

# Mazagan (Morocco)

No 1058 Rev

## 1. BASIC DATA

*State Party:* Morocco

*Name of property:* Portuguese City of Mazagan (El Jadida)

*Location:* Region: Doukkala-Abda, Province El Jadida

*Date received:* 31 April 2004

*Category of property:*

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*.

*Brief description:*

The Portuguese fortification of Mazagan, now part of the city of El Jadida in Morocco, was built as a fortified colony on the Atlantic coast in the early 16th century. It was taken over by the Moroccans on the departure of the Portuguese in 1769. The fortification with its permanent system of bastions and ramparts is an early example of Renaissance military design. The surviving Portuguese buildings include the cistern and the Church of the Assumption, built in the Manueline style of late Gothic architecture. From the mid 19th century, when it became known as El Jadida (The New), the city has developed into a multi-cultural commercial centre.

## 2. THE PROPERTY

*Description*

The fortification of Mazagan is situated on the Atlantic coast, about 90km south-west of Casablanca, and faces a natural bay of great beauty. The modern part of the city of El Jadida has developed around the landward side of the Mazