climate change.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Zagori Cultural Landscape is of extreme importance for the region as a testimony to the temporary migratory travels and related beneficence traditions that had an impact on an agricultural landscape by enriching it with urban infrastructure and aesthetics evident in the traditional villages’ stone bridges, cobbled paths, mansions, schools, religious monuments, and public squares.
- The exceptional architectural tradition of Zagori includes private residences as well as public buildings and infrastructure such as schools, religious monuments, impressive stone bridges, and a network of cobbled paths and stone staircases.
- The cultural landscape encompasses a wide range of intangible cultural heritage and associations related to an agropastoral way of life, including transhumance, the art of drystone construction, and the upkeep of sacred forests. Ethnobotanical knowledge, hagiography, and fresco painting are some of the sciences and arts that developed in this area.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information, the key attributes of the nominated property are the traditional villages, their layouts, and their traditional limestone architecture, the traditional houses and mansions, the cobbled paths, the public infrastructure built between the 18th and 19th centuries such as schools as well as the religious monuments, and the connections between the traditional villages, namely the stone staircases and the stone bridges. Important attributes also include the rural drystone structures, the rural landscape setting, as well as the geological formations and topography of the nominated property and views to and from its wider setting. Key intangible attributes include traditional drystone building and stone masonry skills and techniques. Other intangible attributes include farming and livestock breeding, transhumance practices, traditional knowledge, sacred forest management, ethnobotanical knowledge and related plant cultivation, and the relationship of the communities with their natural environment.

ICOMOS does not consider that the nominated property falls under the category of cultural landscapes (see “Criteria under which inscription is proposed” below). ICOMOS therefore considers that the name of the nominated property should be changed to reflect better the cultural values of the property: “Zagorochoria, the traditional villages of Zagori”.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed with a thematic approach based on protected areas and cultural landscapes, and a geo-cultural region focused on Europe, particularly southeastern Europe. It has examined properties in southeastern Europe inscribed on the World Heritage List or inserted in Tentative Lists, properties in Italy inscribed on the World Heritage List, and other properties in Europe inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Clear parameters for the comparative analysis have not been set out, the parameters being implicit rather than explicit. The main parameters appear to be uniqueness and elegance of the building complexes and infrastructure; the art of drystone construction; transhumant livestock breeding; sacred forests; natural beauty; geological value; and importance of the area for the preservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage. These parameters are not applied systematically to the compared properties.

The State Party focuses on comparisons with properties inscribed under natural criteria, and with cultural
ICOMOS observes that the comparative analysis has not focused on what specifically makes the nominated property and its proposed Outstanding Universal Value stand out when compared to the inscribed properties.

ICOMOS considers that the focus of the comparison could have been expanded to a global level, given that high-mountain agro-pastoralism is a global phenomenon. In addition, a temporal period of comparison has not been established, which is necessary to support the justification of criterion (iv) in particular.

ICOMOS also observes that comparisons with other areas within the same mountainous region of Greece and having similar attributes have not been included. Similarly, neither the particularity of the urban character of the nominated property, nor the sacred values assigned to the forests, have been adequately explored. Furthermore, the comparisons to transhumance practices and drystone walling do not highlight the potential exceptionality of the nominated property. Additionally, ICOMOS notes that the architectural aspect of the nominated property, and specifically the system of traditional villages proposed as attributes, have not been compared in detail with other similar villages in mountainous areas within Greece, the Mediterranean or southeastern Europe.

In October 2022, ICOMOS requested the State Party to expand the comparative analysis to include other areas with similar characteristics located in Greece and that are not included on the World Heritage List, as well as a more detailed analysis of other areas in the Mediterranean and southeastern Europe with similar architecture and traditional villages of the same period and/or style. The State Party provided additional information in November 2022, expanding the comparative analysis and highlighting that the characteristic of an ensemble of villages together with a dense network of stone paths and bridges is the main difference when compared to other mountainous areas in Greece. Most of these other areas have been affected by development, particularly in the islands and coastal areas, but also in cities of the Epirus region such as Arta and Ioannina.

The State Party also provided a more detailed analysis of the architectural elements, defining the typology of the mansions (arhontika) and determining the main stylistic influence to be Ottoman. The State Party further added that the nominated property stands out from other villages in Greece and in southeastern Europe because it is an ensemble composed of several villages and not a specific city, town or area within a city, as is the case with properties in the Balkan region such as Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra (Albania, 2005, 2008, criteria (iii) and (iv)) and Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region (Albania and North Macedonia, 1979, 1980, 2019, criteria (i), (iii), (iv) and (vii)), both of which also showcase an Ottoman architectural style similar to Zagori.

Furthermore, the State Party asserts that the state of conservation of the traditional villages of Zagori stands out in comparison to other villages with similar characteristics, due to the protection enabled by the remoteness of the mountainous area in which these villages are located.

Based on the additional information, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property stands out from similar properties in the same geo-cultural region due to its concentration of traditional villages and the level of their preservation, its vernacular architecture of traditional stone building, the stone bridges and stone paths connecting the villages, and the imposing natural setting in which the villages are found.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi) and natural criteria (vii), (viii) and (x). The comments below relate to the justification of the cultural criteria.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property bears an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition of migration, remittances, and benevolence that transformed the agropastoral rural character of the mountain landscape of Zagori into an urban space with public and private infrastructure development in the 18th and 19th centuries. The rural heritage combined with the urban aesthetics imported by the Zagorian diaspora represent unique architectural expressions that highlight local materials and craftsmanship influenced by cosmopolitan styles of areas such as Central Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, Constantinople, and the Black Sea, where Zagorians practiced temporary migrations.

ICOMOS considers that the influence of outmigration from rural areas is not unique to Zagori, and that investment through benevolence is a phenomenon that can be seen in other areas of the world. Furthermore, due to a lack of historical evidence, it is not possible to confirm how the territorial occupation evolved. The characteristics of the temporary migrations and the tangible impacts they had on the traditional villages of Zagori have not been demonstrated to be unique or exceptional, nor has compelling evidence been presented to demonstrate that the development of a cultural tradition of migration and benevolence whose impacts are exceptional has been preserved in the nominated property. ICOMOS considers that criterion (iii) has not been justified.
Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history:

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that there is an exceptional concentration of public infrastructure represented by squares, cobbled paths, stone staircases, and stone bridges combined with the development of a unique private architectural style and numerous and monumental religious buildings. These characterise Zagori as an outstanding example of an ensemble that expresses the coexistence of the rural character of a mountain area with an elaborate settlement pattern representative of the Enlightenment (18th-19th centuries).

ICOMOS notes the high concentration of stone-made public infrastructure in the nominated property which is adapted to the challenging mountain environment of Zagori. However, ICOMOS considers that sound historical evidence is needed to demonstrate that there was a process of transformation of the rural landscape to an urbanised environment, and furthermore, that this process is connected to and illustrates the Enlightenment as a significant stage in human history. In particular, additional historical evidence is needed to describe how the traditional villages evolved in the period between the 18th and 19th centuries, to consolidate and function as a system. ICOMOS considers that criterion (iv) has not been justified.

Criterion (v): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property bears associations with living traditions of transhumance, drystone building, sacred forest management, ethno-botanical knowledge, musical knowledge, festivals, and hagiography, as well as culinary traditions characteristic of Zagori.

ICOMOS considers that the living traditions of drystone building, transhumance, and sacred forests are not unique to the nominated property but are representative of a larger regional area. Some of these traditions have been recognised jointly with other European countries in an inscription of elements in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, however the comparative analysis has not demonstrated how these traditions are exceptionally represented in the nominated property. While ICOMOS considers that the living traditions in the nominated property potentially have regional significance, their Outstanding Universal Value has not been demonstrated. ICOMOS considers that criterion (vi) has not been justified.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

The State Party did not propose this criterion in the nomination but did propose criterion (v) when the nominated property was included in the Tentative List. Based on the nomination dossier and additional information provided by the State Party in November 2022 and February 2023, and taking into consideration the reasoning used by the State Party to justify criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi), ICOMOS considers that the nominated property exhibits an exceptionally well-preserved traditional settlement pattern that goes back to the 18th century and that justifies criterion (v). ICOMOS considers that the Zagorochoria, traditional villages of Zagori, are an outstanding example of traditional human settlements where the characteristics of the stonework showcased in traditional buildings, stone bridges, stone paths, and stone staircases represent a distinctive culture developed in Zagori. The vernacular architecture, urban structure, and public infrastructure of the villages have been influenced by an exchange with other areas of the Balkan region, Central Europe, Russia, Asia Minor, and Constantinople, where Zagorisians practiced temporary migration. Zagorisians imported ideas and styles to their homeland and provided investments which enabled the development of this isolated area of the Pindus mountain range.

ICOMOS also considers that the Zagorochoria are representative of the common legacy of Byzantine and Ottoman vernacular architecture of the larger Balkan region. This style has become rare in the region, but is still reflected in the traditional stone architecture and traditional village layouts of Zagori. Furthermore, ICOMOS observes that these well-conserved traditional villages are vulnerable to the abandonment of traditional building practices, the development of tourism, and the transformation of their former agropastoral setting that is being retaken by forests, thus putting their conservation at risk. ICOMOS considers that criterion (v) has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (v), but that criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi) have not been demonstrated.

The State Party has proposed the nominated property as a continuing cultural landscape based on the existence of an inter-relationship between culture and nature, specifically the agropastoral characteristics and transhumant practices once pursued within the nominated property representing an interaction between Sarakatsani, Vlach, and Zagorisan resident groups and the environment. However, the State Party has confirmed in the nomination dossier and in the additional information submitted in November 2022 that many of the Sarakatsani and Vlach residents who used to be nomadic and semi-nomadic have now settled permanently in Zagori villages and no longer practice transhumance or agropastoralism. The Zagorians’ practice of animal husbandry and agriculture is also greatly diminished, due in part to socio-
cultural changes and depopulation of the traditional
cultural landscapes.

ICOMOS considers that the processes, relationships, and
dynamic functions that are essential to the cultural
landscape’s distinctive character are no longer
maintained in a robust state. The material forms of its
significant distinguishing features are diminished: many
agricultural structures such as terraces and drystone
walls have been abandoned, and much of what
constitutes the agropastoral landscape – meadows and
agricultural areas in particular – have been taken over by
forests. Agropastoral practices no longer retain an active
social role in contemporary society closely associated
with the traditional way of life. The nominated property
therefore does not fully meet the requirements of cultural
landscapes.

ICOMOS does not consider that the nominated property
falls under the category of cultural landscapes.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets
criterion (v), but that criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi) have not been
demonstrated. ICOMOS does not consider that the
ominated property falls under the category of cultural
landscapes.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the
cultural and natural elements that characterise the group
of small traditional villages that underwent a transformation
influenced by remittances sent by expatriates to fund
private and public infrastructure during the 18th and 19th
centuries. These elements include traditional architecture
of limestone masonry, a network of stone-arched bridges,
stone cobbled paths, and stone staircases linking the
villages, and associated rural mountain landscape
features. The setting and the mountain topography, as
well as the relationship between these environmental
aspects and the built environment, are also important
attributes of the nominated property.

The nominated property must contain all the attributes
necessary to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal
Value. In this regard, ICOMOS observes that Skamnëlì,
one of the twenty villages, was burned down during the
Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and subsequently rebuilt.
ICOMOS therefore considers that it should be part of the
buffer zone along with the village of Elâti, and not included
in the nominated property.

The dynamic functions and relationships between the
architecture, the villages, and the landscape, as well as
the rural heritage and the traditions associated with them
(drystone walling, transhumance, sacred forests) are also
necessary for the integrity of the nominated property.
ICOMOS notes that in order to maintain these aspects,
the State Party needs to address the progressive loss of
traditional activities, including stone building practices,
availability of traditional materials, and livestock breeding.

Natural reforestation in the immediate setting of the
traditional villages represents a threat to the integrity of
the nominated property, increasing the exposure of these
villages to potential fire or wildfires. This threat needs to
be addressed.

Because of the necessity to reassess the boundaries of
the nominated property in order to include the villages of
Skamnëlì and Elâti in the buffer zone, ICOMOS considers
that the integrity of the nominated property has not been
demonstrated at this stage.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the
locations, settings, forms, and functions of the system of
traditional villages, and the locations, settings, forms,
designs, materials, and substance of the buildings and
public infrastructure.

In additional information provided in February 2023, the
State Party clarified that some of the villages, houses, and
mansions had previously been destroyed and then
reconstructed. The limited information available about
these attributes has not allowed a comprehensive
assessment of their authenticity.

A study of the traditional architecture of Zagori, which is
mentioned but not included in the nomination dossier, is
said to describe the volumes, forms, materials, colours,
and construction methods. Traditions and techniques
used for building these structures, particularly drystone
building, are important attributes that need to be
continued to ensure that the traditional villages preserve
their authenticity. The State Party indicates that these
traditions are being maintained and used for new
construction in the traditional villages.

In October 2022, ICOMOS requested further information
from the State Party regarding the traditional villages,
including maps, plans, and photographs that could clarify
how they have changed over time, in order to assess their
authenticity. In November 2022, the State Party provided
additional information in the form of aerial photographs of
eight villages (Elafótopolos, Ano Pedínà, Koukoúli,
Kapósovo, Negádes, Aristí, Dílofo, and Vítsa), comparing
the period 1945-1960 with 2015-2016, and historic and
recent photographs of eight villages (Dílofo, Kípoli,
Koukoúli, Monóndendri, Negádes, Pápigo, Vítsa, and
Tsépéléovo), where reforestation as well as the villages’
layouts are discernible.

Additional documentation about village structure and
architectural plans was requested by ICOMOS in its
Interim Report. In February 2023, the State Party reported
that the historic urban fabric of eighteen of the twenty
villages has survived, as well as the paths and bridges
connecting them. However, some of the villages were
destroyed during various 20th-century wars and
subsequently reconstructed. ICOMOS considers that the selection of traditional villages needs to be reassessed in the context of their authenticity and the villages of Skamnélí and Eláti should be included in the buffer zone. A detailed condition survey of the traditional villages and houses is also necessary to establish a baseline for conservation and management.

Even though most of the twenty traditional villages might meet the requirements of authenticity as defined by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS considers that the villages of Skamnélí and Eláti do not. ICOMOS therefore considers that the authenticity of the nominated property has not been demonstrated at this stage.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have not been met at this stage.

**Boundaries**

The boundaries of the nominated property and the buffer zone are the administrative boundaries of communities and settlements which, according to the State Party, have been defined over the centuries. They are based on the Presidential Decree for Zagori (1979, amended 1995), a legal designation for the protection of traditional villages built before 1923. The nominated property corresponds to Zone “A” of this Decree and the buffer zone to Zone “B”, which together coincide with the administrative limits of the Municipality of Zagori.

Forty-six (sometimes counted as forty-five in the documentation provided by the State Party) traditional settlements located in both Zone “A” and Zone “B” are said to form part of the nominated property, however only twenty are included within its boundaries. In October 2022, ICOMOS requested a clarification regarding the number of traditional villages located within the nominated property, and the rationale used to select those considered to be attributes. Furthermore, the village of Skamnélí, which is listed in Zone “A” of the Decree, appears outside of the nominated property in the maps provided with the nomination dossier, while the village of Dipótamo, listed in Zone “B” of the Decree, appears within the boundaries of the nominated property.

In additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party clarified that only those villages located in Zone “A” of the Decree are part of the nominated property, being the best-preserved traditional villages. The traditional villages located in Zone “B” are included in the buffer zone because they were burned during the Second World War and have therefore lost their original characteristics and material. There are twenty-six settlements in the buffer zone that are protected as traditional villages in Zone “B” of the Decree.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS recommended that the maps be corrected, and that Skamnélí, having been burned down in 1912 (as clarified by the State Party in February 2023) be included in the buffer zone. The State Party provided new maps in February 2023, showing the twenty villages of Zone “A” of the Decree as being within the nominated property. ICOMOS considers that the inclusion of Skamnélí and Eláti in the nominated property needs to be reassessed by the State Party in consideration of their authenticity and integrity.

The State Party indicates that the nominated property is located within North Pindus National Park. The rationale for delineating the area of the nominated property is not explained, beyond having adopted the municipal administrative boundaries that correspond to the Presidential Decree. ICOMOS requested in October 2022 that the State Party clarify the reasons for selecting only a part of the National Park as the nominated property, and to confirm that no potential attributes are located in other areas of the National Park. The State Party replied in November 2022 that other natural attributes could be found outside the boundaries of the nominated property, but potential cultural attributes could not.

ICOMOS considers that the villages of Skamnélí and Eláti should be included in the buffer zone and not in the nominated area.

**Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List. Criterion (v) has been met, but criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi) have not been demonstrated, nor have the conditions of integrity and authenticity been demonstrated at this stage. The inclusion of Skamnélí and Eláti within the nominated property needs to be reassessed. ICOMOS further considers that the nominated property does not fall under the category of cultural landscapes.

**4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

**Documentation**

The State Party informs that the documentation related to the nominated property is held in a number of repositories. The Archaeological Cadastre is a national inventory of immovable heritage. Managed centrally by the Directorate for the Administration of the National Archive of Monuments, it includes documentation on 129 monuments and 11 historical and archaeological sites within the wider Zagori region. The Municipality of Zagori, the Service of Modern Monuments and Technical Works of Epirus, North Ionian and West Macedonia, and the Ministry of Culture and Sports maintain a survey of the state of conservation of the forty-six traditional villages included in the Presidential Decree for Zagori. The ninety-three stone bridges have been studied and documented by the Service of Modern Monuments and Technical Works of Epirus, North Ionian and West Macedonia. Religious buildings and residences included in cultural heritage inventories at the national or regional level have also been surveyed and documented, as has the rural heritage, especially the drystone structures. The full scope of this
The nominated property.

These inventories could provide an initial baseline for the conservation and management of the various elements of the nominated property. ICOMOS considers that it would be important to centralise this information in an accessible database, with the objective of facilitating the holistic conservation and management of the nominated property.

### Conservation measures

At present, individual approaches are taken for the conservation measures that are applied to each of the different traditional villages, houses, mansions, stone bridges, religious monuments, and rural heritage structures. A global approach for the entire nominated property is required to ensure conservation of the interconnections between the different attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The State Party indicates that conservation works are necessary for the rural heritage, which is in disuse, and that funding for such works is not sufficient. Noting that traditional craftsmanship is an important characteristic of the traditional villages, ICOMOS in its Interim Report requested further information on how traditional practices and crafts are being sustained today, and how they will be sustained in the future. ICOMOS also asked the State Party to clarify what conservation measures are in place for the traditional buildings, including their interiors. ICOMOS considers that the limestone masonry is particularly vulnerable to erosion and needs preventive measures. The State Party responded in February 2023, explaining that a stone carving school is being planned in the nominated property, and that both exteriors and interiors of the traditional buildings are being conserved according to the current legislation.

While ICOMOS considers that a stone carving school could help the maintenance of the traditional building techniques and skills, there is a need to develop a holistic approach to the conservation of the nominated property and to produce a comprehensive conservation plan that integrates all existing conservation measures and programmes for the attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

### Monitoring

The State Party proposes a series of quantitative indicators to monitor the state of conservation of the attributes of the nominated property. The findings will be followed up by different institutions in charge of the different heritage elements at different levels of government (national, regional, municipal). ICOMOS considers that a holistic approach to monitoring the nominated property that considers the interrelations between the attributes needs to be elaborated, and that qualitative indicators should be included. Furthermore, it is recommended to include indicators that measure the evolution of the factors affecting the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that a centralised system for data gathering and processing is necessary, and that it be fully accessible to the institutions responsible for conserving and managing the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that there is a need for centralised baseline documentation for all the attributes. All the existing individual conservation measures should be integrated into a single comprehensive conservation plan for the nominated property. Appropriate conservation measures are also needed, notably regarding traditional craftsmanship and limestone masonry. The monitoring system needs to be framed in a holistic way and be centralised for easy access by the managing institutions. ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

### 5 Protection and management

#### Legal protection

The nominated property is protected under Law 3028/2002 “On the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in General”, which is the primary legal mechanism for the protection of cultural heritage in Greece. The Law is enforced by the Ministry of Culture and Sports by means of the corresponding Regional Service. Local responsibility lies with the Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina and its specialized departments for Prehistoric-Classical Antiquities and Byzantine Antiquities, and the Service of Modern Monuments and Technical Works of Epirus, North Ionian and West Macedonia.

The Presidential Decree for Zagori (1979, amended 1995) covers the traditional villages built before 1923 and encompasses the entirety of the Municipality of Zagori, dividing it into Zone “A” and Zone “B” according to the state of conservation and authenticity of the traditional architecture in the villages. This Decree also defines an Urban Control Zone that determines special conditions and building restrictions. It covers both the nominated property and the buffer zone. The Decree is implemented by the Town Planning Department of the Municipality of Zagori, which is in charge of issuing construction permits with the advice of the Ministry of Culture and Sports’ competent Regional Services.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested clarifications regarding the scope of the Presidential Decree, whether all buildings within the listed traditional villages are under legal protection, and whether this protection includes the interiors of the traditional buildings. The State Party responded in February 2023, clarifying that all buildings are protected by law, including current and new constructions. Buildings that are classified as monuments are protected in their entirety, including their interiors.

The Service of Modern Monuments and Technical Works of Epirus, North Ionian and West Macedonia advises on conservation and rescue interventions, and the Local
Councils of Monuments of Epirus are scientific bodies that advise on issues concerning all monuments in the region.

The Ministry of Environment and Energy covers Landscapes of Outstanding Natural Beauty, traditional villages, listed buildings, and other structures such as fountains, paths, and bridges. Other bodies concerned with the built environment of the nominated property are the Building Department of the Municipality of Ioannina, the Architectural Councils of the Region of Epirus, and the Councils of Urban Issues and Disputes and Central Council of Architecture, which are involved in advising and approving larger projects.

About ninety-three percent of the Municipality of Zagori is located within North Pindus National Park, which was established under Law 1650/1986 “On the Protection of the Environment”. The management body of the National Park is responsible for administering and managing this protected area. A number of other laws protect the natural values of the nominated property, including its forests, biodiversity, natural habitats, wild fauna, and flora. Furthermore, several areas of the nominated property are included in the NATURA 2000 network of protected areas of the European Union. The Vikos-Aoos UNESCO Global Geopark was established in 2010 and extends beyond the nominated property. The coordinating bodies for this designation are the Development Organization EPIRUS SA, the Region of Epirus, the Geological and Mining Research Authority, and the municipalities of Zagori and Konitsa. The Forestry Department is in charge of enforcing the Forest Code (Legislative Decree 86/1969) and Law 998/1979 “On the Protection of Forests and Forest Areas in General in the Country”, which applies to the nominated property.

In relation to the intangible cultural heritage of the nominated property, “transhumance” was inscribed in the national inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2017 and on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2019 as “Transhumance, the seasonal droving of livestock along migratory routes in the Mediterranean and the Alps”, submitted jointly with Italy and Austria. The “Art of dry-stone walling, knowledge and techniques” was inscribed in the same UNESCO Representative List in 2018, submitted jointly with France, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Croatia, Cyprus, and Slovenia. The sacred forests of the villages of Zagori have been inscribed in the national inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2014.

Management system
The nominated property has a highly complex management system involving all levels of government from national to regional to municipal, as well as a diversity of institutions in charge of enforcing laws to protect cultural and natural heritage. An Independent Department for the Management of the Cultural Landscape under the Municipality of Zagori has been proposed to implement the proposed management plan, assisted by a Committee for the Preservation and Promotion of the Cultural Landscape that includes the Municipality of Zagori, the Region of Epirus, the Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina, the Service of Modern Monuments and Technical Works of Epirus, North Ionian and West Macedoniam, the Forestry Department, the management body of North Pindus National Park, and the Development Organization EPIRUS SA, which will function as the Technical Secretariat.

In October 2022, ICOMOS requested further information on the timeframe for the establishment of the Independent Department and the Committee, and on the stage at which this process currently stands. In additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party indicated that these entities will be established in the event of an inscription. ICOMOS observes that local communities are not included in the proposed Committee. It considers that a Committee that includes relevant rights-holders and stakeholders is necessary, due to the complexity of the nominated property and its ownership.

Furthermore, ICOMOS notes that different designations such as the National Park and the UNESCO Global Geopark need close coordination to achieve a harmonised management of the natural and cultural values of the nominated property. ICOMOS asked the State Party in October 2022 whether a coordination platform was planned between the UNESCO Global Geopark and the nominated property. In additional information submitted in November 2022, the State Party informed that both designations will be managed by the same organisations, namely, the Region of Epirus and the Municipality of Zagori.

An operating management plan does not yet exist but one has been proposed. It aims at harmonising all current land uses in the nominated property, including those related to agriculture, livestock raising, tourism, and forestry, with the objective of protecting the cultural and natural heritage of the nominated property. The proposed management plan intends to balance the protection of heritage, its utilisation, and the sustainable development of the area. The plan presents a “SWOT” (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, a strategic vision for the nominated property, and five principles that are broken down into a table of actions. ICOMOS considers that the proposed plan presents an exhaustive inventory of intentions for the nominated property, and that its implementation will require financial programming and a detailed timetable.

ICOMOS also considers that the proposed management plan needs to include a Local Master Plan based on a comprehensive conservation plan (including detailed studies of the built heritage) that addresses the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. In October 2022, ICOMOS requested further information regarding the approval of the proposed management plan and whether it would have a legal status. The State Party clarified in November 2022 that the proposed management plan is a binding document, that it was approved by both the Municipal Council of Zagori and the Regional Council of Epirus, and that it will be implemented in the event of an inscription.
The Regional Spatial Framework of the Epirus Region (2018) deals with the management of cultural and natural heritage in the region, and applies to the nominated property. Zagori is defined as a traditional rural area with potential for tourism development.

The National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation (2016) aims to strengthen the resilience of the country to climate change. In this context, the Regional Plan of the Region of Epirus for the Adaptation to Climate Change (2019) proposes measures that are applicable in the nominated property, especially referring to agriculture, livestock, and tourism.

ICOMOS notes that natural reforestation endangers the traditional villages located within the nominated property, particularly in light of recent wildfires across the Mediterranean. The management plan at present does not state protocols or actions that can recover the agropastoral landscape (managed forests, meadows, and agriculture) or mitigate fire hazards (both preventive and responsive mitigation). ICOMOS considers that a specific risk preparedness and disaster risk management strategy for the nominated property needs to be integrated into the proposed management plan. In this regard, the integration of traditional and local knowledge about sustainable land use techniques and disaster mitigation should be encouraged.

Based on the Presidential Decree, pre-approval and an Environmental Impact Study are required for new projects and renovations in the areas outside the traditional settlements, as well as approval by the Committee for Urban Planning and Architectural Control.

Visitor management
The nominated property has established visitor management strategies for the National Park and the UNESCO Global Geopark. ICOMOS notes that there is no central tourism office. Several points of information do exist, notably the information centres in the National Park and the Geopark. ICOMOS considers that a general interpretation centre for the nominated property would be useful to present the nominated property in a more holistic way. ICOMOS also notes that some visitor infrastructure (parking lots, for example) in the traditional villages need better planning in order to accommodate a possible increase in the number of visitors.

ICOMOS considers that a property-specific tourism strategy needs to be created. It should be based on a scientifically determined carrying capacity for the nominated property, and avoid negative impacts on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value created by tourism development and visitors. Furthermore, ICOMOS considers that it would be important to develop training for guides, and potentially hospitality training to reinforce capacities in the local population that could also lead to youth involvement.

Community involvement
According to the State Party, a participatory process was used in the preparation of the proposed management plan. In additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party clarified that the different cultural groups (the Sarakatsani and the Vlach) who are part of the community of residents of the traditional villages have been informed about the nomination process. Details on how these groups have been involved in the development of the proposed management plan and the interpretation of the nominated property were not provided. Nevertheless, the elected officials of the Municipal Council of Zagori and Regional Council of Epirus can be considered as representing the local communities.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property
In summary, ICOMOS considers that the protection of the nominated property is comprehensive, including laws applying to natural, cultural, and intangible attributes. ICOMOS notes that many actors are involved, rendering the management system very complex. In that regard, ICOMOS considers it necessary to strengthen the management system by establishing a coordination platform involving all institutions and levels of implementation, including local communities, rights-holders, and other stakeholders. ICOMOS considers that in addition, the proposed management plan for the nominated property requires financial programming and a detailed timetable, a Local Master Plan based on a comprehensive conservation plan, as well as a property-specific tourism strategy. Furthermore, a specific risk preparedness and disaster risk management strategy for the nominated property needs to be integrated into the proposed management plan. In this regard, the integration of traditional and local knowledge about sustainable land use techniques and disaster mitigation should be encouraged.

6 Conclusion
Zagori Cultural Landscape is a testimony to the formation and decline of an agropastoral landscape that developed as a result of investments in private and public infrastructure made by its diaspora during the 18th and 19th centuries. This infrastructure included a network of stone-arched bridges, stone cobbled paths, and stone staircases that connected small rural settlements to form a political and social unit within this mountainous region. The Zagorochoria or Zagori villages are an exceptional example of a traditional settlement pattern that represents this distinctive culture. Combining natural and cultural elements, the settlements developed a tradition of limestone masonry that persists but is highly vulnerable to irreversible change due to socio-cultural and environmental pressures.

ICOMOS appreciates the work carried out by the State Party to prepare this nomination and to provide informative additional information.
ICOMOS considers that none of the criteria proposed by the State Party have been demonstrated, but that the nominated property meets criterion (v), which was not proposed. However, some important aspects of the nomination require further attention.

ICOMOS considers that systematic information about the traditional architecture in the villages that are included in the nominated property needs to be assembled in order to establish a centralised documentation for all the individual attributes in order to create a baseline for conservation and management. The current collection of individual conservation measures should be integrated into a single comprehensive conservation plan for the whole nominated property. Issues have been identified regarding the integrity and authenticity of some traditional villages that are included within the nominated property and that would require a redefinition of the boundaries and buffer zone. In this regard, ICOMOS recommends including the villages of Skamnéli and Eláti in the buffer zone, rather than in the nominated property.

Concerning the category of the nominated property, ICOMOS considers that the requirements of cultural landscapes have not been fully met, since the processes, relationships, and dynamic functions that are essential to a cultural landscape and its distinctive character are no longer maintained in a robust state. The material forms of its significant distinguishing features such as terraces and drystone walls have largely been abandoned and many of the meadows and agricultural areas have been taken over by forests. Agropastoral practices have also diminished significantly.

The management system needs a coordination platform and mechanisms, given the numerous designations, institutions, and levels of implementation that overlap with the nominated property. The proposed management plan needs to include financial programming, a detailed timetable, and a Local Master Plan based on a comprehensive conservation plan. Considering the factors affecting the nominated property, particularly depopulation, tourist pressures, reforestation, and climate change, both a tourist strategy and a risk preparedness and disaster risk management strategy need to be included in the proposed management plan, as well as a sustainability strategy that addresses the continuity of traditional masonry and building techniques and skills, all of which are essential for the long-term maintenance and conservation of the traditional villages.

7 Recommendations

ICOMOS recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopts the following draft recommendations, noting that this will be harmonised as appropriate with the draft recommendations of IUCN regarding their evaluation of this mixed site nomination under the natural criteria and included in the working document WHC/23/45.COM/8B.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of Zagori Cultural Landscape, Greece, be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Consider including the villages of Skamnéli and Eláti in the buffer zone;
- Prepare documentation on the traditional villages and traditional buildings within the nominated property to create a baseline for the conservation and management of the property as a whole;
- Develop a comprehensive conservation plan that considers the stone-arched bridges, the historical paths and staircases, and the traditional villages in a holistic way;
- Develop a coordination platform and mechanisms for the management of the nominated property, taking into consideration other designations, institutions, and levels of implementation that overlap with the property;
- Include within the proposed management plan a financial programming, a detailed timetable, and a Local Master Plan based on a comprehensive conservation plan;
- Develop a mechanism and opportunities for local communities, rights-holders, and other stakeholders to participate in the management of the nominated property;
- Develop a risk preparedness and disaster risk management strategy;
- Develop a tourism strategy that takes into account the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and determine scientifically its carrying capacity;
- Develop a sustainability strategy for the traditional masonry and building techniques and skills in order to maintain the traditional villages over the long term.

ICOMOS further considers that the name of the nominated property should be be changed to better reflect its cultural values: “Zagorochoria, the traditional villages of Zagori”.

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Revised map showing the boundaries of the nominated property (February 2023)
V Cultural properties

A Arab States
Minor modifications to the boundaries

B Asia – Pacific
Minor modifications to the boundaries

C Europe – North America
Minor modifications to the boundaries

D Latin America and the Caribbean
Minor modifications to the boundaries
Rock Art in the Hail Region
(Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
No 1472bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Name of property
Rock Art in the Hail Region

Location
Northern Province
Hail Region

Inscription
2015

Brief description
Rock Art in the Hail Region is a serial property that comprises two sites in a landscape of desert sands: the Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and the Jabals al-Manjor and Raat at Shuwaymis. The hill range of Umm Sinman overlooks a freshwater lake that once existed here, and which provided water to people and animals in the southern part of the Great Narfud Desert. Here, on these hills, the ancestors of present-day Arabs left the marks of their presence on numerous petroglyph panels and inscriptions. Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat are rock escarpments of a now sand-covered wadi that contain a large number of human and animal figures covering some 10,000 years of human history.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background
Rock Art in the Hail Region is a serial property inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2015 on the basis of criteria (i) and (iii).

When the property was inscribed, the World Heritage Committee asked the State Party to extend the buffer zone of the Jabal Umm Sinman component by 1.0 to 1.5 km to the west and the south, in order to preserve the long-term visual integrity of the site (Decision 39 COM 8B.11).

In the report on the state of conservation of the property submitted by the State Party in 2016, the Saudi authorities pointed out that the high sand dunes formed an informal buffer zone as they made the zone unsuitable for any type of construction that could pose a threat to the property’s integrity.

In 2017, the World Heritage Committee asked the State Party to clarify whether there were “any impediments” to formalizing the extended buffer zone as proposed in 2015 (Decision 41COM 7B.85).

In 2018, in the report on the state of conservation of the property, the State Party once again asserted that the enlarged zone was already protected by natural topography, and that coordination with the local authorities and the monitoring of the site would ensure its protection. No information was supplied concerning any potential impediments to the extension of the buffer zone.

In 2019, the World Heritage Committee reiterated its request for the formal extension of the buffer zone as proposed in 2015 (43COM 7B.53). In its report on the state of conservation of the property, submitted in 2020, the State Party indicated that, after the introduction of a system of ownership and title deeds, an extension of the buffer zone had been established, which was however less than the recommended extension of 1.0 to 1.5 kilometres.

In 2021, the World Heritage Committee reiterated its request for a formal statement of the extension as recommended at the time of inscription (Decision 44COM 7B.137), stipulating that the buffer zone boundary should be “increased by 1.0 to 1.5 kilometres to the west and south of the component [Jabal Umm Sinman], in order to prevent any visual impact on the integrity of the property, and that any impediments to such action be indicated”, and reminded the State Party that this revision should be carried out by submitting a boundary modification proposal in accordance with Paragraph 164 and Annex 11 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Modification
Based on the decision of the World Heritage Committee in 2021, the State Party has submitted the present request for the extension of the buffer zone of the Jabal Umm Sinman component.

The State Party has requested a correction relating to the previously indicated figures for the Jabal Umm Sinman component (initially 1,385 ha and now 1,783.9 ha) and its buffer zone (initially 1,515 ha and now 1,951 ha), even though the boundaries remain unchanged. ICOMOS notes however that no explanation has been given to justify these substantial differences in area. The proposed extension of the zone amounts to 907 ha, resulting in a total figure of 2,422 ha, representing a 60% increase.

The buffer zone boundary follows the topographic contour line, with an alignment parallel to the previous western boundary. To the south, a horizontal edge is imposed, which does not go beyond the previous buffer zone boundary, resulting in a discontinuity for which no contextual reference is given. No justification has been
given concerning the absence of an extension to the buffer zone in this southern part.

It should be pointed out that the extension was recommended to protect the integrity of the property’s attributes in visual terms, one of which is the environmental setting. The setting is directly linked to the views to and from the site beyond the defined buffer zone. The main road, with a slight downward slope, is panoramic, offering a visual perspective that enables the discovery of the site as the observer approaches. As for the picturesque view along the line of sight, all the visual sequences along the road are of crucial importance for the visual integrity of the landscape and the environmental setting. The views to the south and west are considered to be “key views” in the property management plan.

Furthermore, landscape value is one of the values associated with the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) in the statement of OUV adopted in 2016 (Decision 40COM 8B.50), and the authentic perception of the desert landscape may be impacted by development.

No clear description of sensitive zones and visual axes to and from the property has been provided, nor any indication of how the extension of the buffer zone would contribute to protecting the integrity of the attributes in visual terms.

From a legal viewpoint, the property is protected through Royal Decree No. M/26 (1392H/1972) and Resolution No. 78 (1429H/2008) of the Council of Ministers, which safeguard the heritage sites of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As the property is an archaeological site, the buffer zone is also protected by the Saudi Law on Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage, Royal Decree No. 9/M (1436H/2014).

The property comes under the jurisdiction of the provincial office of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) in Hail, which operates under the supervision of the SCTH head office in Riyadh.

Despite their creation, no reference is made to the sectorial ownership statuses of the land outside the buffer zone.

The Jubbah abattoir development project, located in the south, close to the buffer zone, consists of one building (52m x 25m) built on a concrete platform (160m x 70m), in a contemporary architectural style that is incompatible with the character of the property. A cattle market and other dispersed facilities are located inside the perimeter of the abattoir. The project is linked to the main road by a slip road.

It should be noted that the State Party has provided no information on this matter, and that the project has been visualised by means of recent photographs and satellite images.

ICOMOS stresses that the project in question is located in a zone that is highly sensitive in terms of preserving the views on the south side. This zone is located less than 1 km south of the buffer zone and is inside the perimeter of the extension requested by the World Heritage Committee, whose extent has been stipulated, and which was declared non-constructible because of its nature by the State Party in the 2016 report on the state of conservation of the property.

The management plan, established in 2015, and currently in force pending the introduction of the new plan scheduled for 2023, focuses on the protection of the key views (L3), and respect for the cultural landscape character of the site, by proposing that it should be safeguarded in its integral environmental setting (L4), under the heading of Landscape, context and setting policies.

Under the plan, action (L3.1) provides for conducting viewshed studies to determine views of the properties from key observation points, and policy (P1) confirms that development projects will have no impact on the setting and the values of the landscape in the identified visibility zones.

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party, as stipulated in the management plan, should conduct viewshed studies in order to determine which zones are visually sensitive and ensure that they are protected.

As for regulations concerning construction in these visibility zones, there are no requirements relating to urban and architectural compatibility, except for building height and volume. There is no requirement to choose local architectural styles or to use local materials. Construction rules should be established for zones that are visually important.

In accordance with the World Heritage Committee recommendation (Decision 39COM 8B.11), ICOMOS recommends that indicators should be established to measure the impact of development on the attributes of the property.

ICOMOS welcomes the extension of the buffer zone to the west of the property. However, the present extension does not provide any additional protection for the attributes of the property to the south, in visual terms, even though the World Heritage Committee, in its Decision 44COM 7B.137, recommended an extension of the buffer zone boundary of 1.0 to 1.5 km to the west and south of the Jabal Umm Sinman component part to prevent any visual impact on the integrity of the property, and recommended that any impediment to this action should be indicated.
3 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the proposed minor boundary modification of Rock Art in the Hail Region, Saudi Arabia, be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Consider extending the buffer zone by 1.0 to 1.5 km towards the south, in accordance with the World Heritage Committee decisions 39COM 8B.11, 41COM 7B.85, 43COM 7B.53 and 44COM 7B.137;

- Include in the buffer zone, based on visual perspectives, a viewshed entering from the main road (Al-Muhaffar) leading to Jubbah, so as to protect the essential co-visibility from and towards the property along the panoramic road.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Providing explanations about the substantial differences in area of the Jabal Umm Sinman component part, even though the boundaries are not affected,

b) Putting in place, as a matter of urgency, effective inter-sectorial consultation mechanisms to ensure that no development project takes place within the property boundaries or the nearby areas, and that the projects under way, such as the abattoir, are halted until a heritage impact study has been conducted,

c) Establishing viewshed studies so as to determine the zones that are visually sensitive, to protect them and to regulate construction in these zones, in order to protect the character of the landscape and preserve the visual integrity of the property,

d) Developing, in accordance with Decision 39COM 8B.11 (point 4.f), monitoring indicators to measure the impact of development on the attributes of the site;
Map showing the revised boundaries of the buffer zone (February 2023)
Crac des Chevaliers and Qal‘at Salah El-Din (Syrian Arab Republic)
No 1229bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Syrian Arab Republic

Name of property
Crac des Chevaliers and Qal‘at Salah El-Din

Location
Municipality of Al Hosn (Homs Governorate)
Municipality of Haffeh (Latakieh Governorate)

Inscription
2006

Brief description
These two castles represent the most significant examples illustrating the exchange of influences and documenting the evolution of fortified architecture in the Near East during the time of the Crusades (11th-13th centuries). The Crac des Chevaliers was built by the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem from 1142 to 1271. With further construction by the Mamluks in the late 13th century, it ranks among the best-preserved examples of the Crusader castles. The Qal‘at Salah El-Din (Fortress of Saladin), even though partly in ruins, represents an outstanding example of this type of fortification, both in terms of the quality of construction and the survival of historical stratigraphy. It retains features from its Byzantine beginnings in the 10th century, the Frankish transformations in the late 12th century and fortifications added by the Ayyubid dynasty (late 12th to mid-13th century).

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background
The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006 on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv). It is a serial property consisting of two monuments, namely the Crac des Chevaliers, with an area of 2.38 ha and a buffer zone of 37.69 ha, and Qal‘at Salah El-Din, with an area of 6.49 ha and a buffer zone of 129.52 ha.

A Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was adopted in 2010 (Decision 34 COM 8E).

In 2013, the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Decision 37 COM 8C.1).

In 2019, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to consider developing a Master Plan for Qal‘at Salah El-Din and its setting (Decision 43 COM 7A.35).

In 2020, the International Assistance support under the World Heritage Fund was approved for the project of Documentation and Emergency Structural Intervention in Qal‘at Salah El-Din, which was to comprise a topographic survey of the castle to update the documentation of the monument, including the Rabab (Bayt al-Madina) area, and a damage assessment of the monument, which would become the basis for conservation and management decisions, as well as monitoring. The works were furthered to allow the elaboration of a Master Plan and a Management Plan for this component part and its surroundings.

In 2021, the World Heritage Committee encouraged the State Party to add to the Master Plan and the Management Plan, a Risk Management Plan for the property and its buffer zone (Decision 44 COM 7A.22).

The same year, the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS initiated remotely a process of elaboration of a set of corrective measures and the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR). Within this process, the question of potential modification of the perimeter of the buffer zone of Qal‘at Salah El-Din was raised.

Modification
The current minor boundary modification request concerns only the buffer zone of the Qal‘at Salah El-Din component part. It proposes an extension of the existing buffer zone in all directions, and would result in including thirty new archaeological structures found on the ground east and south of the castle, together with some surrounding landscape.

The extension towards the east, where the majority of the new archaeological vestiges have been documented, will result in including, within the buffer zone, remains located in the Rabab (Bayt al-Madina) area, which correspond to the structures documented in the eastern section of Qal‘at Salah El-Din. Among these new vestiges are remnants of a number of cisterns and towers, including the rectangular Al-Tibn tower with a high cross vault and the L-shaped Birak tower, as well as ruins of the Sheikh Abdullah building with an adjacent structure accessed through the ceiling, and the Rabab Mosque – a rectangular building covered with a barrel vault and preceded by a portico, which had most probably been originally a church.

Further east, within the proposed buffer zone extension, are located ruins of a quasi-square, four-room building of the Sheikh Issa Mausoleum with a tomb, a barrel-vaulted
rectangular building known as the Sheikh Issa Palace, remains of the Dawar Al-Jdaid Bridge made of bossed stones and with an arch still visible, as well as natural landscape features such as a cave, a tunnel used to collect water, and a watercourse in the limestone bed with several basins, known as the Sheikh Issa Hammam (Bath). Slightly more south the square-shaped Sheikh Hossam al-Din Mausoleum, made of limestone and attached to a mosque, the quasi-square Kharbek tower, and a few cisterns can be found.

In the southernmost end of the proposed buffer zone are located remains of cisterns dug in the rocky ground, some buildings of unknown function, and a vaulted stone-carved tomb.

The proposed perimeter of the buffer zone follows topographical features and land plots. It was elaborated with the aim of ensuring protection of the archaeological structures that are located outside the property but support its Outstanding Universal Value. The viewsheds from the property towards the surrounding historic landscape were also considered by the State Party. The proposed buffer zone is thus said to contribute to the visual integrity of Qal`at Salah El-Din and its immediate and wider setting.

The proposed modification will not carry implications for the protection applicable to the property, which is regulated by the provisions of the Antiquities Law (no. 222, revised in 1999), the Ministerial Decree no. 380/A of 2003, the Ministry of Culture Decision No. 111/A of 2005, and the Law of the Ministry of Local Administration (no. 15, of 1971). It will neither affect the management of the property, coordinated jointly by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums and local authorities of Al Hosn (in the case of Crac des Chevaliers), and the local authorities of Latakiah Governorate in collaboration with the Directorate of Antiquities of Latakiah (in the case of Qal`at Salah El-Din).

The Antiquities Law (no. 222) is currently being revised. The extended buffer zone will be protected under the Antiquities Law (no. 222) upon the issuance of a new Ministerial Decree that will set out the strategic policy for the protection of the property with the redefined buffer zone of Qal`at Salah El-Din (no timeframe is provided). It will continue being managed jointly by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums and the local authorities of Latakiah Governorate, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture. Different controls will apply depending on the zoning of the buffer zone. Three strategic zones, have been demarcated already at the stage of inscription of the property on the World Heritage List. The Red Zone represents the buffer zone with which the monument of Qal`at Salah El-Din was inscribed on the national heritage list by virtue of Law no. 8 of 1959. In this zone construction is prohibited. It remains unchanged by the proposed modification. The existing Green Zone of the buffer zone, with its current controls, will be extended to the east and south. All construction, alteration or expansion of existing buildings will be prohibited in this area. As a result of the extension of the Green Zone to the south, part of the current Blue Zone will now be converted into a Green Zone and will enjoy the associated protection. The existing Blue Zone will expand further to the south and new sections will be added north and east of the new Green Zone. In the Blue Zone, new constructions will be permitted according to the existing rule of one house per plot, up to two storeys high and surrounded by trees. Tourist facilities and infrastructure will be permitted, if they are of small size, mostly temporary and easily movable, and are used in relation to light tourism activities. Large tourism establishments and industrial activities are prohibited in the Blue Zone. Any new activities must be pre-approved and supervised by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums.

The land within the proposed buffer zone is in public and private ownership, with the former prevailing.

ICOMOS welcomes and support in principle the extension of the buffer zone of Qal`at Salah El-Din, particularly the idea that the buffer zone should encompass additional areas, comprising visual catchment, views, and the documented historic sites outside the inscribed boundary, which contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property overall. However, ICOMOS notes some discrepancies between the current submitted graphic representations of the boundary of the existing buffer zone for Qal`at Salah El-Din and the one approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2006 with the size of 129.52 ha (and specified in the Decision No 111/A of 2005), which is now proposed for extension, as well as some related inconsistencies related to the size of the buffer zone before and after the proposed modification. As different figures for the existing buffer zone are referenced by the State Party, it is difficult to establish precisely what the extent of the proposed modification and the size of the new buffer zone will be.

ICOMOS considers also that greater precision is needed for the delineation of the buffer zone perimeter, as it cuts through different topographical features seemingly without a clear logic.

ICOMOS considers that a clearer justification for the proposed extension should be provided. While it is understood that the proposed extended buffer zone was defined by the spread of the archaeological vestiges observed on the ground and the need to protect the important views from Qal`at Salah El-Din, it is not clear what mechanisms were employed to identify these important viewsheds, which makes it difficult to establish why some areas were considered more significant than others.

Finally, ICOMOS further considers that it is unclear how the new limits of the Green and Blue Zones have been established and how the different Zones differ in terms of their management, considering that the Red and Green
Zones seem to enjoy the same restrictions and thus could possibly be combined, and the southern part of what was once in the Blue Zone would now be converted into a Green Zone. It is also not well understood in what way the different Zones will help protect the archaeological vestiges located within them, that are said to support the Outstanding Universal Value, and how they will assist in managing the buffer zone given the mixed ownership of land in both the Green and the Blue Zones.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the proposed buffer zone for the Crac des Chevaliers and Qal’at Salah El-Din, Syrian Arab Republic, be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Explain the methodology used to delineate the proposed boundary of the buffer zone, especially in relation to the protection of the wider setting of Qal’at Salah El-Din and important views from the castle, to be able to assess how the new buffer zone will support the visual integrity of the property and its surroundings, to justify the proposed extension of the buffer zone in all directions, beyond the horizontal spread of archaeological structures observed on the ground;

- Revise the perimeter of the proposed buffer zone to allow for greater precision in the definition of the boundary, especially with regard to topographical features which constitute the anchors of the perimeter;

- Clarify the size of the extension to the existing buffer zone (as approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2006 with the size of 129.52 ha) and the total area of the new buffer zone of Qal’at Salah El-Din after the proposed modification;

- Officially endorse through national regulation the proposed extended buffer zone;

- Clarify the need for and the division into different zoning within the proposed buffer zone and consider simplifying it, taking into consideration the extent of applicable controls, the need for protecting features that support the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, the views and the broader setting of the castle, as well as the related management objectives;

- Provide more information on any arrangements made with private land owners of plots within the proposed extension in terms of management of the area, and the timeframe for endorsement of the new buffer zone at the national level.
Map showing the revised boundaries of the buffer zone (February 2023)
V Cultural properties

A Arab States
Minor modifications to the boundaries

B Asia – Pacific
Minor modifications to the boundaries

C Europe – North America
Minor modifications to the boundaries

D Latin America and the Caribbean
Minor modifications to the boundaries
Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group
(Japan)
No 1593bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Japan

Name of property
Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan

Location
Habikino City
Osaka Prefecture

Inscription
2019

Brief description
Located on a plateau above the Osaka Plain, the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group is a serial property of forty-five component parts containing forty-nine kofun (‘old mound’), a large and distinctive type of burial mound. The inscribed kofun are found in two major clusters, and are the richest tangible representation of the culture of the Kofun period in Japan from the 3rd to 6th centuries, a period before Japanese society entered into a new phase with an established centralised state under the influence of the Chinese system of law. The inscribed kofun have been selected from a total of 160,000 from around Japan, and represent the ‘middle kofun’ period (late 4th to late 5th centuries). The kofun are found in different scales and shapes, and contain a range of grave goods. Understood as tombs for kings’ clans and affiliates during this period, some of the kofun are designated as Ryobo (imperial mausolea).

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background
Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan was inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv) in 2019.

The World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to finalise the expansion of the buffer zone of Minegazuka Kofun (component part no. 44). The present proposal for minor boundary modification responds to that recommendation.

Modification
The proposed modification to the buffer zone for Minegazuka Kofun (component part no. 44) enlarges the buffer zone by 1 ha on its northwestern edge. Although this is a relatively small extension, it was discussed with ICOMOS prior to the inscription of the serial property because this kofun site is located within an urban residential neighbourhood. The enlargement of the buffer zone aims to strengthen the protection of the site.

The State Party advises that the Osaka Prefectural Government and Habikino City have amended the relevant regulations applying to this area to provide protection of the buffer zone. Legislative measures that apply to the buffer zone include the City Planning Act, Building Standards Act, Landscape Act and Outdoor Advertisement Act. A comprehensive management system for the serial property identifies the roles of each of the relevant administrative bodies.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan, Japan, be approved.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Continuously monitoring development in this buffer zone and its surrounding areas,

b) Further exploring how the buffer zones relate to the broader setting and what, if anything, needs protecting in the broader setting; and implement the subsequent measures;
Map showing the revised boundaries of the buffer zone (February 2023)
V Cultural properties

A Arab States
Minor modifications to the boundaries

B Asia – Pacific
Minor modifications to the boundaries

C Europe – North America
Minor modifications to the boundaries

D Latin America and the Caribbean
Minor modifications to the boundaries
Colonies of Benevolence  
(Belgium, Netherlands)  
No 1555bis

1 Basic information

States Parties  
Belgium  
Netherlands

Name of property  
Colonies of Benevolence

Locations  
Antwerp province  
Flemish Region  
(Belgium)  
Drenthe and Fryslân provinces  
(Netherlands)

Inscription  
2021

Brief description  
Founded from 1818 onwards by the Society of Benevolence, the Colonies of Benevolence is a transnational serial site composed of three component parts illustrating a model of social reform that was highly influential in Europe in the 19th century, now known as the domestic agricultural colony. Located in the rural areas of the Netherlands (now the Netherlands and Belgium), they were created with the aim of transforming the poorest into “industrious” citizens, and “uncultivated” farmland into productive land. The property includes the colonies of Frederiksoord-Wilhelminaoord and Veenhuizen (Netherlands); and Wortel (Belgium), and is also inscribed as a cultural landscape. The colonies were designed as self-sustaining agricultural settlements with residential buildings, farms, churches and other community facilities in an orthogonal grid pattern. A distinction is made between “free” colonies established for families and “unfree” colonies established for groups of destitute people, which are differentiated by their modes of supervision and accommodation as well as by the typology of their landscapes.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report  
10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background  
The property was originally nominated without a buffer zone, as the States Parties considered that the existing spatial regimes in the surrounding areas and the confined nature of the colonies made the establishment of such a zone unnecessary. However, ICOMOS, in its evaluation of the 2021 nomination, considered that buffer zones were necessary, not only to offer protection to the immediate environment of the colonies, but also to constrain or even prohibit certain types of activities. The evaluation therefore recommended the establishment of buffer zones, which would be delineated in such a way as to take into account the specific measures to be put in place in terms of planning and protection policies.

The World Heritage Committee approved the inscription of the property in its Decision 44 COM 8.25, recommending that the States Parties establish “a buffer zone, in order to ensure the protection of the component parts from any potential threats, through a minor boundary modification process, to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2023”.

Modification  
The request for a minor boundary modification to establish a buffer zone for each of the property’s component parts follows the recommendation of the World Heritage Committee.

The proposed buffer zones are delineated in such a way as to integrate the immediate environment of the component parts and to control their development, in order to reinforce their protection, and to preserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The boundaries follow, where possible, the sub-plots of agricultural areas or natural areas immediately adjacent to the component parts, as agriculture and livestock farming are an integral part of the landscape and the historical development of the colonies. In some places, development areas have also been added to the proposed boundaries, including villages, recreation areas and areas with social and economic functions. As for the Wortel component part, it should be noted that the northern part of the property coincides with the border between Belgium and the Netherlands. This part of the proposed buffer zone, which corresponds to a nature reserve, is therefore cross-border with the Netherlands.

Finally, in terms of protection, the request provides a detailed inventory of the different types of protection and legal provisions and their implications in force for each of the identified areas (agricultural area, natural area, villages, recreation area, scenic agricultural area, nature reserve, social and economic functions) in the proposed buffer zones.

ICOMOS considers that the buffer zones will provide an additional layer of protection for the property as a whole,
as they will ensure that development projects in the immediate vicinity of the components parts of the property that could have a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value are controlled.

ICOMOS considers, however, that it would have been useful to give more details on the nature of the existing modern development elements and in particular those located in the recreational areas or those with social and economic functions in Frederiksoord and Veenhuizen, in order to better appreciate the relevance of their inclusion in the proposed buffer zones.

3 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zones for the Colonies of Benevolence, Belgium, Netherlands, be approved.
Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone for component part: "Wortel" (BE) (February 2023)
Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone for component part: "Frederiksoord-Wilhelminaoord" (NL) (February 2023)
Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone for component part: "Veenhuizen" (NL) (February 2023)
Ancient City of Nessebar (Bulgaria)
No 217bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Bulgaria

Name of property
Ancient City of Nessebar

Location
Burgas Province

Inscription
1983

Brief description
Situated on a rocky peninsula on the Black Sea, the more than 3,000-year-old site of Nessebar was originally a Thracian settlement (Menebria). At the beginning of the 6th century BC, the city became a Greek colony. The city's remains, which date mostly from the Hellenistic period, include the acropolis, a temple of Apollo, an agora and a wall from the Thracian fortifications. Among other monuments, the Stara Mitropolia Basilica and the fortress date from the Middle Ages, when this was one of the most important Byzantine towns on the west coast of the Black Sea. Wooden houses built in the 19th century are typical of the Black Sea architecture of the period.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background
The Ancient City of Nessebar was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1983 on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv).

In 2008, the State Party clarified the boundaries and confirmed the size of the property at 27.1 ha and of the buffer zone at 1245.6 ha (Decision 32 COM 8D). The latter includes a maritime belt in the Black Sea around the peninsula to protect underwater archaeological vestiges of the Ancient City of Nessebar.

The submerged archaeological sites were first investigated between 1960 and 1984. In the 1980s and 1990s, some of them, identified along the northern and north-western shore of the peninsula, were covered as a result of structural works of reinforcement of the coastline. Underwater archaeological works were undertaken again in 2015, in response to the Municipality's project to expand the Severna Buna Fishing Port in the north-western part of the peninsula. The Bulgarian Centre for Underwater Archaeology carried out a geophysical survey campaign, which suggested the presence of buried structures. In 2017, a new program dedicated to underwater archaeological sites of the Ancient City of Nessebar was launched by the Centre for Underwater Archaeology with the aim of drawing up a status report on the submerged structures, documenting them and undertaking photogrammetric recording.

In 2010, a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was adopted for the Ancient City of Nessebar (Decision 34 COM 8E).

The same year, a joint WHC-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited the property. It indicated that continued absence of an adequate management and protection framework for the Ancient City of Nessebar, including a conservation master plan that would address both the archaeological remains in the city and underwater, could present threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

In 2012, the ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission further informed that, while the State Party already recognised in the nomination dossier the existence and importance of the underwater archaeological vestiges, no activities related to this heritage had been undertaken since the inscription of the property. The mission recommended developing a project proposal for underwater area protection within the framework of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001).

In 2015, a WHC-ICOMOS advisory mission to the property took place, joined by the UNESCO Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB) to the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. The mission evaluated the underwater archaeological structures located in the buffer zone and recommended that a minor boundary modification be proposed to include this heritage within the boundary of the property. The mission further assessed the ongoing developments at the surrounding sea coastline and port development projects, which had potential to endanger the preservation of underwater archaeological remains, and recommended considering underwater cultural heritage values in the heritage impact assessment of any development projects proposed on the sea coastline.

In 2018, a joint WHC-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited the property. It urged the State Party to undertake systematic archaeological investigations of
the submerged remains and reiterated the recommendation of the 2017 advisory mission for the State Party to consider proposing a minor boundary modification to include the underwater structures within the boundary of the property. The mission also considered that the improvement of port facilities and the increase in maritime traffic around the peninsula were potential factors of degradation or destruction of the underwater vestiges, and indicated that no intervention on the seabed that may affect the archaeological sites should be undertaken and navigation controlled. The mission recommended that the State Party should seek in the long-term to relocate the Nessebar Port Terminal and the Marina Nessebar facilities outside of the peninsula.

In 2019, the World Heritage Committee urged the State Party to continue to undertake research in anticipation of a future minor boundary modification to include all underwater archaeological remains of the ancient town (Decision 43 COM 7B.81).

In 2021, the World Heritage Committee again requested the State Party to finalise promptly the research necessary for a future minor boundary modification request (Decision 44 COM 7B.154).

**Modification**

The requested modification proposes an extension of the area of the property by 7.61 ha by adding three polygonal sections of the aquatic part of the buffer zone, anchored to the littoral to the northwest, southeast, and south of the peninsula. The size of the property will increase to 34.71 ha, while the area of the buffer zone will be reduced to 1237.99 ha after the modification. The State Party has submitted maps with the new perimeter, which now runs partly at sea, and provided coordinates of the angles of the three added sections.

The northwest section includes submerged remnants of a linear stone structure, and walls of a Byzantine fortress from the 6th century built in *opus mixtum*, which correspond with archaeological vestiges found on the ground at the western end of the peninsula.

The southeast section includes archaeological remains of different structures: a wall of an early Byzantine fortress built in *opus mixtum*, a wall of a fortress with a tower probably from the Late Classical or Hellenistic period, another wall and a tower of a fortress from the end of the Classical or Hellenistic period, a fortress wall made of large blocks likely dating to the Late Classical or Hellenistic period, a semi-circular wall that may be associated with the first fortification system of Messambria (also known as Menebria), and two breakwaters – one L-shaped and the other linear – from Late Antiquity or later. These remains have been partly disturbed as a result of the construction of a pier in this part of the peninsula.

The south section encompasses submerged vestiges of an antique street that run along the contemporary shoreline.

The proposed additions to the area of the property are said to be an integral part of the Ancient City of Nessebar. The underwater archaeological vestiges testify to the changes in the sea coastline and the different outlines of the city at different periods, thus contributing to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The proposed modification will not carry implications for the current management measures and protection mechanisms applicable to the land area of the property, which is regulated by virtue of Cultural Heritage Law (Official Gazette No. 19 of 2009), Ordinance No. 8 of the Culture Committee and the Committee on Architecture and Public Works of the Architectural-Historical Reserves Sozopol and Nessebar /SG 9/1981, as well as the Spatial Planning Act (Official Gazette No 1 of 2001 with amendments). At the municipal level, it is regulated by the Construction and Regulatory Plan of the Ancient City of Nessebar from 1981 and the preliminary Construction and Regulatory Plan adopted in 1991.

The aquatic sections that are proposed as extensions to the property are managed as underwater archaeological research territory through the Cultural Heritage Law. New constructions within these areas are prohibited, with the exception of infrastructure that serves protection of the immovable underwater cultural heritage or is used to provide the necessary minimum access to these sites; the latter regulated through Ordinance No. H-7 of 12.06.2008. Maintenance and cleaning as well as tourism development are under control of the Centre for Underwater Archaeology in coordination with the Ministry of Environment and Water. Activities allowed within the three aquatic sections are regulated through the protection regime adopted by the State Party in 2015 for the buffer zone of the property (Minister of Culture Order No. RD 9R-14 of 06.05.2015 /SG No. 51 of 2015). They require pre-approval of the Ministry of Culture in communication with the Centre for Underwater Archaeology and the National Institute for Immovable Cultural Heritage, and must be carried out under archaeological supervision.

The Conservation and Management Plan for the property, which is to be developed within six months, will include specific conservation measures for the underwater vestiges as attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed minor modification of the boundary of the property is appropriate. It will contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value and strengthen the integrity of the Ancient City of Nessebar.

However, ICOMOS considers that while the boundary of the property as shown on the provided maps corresponds to the original boundary approved by the
World Heritage Committee in 2008, aside for the now proposed aquatic additions, the boundary of the buffer zone differs from the originally approved one. The difference relates to the mainland area of Nessebar, which constitutes the western end of the buffer zone.

Indeed, ICOMOS and WHC missions that visited the property in 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2018 indicated the need for a revision of the buffer zone on the mainland in order to protect the area of the necropolis located in this part of Nessebar, and to maintain a green area which constitutes a section of the coastline visible from the peninsula. However, a formal request for the modification of the boundary of the buffer zone has not been thus far submitted by the State Party.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the Ancient City of Nessebar, Bulgaria, be approved.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Formally proposing a minor boundary modification for the buffer zone of the property, in response to the recommendations provided by ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre in 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2018;

b) Completing the Conservation and Management Plan for the Ancient City of Nessebar, and considering the underwater archaeological vestiges in all areas of management and planning by making provisions for specific regimes for conservation, management, sustainable development, and monitoring of this heritage,

c) Reinforcing and expanding the research programme for the underwater cultural heritage of the Ancient City of Nessebar as an integral part of developing the national inventory,

d) Considering underwater cultural heritage values as part of heritage impact assessment of any new development along the coastline,

e) Launching a feasibility study on the underwater archaeological sites to explore how to make them accessible to the public through maritime archaeological routes and pursuing other interpretation initiatives,

f) Establishing a capacity-building programme in cooperation with UNESCO and its partners to improve the identification, evaluation, research and protection of underwater cultural heritage,

g) Not undertaking any intervention on the seabed that may affect underwater archaeological vestiges and controlling navigation around the peninsula,

h) Considering, in the long-term, relocation of the Nessebar Port Terminal and the Marina Nessebar facilities outside of the peninsula;

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party submit a revised map at the appropriate scale, showing the boundary of the property as approved following this minor boundary modification request, and the buffer zone as clarified in 2008.
Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone (February 2023)
Prehistoric Sites and Decorated Caves of the Vézère Valley (France)  
No 85bis

1 Basic information

State Party  
France

Name of property  
Prehistoric Sites and Decorated Caves of the Vézère Valley

Location  
Communes of Les Eyzies de Tayac, Tursac, Montignac-sur-Vézère, Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère, Marquay, Manaurie-Rouffignac, Saint-Cirq-du Bugue; Department of the Dordogne  
Nouvelle-Aquitaine region

Inscription  
1979

Brief description  
Located in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region in the Department of the Dordogne, the Vézère Valley is a privileged prehistoric territory that contains more than 150 deposits dating back to Paleolithic times and about thirty decorated caves. This vast territory of roughly thirty kilometres by forty kilometres is of outstanding interest from the ethnological, anthropological and aesthetic point of view with its cave paintings, in particular those of the Lascaux Cave, discovered in 1940. It also enabled the establishment of a chronological cadre for the prehistoric civilisations of the European Quaternary Period. This property comprises fifteen prehistoric sites that bear witness to a strong Paleolithic occupation: decorated caves, funerary places, workshops, exploitation areas for raw materials, habitats, hunting scenes. Furthermore, its potential as an archaeological reserve is considerable, as demonstrated by the discoveries carried out as preventive excavations since its inscription on the World Heritage List.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report  
10 March 2023

2 Issued raised

Background  
In 2006, the Periodic Report for Cycle 1 Section II pointed out that there was no buffer zone, and that it was necessary to create one; the State Party then declared that it would envision creating a buffer zone.

From 2006 to 2011, the conservation situation of the property was a matter of concern, and it was regularly examined by the World Heritage Committee (Decisions 30 COM 7B 6; 32 COM 7B.88; 33 COM 7B.100; 34 COM 7B.85 and 34 COM 7B.92); the essential issues were conservation problems in the main decorated cave and the scientific management of this situation. In March 2009, the property was examined by an ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission. Following the closure of underground access to visitors, a project for a replica cave emerged. In accordance with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the World Heritage Committee asked to be kept informed at all stages of this tourism project (35 COM 7B.92).

From 2013 to 2015, it seems that the state of conservation of the cave paintings had stabilised and was under control (37 COM 7B.74 and 39 COM 7B.77); the State Party was nevertheless asked to provide information and an impact assessment with regard to the various projects outside the property itself, such as the replica of part of the main cave, the access roads and the new vehicle parking areas.

In 2014, the Periodic Report for Cycle 2 Section II set out the results of the retrospective inventory, particularly as regards the clarification of the property boundaries. The boundaries were shown on a new map approved by the World Heritage Committee (38 COM 8D). However, the property still had no buffer zone.

The state of conservation report on the property, prepared by the State Party (January 2015), provided a comprehensive overview of the management of the property following the stabilisation of its state of conservation. It found that the state of the main cave was “convalescent”. The management measures presented comprised very restricted access to the decorated cave, scientific research on the factors affecting the state of conservation of the property, the “sanctuarisation” of the Lascaux hill, and the creation of the “Lascaux IV” replica. It was thus the property itself, and then its direct environmental context (geological, climatic, hydrological, etc.) and a new way of presenting it to the public, that were the focuses of attention for the management partners and the scientific advisors up to this stage.

Decision 42 COM 8E in 2018 ratified the retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value proposed by the State Party.

The need to define a buffer zone has long remained a matter of secondary importance, in light of the urgency and imperative need to solve the problems of sustainable conservation of the property itself. A number of questions concerning the use of the nearby areas and their strict control did however arise, related on the one hand to the conservation of the property and its Outstanding Universal Value, and on the other hand to the communication of the OUV to the general public and to local inhabitants, in particular by means of the construction of the Lascaux IV replica.
The definition of a buffer zone for the property is a recent initiative by the State Party, reflecting the application of the Heritage Code (Code du patrimoine, 2004) and the LCAP Law (2016) relating to the built and archaeological heritage and museums, and particularly the Site Patrimonial Remarquable scheme (SPR). These legal provisions refer to the requirements set out in the World Heritage Convention, calling on the authorities concerned to establish and manage a buffer zone around the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, and pointing out the necessity of developing a management system and plan.

The State Party submitted a minor boundary modification request in 2021, which was examined by the World Heritage Committee during its session of the same year.

At that time, ICOMOS considered that the proposed buffer zone was adequately justified and the protection proposals appropriate. However, approval of the protection mechanisms by the local authorities was not provided, nor was the adoption of the management plan incorporating these mechanisms.

The World Heritage Committee adopted the following Decision 44 COM 8B.62:

The World Heritage Committee, 1. Having examined Documents WHC/21/44.COM/8B.Add and WHC/21/44.COM/8B1.Add, 2. Refers the proposed buffer zone for Prehistoric Sites and Decorated Caves of the Vézère Valley, France, back to the State Party in order to allow it to: 1. Provide a timeframe for the municipal and/or inter-municipal approvals of the regulatory measures associated with the proposed buffer zone, and their incorporation in local town planning documents, in order to render them operational, 2. Provide a timeframe for the finalisation, adoption and implementation of the management plan for the property, especially with regards to tourism management and facilities.  

Modification

The serial property comprises fifteen component parts that are separate but geographically close to each other, with a total area of 105,733 ha, for which the State Party proposes a single buffer zone of 17,022 ha. It comprises the whole of the Vézère Valley from Montignac to Limeuil, taking into account the Beunes Valleys.

The State Party has provided several maps indicating the proposed boundaries of the buffer zone and the archaeological zones.

The State Party points out that the buffer zone perimeter must be defined in such a way as to enable control over human activities and the monitoring of physical factors that could affect the atmosphere underground in the decorated caves. More generally, the proposed buffer zone will ensure the sustainable conservation of the underground archaeological and heritage assets. Of particular importance are controlling tourism flows and modifications to the built structures, and preventing pollution and fire risks. It will also enable a better knowledge of the environmental, climatic and hydrological parameters, which play a major role in the long-term conservation of the decorated caves. The buffer zone will thus contribute to a more global management approach to the component parts, which until now has been considered individually for each site individually.

The State Party has also specified the forms of protection. It points out that the obligation of proposing a buffer zone for a property inscribed on the World Heritage List has been incorporated into the Heritage Code.

The mechanisms of legal protection that apply in the buffer zone area are as follows:

- The fifteen sites forming the property are listed as Historic Monuments, and have their own protected surroundings; any intervention is subject to an authorisation by the Prefect of the region.
- The SPR (Site patrimonial remarquable) of Eyzies-de-Tayac-Sireuil has an area of some 3,904 ha; it is therefore covered by a number of heritage protection measures. Any building work in this sector is conducted under the control of the state.
- In the ZPPA areas (Zones de présomption de prescription archéologiques), all town planning applications registered are subject to the decision of the Prefect of the region.
- In the sector of the Listed site “Vallée de la Vézère et sa confluence avec les Beunes - Grotte de Rouffignac - La Ferrassie”, all building work is conducted under the control of the State; the listed site itself is surrounded by a registered site in which building work is also under the control of the administration of the State Party.

The proposed buffer zone is furthermore covered by several regulatory or administrative protection plans, as set out in local planning documents ("Plan local d’urbanisme" and "Plan local d’urbanisme intercommunal") which reinforce the protective mechanisms.

As regards the involvement of the local authorities in the protection of the property, the Heritage Code states that the buffer zone is defined “in conjunction with the territorial authorities concerned and then adopted by the administrative authority” (article L.612-1, paragraph 2). It is then adopted by the Prefect of the region (L.612-1, R.612-1 and R.612-2). These provisions have been complied with.

The whole of the buffer zone is covered by at least one of the protection mechanisms mentioned. Furthermore the buffer zone itself bears the French label of Grands Sites de France, which covers a series of measures for the protection and enhancement of the property as a whole, with regard to the management plan currently in preparation.
However, the management of environmental issues does not seem to have been sufficiently taken into account in the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. In view of its underground nature, the property is particularly sensitive to the hydrogeological situation of its environment. The pressures exerted by human activities and land use modes (housing, agriculture, industrial and craft activities, tourism), in the buffer zone, are all factors which can affect the hydrogeological situation of the property, by pollution linked to agriculture (nitrates, pesticides), to industry and craft activities (organic pollutants, heavy metals, nanoparticles) and to the disposal of domestic wastewater after a degree of treatment that varies depending on the location.

The legal protection mechanisms presented, although enabling effective control and management of the aspect of building work and alterations inside the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone, have however only a slight effect on changes in the hydrogeological characteristics of the property and its buffer zone.

ICOMOS considers that the buffer zone boundaries are justified and that appropriate protection mechanisms have been proposed for the whole buffer zone.

ICOMOS considers that the State Party, in response to the World Heritage Committee decision 44 COM 8B.22, has indicated that it has drawn up the proposed buffer zone in conjunction with the territorial authorities, in accordance with the Heritage Code recommendations. It also mentions the regulatory role of these authorities through local urban planning documents.

ICOMOS notes however that the management plan has still not been promulgated by the various parties involved in the management of the property, to ensure that protection is proactive and not solely regulatory, especially for tourism facilities and development.

ICOMOS also notes that the protection of groundwater in the Vézère Valley requires a refined strategy for the sustainable management of the resource and its treatment after use, accompanied by a research strategy. The latter should enable a highly detailed characterisation of the processes involved, and the monitoring and modelling of the behaviour of the hydrosystems of the Vézère Valley, in light of hypotheses for tourism frequentation, agricultural land management, and the climate change now taking place.

3 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Prehistoric Sites and Decorated Caves of the Vézère Valley, France, be approved.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Providing a timeframe for the finalisation, adoption and implementation of the management plan, especially for tourism facilities and development,

b) Proposing a project for the study, monitoring and regulation of human activities with regard to their long-term impact on:

i) The water resource and its foreseeable evolution across the whole of the property and its buffer zone,

ii) The hydrogeological environment of the property and its buffer zone, changes in which could affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property in a mid-term to long-term perspective,

iii) The integration of appropriate regulations into the town planning documents as approved by the local authorities;
Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone (February 2023)
Historic Centre of Rome  
(Holy See, Italy)  
No 91quater

1 Basic information

States Parties  
Holy See  
Italy  
(each according to its jurisdiction)

Name of property  
Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in that City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura

Locations  
City of Rome  
Holy See

Inscription  
1980, 1990

Brief description  
Founded, according to legend, by Romulus and Remus in 753 BC, Rome was first the centre of the Roman Republic, then of the Roman Empire, and it became the capital of the Christian world in the 4th century. The World Heritage site, extended in 1990 to the walls of Urban VIII, includes some of the major monuments of antiquity such as the Forums, the Mausoleum of Augustus, the Mausoleum of Hadrian, the Pantheon, Trajan’s Column and the Column of Marcus Aurelius, as well as the religious and public buildings of papal Rome.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report  
10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background  
The Historic Centre of Rome was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980 on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi) and extended in 1990 to include extraterritorial properties of the Holy See in the area west of the Tiber River as far as St Peter’s Square including the area up to the walls of Urban VIII. The property has been inscribed on the World Heritage List without buffer zone.

Following discrepancies in the perimeter of the property resulting from this extension in 1990, the World Heritage Committee (Decision 39 COM 8B.43) approved a minor modification to the boundary of the property in 2015, and requested the States Parties to submit an amended cadastral map showing the inclusion of the bridge Regina Margherita within the property boundary and the boundary of the area protected by the New Town Planning Scheme. It was also requested to clarify the total area of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. Following the submission of the requested documents by the State Party in 2015, the approved boundary of the inscribed property is 1,468.17 ha of which 1,430.80 referring to the Historic Centre of Rome and 38.90 ha to the Holy See.

The Periodic Reporting exercise of 2014 – section II mentioned the need for the establishment of a buffer zone.

The States Parties have taken steps to define a buffer zone around the property with the establishment of a Technical Scientific Committee pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between the Municipality of Rome, the Lazio Region, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, the Vicariate of Rome, and representatives of the Holy See in 2009. The Technical Scientific Committee was mandated to prepare the management plan for the property and engaged in preliminary studies to define a buffer zone as part of this assignment.

In 2015, the Transboundary Coordination Group was created after the signature of a memorandum of understanding between Italy and the Holy See, consolidated with a second memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, the Lazio Region and the Municipality of Rome approved by Rome’s Government in 2017. The Transboundary Coordination Group initiated the process of validation of the proposed delineation for the buffer zone, and this was approved by the Technical Scientific Committee in 2015.

In 2020, a buffer zone proposed by the Transboundary Coordination Group was submitted as a minor boundary modification, together with a Technical Report which detailed the extensive background studies that had been carried out.

This proposal covered an area of 5,893.83 ha including 5,887.09 ha under the jurisdiction of Italy and 6.74 ha under the authority of the Holy See.

The World Heritage Committee referred back the proposal to the States Parties in its decision 44 COM 8B.55:

The World Heritage Committee,
1. Having examined Documents WHC/21/44.COM/8B and WHC/21/44.COM/INF.8B1,
2. Refers the proposed buffer zone of the Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in that City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura, Holy See and Italy, back to the States Parties in order to allow them to:
1. Consider extension of the proposed boundary of the buffer zone based on further examination of the conceptual and physical interconnections between the property and its immediate setting.

2. Provide further details on the mechanisms in place in the proposed buffer zone to assess the impact of development projects on the World Heritage property.

3. Indicate how and when the delimitations of the proposed buffer zone will be transcribed into existing local and national regulations in order to provide a statutory status to its boundaries.


Modification
The revised minor boundary modification that has been submitted seems to cover an area of 7,158.933 ha including 7,152.193 ha under the jurisdiction of Italy and 6.74 ha under the authority of the Holy See. These figures will have to be confirmed because it seems that there is an error in the determination of the area in hectares of the buffer zone in the minor boundary modification request.

This revised boundary has been delineated as a response to the requests for an expansion of the perimeter in certain key areas, in particular in the areas of Ponte Milvio, the Garden City, Tuscolano, and the Appia Antica Park. It has been drawn to reflect the following criteria: archaeological and visual intervisibility continuity; main access roads, visual cones and panoramic points; railway belt; villas and historic parks; Tiber River; fabrics of the General Urban Plan (GUP); main areas of urban transformation; and areas necessary to service the property.

It has also adopted an Historic Urban Landscape approach; used existing protection measures which are considered adequate; acknowledged regeneration projects in “Transformation areas” defined under the General Urban Plan (GUP); and respected the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), Goal no.11.

The proposed buffer zone boundary has been extended to the north, north-east, south-west, west and south-west as follows:

To the north around the Ponte Milvio
The boundary has been extended beyond Piazzale Ponte Milvio to an area which represents the historic entrance to Rome from the north, demonstrating a direct cultural interconnection with the property. It now includes:

- The Olympic Village and the Flaminio district, an important area of urban transformation as well as a new cultural district;
- The Park of Tor di Quinto to the north of the Tiber, and the Villa Glori, Villa Ada and Villa Borghese to the south of the Tiber;
- The area around the Acqua Acetosa sports facilities and the Islamic Mosque in Rome;
- The districts of Pinciano and Parioli to the east of Viale Tiziano (between Villa Glori, Villa Ada and Villa Borghese);
- The catacombs of Via Salaria and Via Nomentana.

To the northeast around the Garden City
This boundary has been extended to reflect some of the main roads connecting the city with its hinterland, such as Via Salaria, Via Nomentana, Via Tiburtina, as well as two main railway junctions, Termini and Tiburtina Stations. It now includes:

- Trieste district with Villa Chigi, Parco Virgiliano, Villa Leopardi and Villa Blanc the mausoleum of Santa Costanza and the Basilica di Sant'Agnese fuori le Mura;
- The Garden City district, the Aniene Park and Nomentano Bridge;
- The Nomentano district with Villa Torlonia and Villa Paganini and the Macro Museum;
- The Tiburtino and San Lorenzo districts with the monumental complex of Verano (Monumental Cemetery) and the Sapienza University.

To the south-east around the Tuscolano quarter
This area encompasses Porta Maggiore, the first section of the consular roads (Via Casilina and Via Prenestina) and the historical-monumental route of Via Appia Antica, as well as two of the main road axes from the south-east that connect with Ciampino airport (Via Tuscolana and Via Appia Nuova). It now includes:

- The western part of the Pigneto district and the Appio Latino district;
- Torre del Fisciale Park;
- INA House buildings;
- Northern part of Appia Antica Regional Park and Appia Antica Archaeological Park, tombs of the Via Latina, Caffarella, Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella, Circus and Villa of Massenzio, and the Tenuta di Tor Marancia;
- Catacombs of San Callisto, Domitilla and San Sebastiano.

To the south-west
This area is crossed by the River Tiber and also by the important functional access routes from the south (Via Cristoforo Colombo and Via Ostiense, Viale Guglielmo Marconi) and includes the railway junctions of Rome-Lido, Ostiense and Trastevere Stations. It now includes:
To the west

This area includes the historical axes of Via Trionfale and Via Aurelia Antica and important axes of connection with the Large Ring Road (G.R.A. Grande Raccordo Anulare). It now includes:

- The districts of Monteverde Vecchio and Monte Mario;
- The area of Porta Portese and Viale Trastevere;
- Villa Doria Pamphilj Park and Pineto Urban Regional Park/Pineta Sacchetti;
- The Aurelio, Prati, Balduina, Trionfale and Vittoria districts;
- The area of the Foro Italicco with the Central Tennis Stadium and the Olympic Park.

The States Parties acknowledges the constant anthropogenic pressure which the property faces. The identification of a buffer zone is seen as essential for the full protection, conservation and enhancement of the property and to allow control of development, particularly interventions likely to impact the skyline of the property and/or its integrity.

The elaboration of the buffer zone has offered the opportunity for a new reflection on how structural, visual and socio-economic aspects outside the property can be linked to it, and how the buffer can contribute to the protection of the integrity and authenticity of the urban setting, the protection of the urban skyline and the promotion of sustainable development of the property.

To achieve these objectives, it is considered that the existing protection, that includes the National Laws, Holy Law, Regional Laws, the Regional Landscape Territorial Plan (PTPR), and Rome General Urban Plan (GUP), is adequate.

What remains unclear is whether and how the proposed buffer zone will be transcribed into existing local and national regulations and thus how existing current instruments and tools will be used to ensure the buffer zone offers an effective additional layer of protection for the Outstanding Universal Value of the property in relation to new developments, and in particular in the

“Transformation areas” defined under the General Urban Plan (GUP).

Although it is stated that the establishment of the buffer zone is part of an organic and well-established platform for analysing and monitoring the conservation status of the property, what has not been clarified is how the overall management structure of the property relates to the buffer zone.

The Transboundary Coordination Group, which was set up to define the buffer zone, has now been tasked with monitoring the conservation status of the property and its buffer zone according to the provisions of the World Heritage Convention; evaluating conservation-related issues of the property; examining management methods according to the highest scientific standards; examining any action that could jeopardise the Outstanding Universal Value of the property; and issuing general recommendations on best practices.

The Transboundary Coordination Group is also mandated to identify and invite additional parties in order to develop, on a case by case basis, solutions that protect the property. The Group is thus a key instrument in monitoring the protection of the buffer zone, and includes representatives of all the authorities involved in the management of the property.

Quite how the Transboundary Coordination Group relates to the management of the property is unclear as no management plan has yet been finalised. The Group was mandated to draft the management plan and it is stated that the boundaries of the buffer zone will be included in the strategies identified in the plan, but no details have been provided on its progress or status.

Overall, ICOMOS welcome the detailed and analytical response of the States Parties to the request of the World Heritage Committee to extend the proposed buffer zone, and considers that what is now proposed is of suitable size to reflect both the complexity and substance of the immediate setting of the property and the interrelationship between the two. The criteria defined and used to inform the boundaries have set out clearly how the buffer zone supports the property.

While ICOMOS welcomes the extended mandate of the Transboundary Coordination Group to include a monitoring role for the buffer zone, it considers that the management structure for the buffer zone should be linked to that for the property in order that the buffer zone can be managed for how it supports the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

The absence of a finalised management plan still remains an important issue as it should supply the link between the property and its buffer zone. ICOMOS reiterates its view that the management plan, which has been under preparation since 2006, need to be completed as a matter of urgency.
3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone of the Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in that City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura, Holy See, Italy, be approved.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the States Parties give consideration to the following:

a) Completing the management plan of the property as a matter of utmost urgency, and submitting it to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS,

b) Submitting details of how and when the delimitations of the proposed buffer zone will be transcribed into existing local and national regulations in order to provide a statutory status for its boundaries,

c) Integrating into the management mechanisms, a systematic application of Heritage Impact Assessment for any plan and project that may impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.
Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone (February 2023)
1 Basic information

State Party
Spain

Name of property
Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro, a landscape of Arts and Sciences

Location
Municipality of Madrid

Inscription
2021

Brief description
The Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro is a cultural landscape that evolved since the creation of the tree-lined Paseo del Prado avenue, a prototype of the Hispanic alameda, in the 16th century. The avenue features major fountains and is surrounded by prestigious buildings. The site embodies a new idea of urban space and development from the enlightened absolutist period of the 18th century. Buildings dedicated to the arts and sciences join others in the site that are devoted to industry, healthcare and research. Collectively, they illustrate the aspiration for a utopian society during the height of the Spanish Empire, linked to the enlightened idea of democratisation of knowledge, and exercised major influence in Latin America. The Jardines del Buen Retiro (Garden of Pleasant Retreat), a remnant of a 17th century palace, constitutes the largest part of the property. The site also houses the terraced Royal Botanical Garden and the largely residential neighbourhood of Barrio Jerónimos with its rich variety of 19th and 20th century buildings that include cultural and scientific venues.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background
The Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2021 on the basis of criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi), without a buffer zone. This proposal relates to establishing a buffer zone for the property.

At the time of inscription of the property, the World Heritage Committee requested the establishment of "an adequate buffer zone according to the option provided by the State Party on the basis of the Historical Centre in the Madrid General Urban Development Plan (PGOUM)" (Decision 44COM 8B.21).

The State Party submitted a state of conservation report to the World Heritage Centre in November 2022 indicating progress towards defining a buffer zone.

Modification
The area proposed by the State Party for the buffer zone of Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro is of 2.255 ha.

The proposed buffer zone is mostly achieved through the Special Protection Area APE 00.01 under the Madrid General Urban Development Plan. A smaller area in the south of the proposed buffer zone is part of the Historic Quarter of the City of Madrid, registered as a Site of Cultural Interest (BIC) in the category of Historic Site, declared under Decree 42/1995 of 27 April 1995. The Site of Cultural Interest is larger than the area included in the proposed buffer zone to the south, and overlaps the Special Protection Area.

The Special Protection Area surrounds the property to the north, east, part of the south, and to the west. The Site of Cultural Interest, which completes the proposed buffer zone to the south, is roughly a triangular area.

The boundaries of the proposed buffer zone follow a series of roads, the Manzanares river to the west and south and go along Parque del Oeste to the north west. The large railway complex of the Atocha train station is included to the south.

Protection for the proposed buffer zone is achieved through urban planning and Historic Heritage laws. The Special Protection Area is included within the Madrid General Urban Development Plan, an urban planning document with legal status. The Special Protection Area addresses the overlap of heritage and urban development protection. This protection includes visual points from and towards the property within the city. While some tall buildings pre-date the Madrid General Urban Development Plan of 1997, such developments are no longer allowed.

As the smaller area in the south of the proposed buffer zone is part of the Site of Cultural Interest area, it benefits from the highest possible level of heritage protection. The Historic Quarter of the City of Madrid and its protected environment are also included in the provisions of the Madrid General Urban Development Plan under the Special Protection Area APE 00.01, as the two areas overlap.

The proposed buffer zone is within the management of the City of Madrid and will be managed through similar mechanisms as applied to the property itself.

The proposed buffer zone adequately responds to the request of the World Heritage Committee to establish a buffer zone on the basis of the Historical Centre in the
Madrid General Urban Development Plan. The buffer zone extends in all directions around the property to include urban areas, parks and transport infrastructure. The extent of the proposed buffer zone around the property varies, and is relatively large to the north and west.

The western part of the proposed buffer zone might have been further extended to include the Parque de la Virgen de Puerto and Parque del Oeste. However, the considerable size of the proposed buffer zone to the west, about two kilometres to the nearest relevant point, and the park character of the adjacent areas, suggest that the current proposal is adequate. It is also understood that some of these park areas are not covered by Special Protection Area APE 00.01.

ICOMOS considers that the protection provided by the proposed buffer zone is adequate, being based on urban planning for the Historic Quarter of the City of Madrid and its protected environment, and Historic Heritage laws. For instance, tall building developments are no longer allowed.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed buffer zone for the Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro will contribute to add an additional layer of protection to the property and strengthen its management.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro, Spain, be approved.
Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone (February 2023)
Bellinzona (Switzerland) No 884bis

1 Basic information

State Party
Switzerland

Name of property
Three Castles, Defensive Wall and Ramparts of the Market-Town of Bellinzona

Location
Bellinzona
Canton of Ticino

Inscription
2000

Brief description
The Bellinzona site consists of a group of fortifications grouped around the castle of Castelgrande, which stands on a rocky peak looking out over the entire Ticino valley. Running from the castle, a series of fortified walls protect the ancient town and block the passage through the Ticino valley. A second castle (Montebello) forms an integral part of the fortifications, while a third but separate castle (Sasso Corbaro) was built on an isolated rocky promontory south-east of the other fortifications.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background
The World Heritage Committee inscribed the property in 2000 on the basis of criterion (iv). A map of the attributes of the property was drawn up for the purposes of inscription, but the State Party did not propose a buffer zone. The retrospective declaration of Outstanding Universal Value was adopted in 2013 (Decision 37 COM 8E).

Modification
The purpose of this minor boundary modification proposal is to create a buffer zone for the property.

The proposed buffer zone has an area of 90,8061 ha. Its basic purpose is the monitoring of the inscribed property and the nearby areas, and particularly the control of urbanisation and architectural interventions. This approach is aimed at preserving the landscape characteristics of the property, and thus allowing the emergence of the monumental qualities of the castles, which are testimony to medieval military engineering.

The buffer zone has been designed from the perspective of the spatio-temporal continuity of the town, in which the urban fabrics immediately outside the walls form an integral part of the ensemble, and which includes the historic centre and fabrics from periods up to the 20th century and more recent constructions. Rather than applying strict urban stratification based on identifying strata from different historic periods, the approach is more coherent, enabling the perception of harmonious urban continuity.

The delineation of the buffer zone is also based on natural features wherever possible. It follows the topography to the north, in line with the parallelism of the medieval architecture, and is aligned with the natural boundary of the River Dragonato to the south, including a wide strip of Alpine hills. It also includes the Alpine meadows near the Castle of Sasso Corbaro to the east, and then runs down the slopes to the banks of the Ticino to the west, to include the Murata.

To the north, the perimeter line changes direction at the intersection of the Via Henri Guisan and the Via San Giovanni. This change of direction is probably intended to enable the inclusion of the Church of San Giovanni in the buffer zone, given that the angle provides no additional protection for the view of Castelgrande, and that only the church is included in the block that terminates at its limit facing the Via cancelliere Molo.

The State Party indicates that the buffer zone was designed on the basis of a contextual analysis, taking account of relations and visual axes both towards and from the property. However, ICOMOS notes that in the valley area to the west, where the altitude is low and the emerging character of the attributes disappears, visibility is substantially reduced. Post-inscription developments along the axis in the direction of Italian Lombardy do not preserve the visual relationships with the Murata, even inside the buffer zone.

It is important to note furthermore that the Murata is completely hemmed in by recently built structures on either side of the Via Murata. The adjacent buildings block the panoramic view from the north side, and their use cannot be considered compatible with the character of the property.

It should also be stressed that the whole of the zone north-west of the Murata and along the Ticino is currently undergoing rapid urban expansion, with some large-scale projects. New projects may be developed on unoccupied land that is not currently urbanised, and this could have an additional impact on views. The considerable size of the recently erected buildings in this zone, including those close to the Murata, is visible on satellite images.

ICOMOS notes that the visual integrity of the zone around the Murata is vulnerable and jeopardises the property's
Outstanding Universal Value. It is recommended that prevention and mitigation measures be taken.

The legal framework governing cultural property protection is set out in the Law of 13 May 1997 on the protection of cultural properties. In accordance with this law and the decision of the State Council of the Canton of Ticino of 12 October 2022, the proposed buffer zone is now considered to be a “Perimetro di rispetto cantonale”. As for protective measures, any project planned or built anywhere in the buffer zone requires a permit issued by the Cantonal Office for Cultural Properties, which is the executive body responsible for managing the property, in conjunction with the Cantonal Commission for Cultural Properties.

The State Party stresses that the property management plan is currently being revised by the relevant authorities. The revision will take the proposed buffer zone into account and will set out the measures necessary to make the protection of the property operational. Protection will be ensured by management focused on the Outstanding Universal Value and its associated attributes.

The legal and governance framework at several levels, and the management system set up to implement the protection measures, are considered to constitute a coherent basis to ensure adequate management inside the property protection perimeter and the buffer zone. ICOMOS notes however that no mention is made of any Heritage Impact Assessments for projects planned inside the buffer zone, which could potentially impair the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed delineation of the buffer zone is adequate. It provides an additional layer of protection for the inscribed property. However, to guarantee stronger protection, ICOMOS recommends that Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms for the buffer zone, and the surrounding area, be integrated into the management system.

3 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Three Castles, Defensive Wall and Ramparts of the Market-Town of Bellinzona, Switzerland, be approved.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Finalising the management plan currently in its revision phase, concentrating on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its attributes, while paying particular attention to the key visual perspectives,

b) Implementing systematic Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms for any project planned or under way inside the buffer zone, and in the surrounding zones, that could have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

c) Introducing building regulations in the urban expansion zone to the north-west of the buffer zone, by setting standards for scale and character. The aims of this regulation are to ensure the architectural compatibility of new buildings with the property, and to preserve views and the landscape,

d) Ensuring that synergies are generated between the property management plan and the national and cantonal urban planning instruments, so as to incorporate urban planning guidelines that take into account visual axes and panoramas, in the urban planning of the buffer zone perimeter and its surrounding and territorial setting;
Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone (February 2023)
V Cultural properties

A Arab States
  Minor modifications to the boundaries

B Asia – Pacific
  Minor modifications to the boundaries

C Europe – North America
  Minor modifications to the boundaries

D Latin America and the Caribbean
  Minor modifications to the boundaries
Historic Centre of Lima
(Peru)
No 500ter

1 Basic information

State Party
Peru

Name of property
Historic Centre of Lima

Location
City of Lima

Inscription
1988 as "Convent Ensemble of San Francisco de Lima", extended in 1991 as "Historic Centre of Lima"

Brief description
The Historic Centre of Lima, known as the “Ciudad de los Reyes” (City of Kings), is located in the Rimac valley, and was founded by Spanish conqueror Francisco Pizarro in January 1535 on the territories led by the Chiefdom of Rimac. Lima was the political, administrative, religious and economic capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru and the most important city of the Spanish dominions in South America. The city played a leading role in the history of the New World from 1542 to the 18th century when the creation of the Viceroyalties of New Granada (1718) and of La Plata (1777) gradually put an end to the omnipotence of the oldest Spanish colony on South America.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background
The Historic Centre of Lima was first inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1988 on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv) as “Convent Ensemble of San Francisco de Lima” including only the convent ensemble of San Francisco built in the 17th century and located in the core of the Historic Centre of Lima. Later in 1991, the property was extended and inscribed under the name “Historic Centre of Lima”, on the basis of criterion (iv), encompassing parts of the historical town located in both sides of the Rimac river. On the left bank, it includes the monuments built around the Plaza de Armas (Plaza Mayor), as well as the entire quarter lying between the Plaza de Armas and the convent of San Francisco. On the right bank, it includes a residential district, known as “el Rimac”, with promenades and one of the oldest convent ensembles, the Monastery of Descalzos.

A clarification of the property boundaries (Decision 37COM 8D) and a Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (Decision 37COM 8E) were adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2013. The Historic Centre of Lima is recognised as a testimony of the architecture and urban development of a Spanish colonial town of the 17th century of great importance in Latin America.

The property has been under reactive monitoring since 2002 (Decision 26COM 21B.64) initially due to plans for modern buildings, and then to assess its state of conservation and the potential impact of proposed and approved projects on its Outstanding Universal Value (Decision 33COM 7B.14S). The World Heritage Committee has requested the State Party to revise the property’s management plan (Decision 27COM 7B.99), to set up a Management Coordination Unit (Decision 28COM 15B.120), and to finalise, approve and implement the new Master Plan (Decision 33COM 7B.14S; Decision 37COM 7B.102; Decision 39COM 7B.92; Decision 41COM 7B.64; Decision 43COM 7B.102). In 2017, the World Heritage Committee welcomed the invitation of the State Party for an Advisory mission to provide technical assistance regarding the issues concerning the management and conservation of the property (Decision 41COM 7B.64).

The 2017 Advisory mission advised the State Party, among other recommendations, to request a minor boundary modification to include the Church of Santiago Apostol del Cercado, the rhomboid square and the former School of the Prince in the neighbourhood El Cercado, located in the buffer zone, depending on their conditions of authenticity and integrity. Furthermore, it suggested that the minor boundary modification includes the monuments of Santa Rosa de las Monjas (Santa Rosa de Santa Maria Church and Monastery), Nuestra Señora del Prado Church and Monastery, “del Corcovado” House, San Bartolomé Hospital and Quinta del Rincón del Prado, also located within the buffer zone.

Based on the recommendations of the 2017 Advisory mission, the World Heritage Committee encouraged the State Party in 2021 to submit a minor boundary modification proposal to include within the property’s boundaries the above-mentioned monuments (Decision 44COM 7B.169).

Modification
In January 2023, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre a request for a minor boundary modification in order to improve the understanding of the property by incorporating attributes that are considered indispensable for the comprehensive expression of its Outstanding Universal Value, and to improve the conservation and management of the property and buffer zone. It consists of three measures:

1. To incorporate in the property’s boundaries six monuments located within the buffer zone. From these, four are adjacent to the property’s boundaries: Prado or
2. To adjust the boundaries of the inscribed polygon at a plot level, in order to improve the management processes and control of the property and to favour its integrity, by including only complete plots in the delimitation.

3. To adjust the boundaries of the buffer zone to include monuments that are currently partially included.

With these modifications, the property that consisted of 259.36 ha would be extended to 277.99 ha, and the buffer zone of 766.7 ha would be extended to 806.71 ha.

According to the State Party, the monuments to be included would contribute as attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and reinforce its integrity as follows:

a. Prado or "del Corcovado" House: It is one of the very few examples of a colonial and republican domestic architecture that is preserved in an integrally manner in Lima, practically unchanged since the 17th century. It adds 0.63 ha to the property.

b. San Bartolomé Hospital: It was the viceregal hospital for “free brown people” and maintains most of its original architecture and layout. It will complete the ensemble of three historic viceregal hospitals within the property, together with the Ancient Hospital for “Indians” of Santa Ana and the ancient Hospital for Spaniards of San Andrés. It adds 4.38 ha to the property.

c. Nuestra Señora del Prado Church and Monastery: It is one of the few and best-preserved examples of Lima’s monastic architecture of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. It adds 3.71 ha to the property.

d. Santa Rosa de Santa Maria Church and Monastery: This religious architectural complex was built in the same place where Santa Rosa de Lima died, a venerated and indivisible character in the history of the city. The complex is surrounded by a large number of buildings of monumental value, as well as the remnants of La Concepción Church and Monastery and the Mercedarian School of San Pedro Nolasco, thus consolidating an urban area with an important historical and architectural heritage. It adds to the property 3.85 ha.

e. Ancient Indigenous Reduction of Santiago Apostle of Cercado: This settlement or "reduction" of indigenous people was designed to be a satellite of the city. It helps understanding the relationship between the colonial city and the indigenous reduction. It adds to the property 10.20 ha.

f. Quinta and Molino de Presa: one of the best architectural expressions of the mid-18th century and the only one of its kind in Lima, it is a rococo style mansion used as a pleasure house, then located in the suburbs of Lima and now part of the traditional neighbourhood of Malambo. It adds to the property 1.62 ha.

The adjustment of the boundaries allows an adequate regulation of land use by adding only complete plots. In the process of boundaries verification (measure 2), five monuments have been proposed for inclusion: Gran Biblioteca Pública de Lima, Casa Mitsuwa, Jr. Ucayali No 463, 467, 471, 479, Edificio Ferrand and Edificio Central. At the same time, some areas and buildings which are not attributes of Outstanding Universal Value nor monuments or monumental areas have been proposed for exclusion: Av. Abancay blocks 7,8 and 9, Av. Emancipación No 443, 447, Av. Abancay No 235, 251, Jr. Casma 213, 277, and Jr. Viru 207-227.

The modification of the buffer zone (measure 3) is guided by an update of the boundaries of the Historic Centre of Lima (Monumental Zones of Lima and Rímac) in the new Master Plan 2019-2029. It allows the complete inclusion of the following monuments: Archbishop Loayza Hospital, Barbones Military Headquarters and Jose Pardo Politechnic Institute.

All the monuments included in the minor boundary modification are located in areas declared Cultural Heritage of the Nation.

ICOMOS acknowledges the detailed documentation provided by the State Party, and notes that some of the monuments that are being incorporated in the property’s boundaries are in a poor state of conservation. In this regard, ICOMOS notes that restoration and enhancement projects, as well as the reconstruction of some monuments (for example, El Buque in Barrios Altos) are being proposed in the Master Plan. ICOMOS considers that all restoration and enhancement projects, in particular, reconstructions, need to be carefully planned to maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of the property by following standard principles based on evidence and baseline documentation.

ICOMOS notes as well that the State Party has added to the original recommendation of the 2017 Advisory mission, the inclusion of Quinta and Molino de Presa where a tourist proposal is being developed, instead of Quinta del Rincón del Prado which is in a bad state of conservation.

ICOMOS considers that the inclusion of the six proposed areas will improve the comprehensive understanding and expression of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Historic Centre of Lima. Furthermore, ICOMOS considers that the revision of the boundaries of the property is positive because it includes attributes of Outstanding
Universal Value. In addition, the adjustment of the boundaries of the buffer zone will favour the management of the monumental area, and will permit the inclusion of monuments in their totality contributing to the integrity of the property.

ICOMOS notes that the Historic Centre of Lima will become a serial property of three component parts, from which two are small and irregular. Nevertheless, because the component parts are connected through the buffer zone, and belonging to the Monumental Zones of Lima and Rimac as defined in the Master Plan 2019-2029, ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the property will be maintained and enhanced.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of Historic Centre of Lima, Peru, be approved.

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the buffer zone of Historic Centre of Lima, Peru, be approved.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

a) Carefully planning and implementing restoration, enhancement and reconstruction projects in line with standard principles based on evidence and baseline documentation,

b) Informing the World Heritage Centre of the intention to undertake or authorise all major projects which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in line with paragraph 172 of Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,

c) Developing and implementing a Heritage Impact Assessment for any development proposals in the property, its buffer zone and/or wider setting that could potentially affect the property’s Outstanding Universal Value;
Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone (February 2023)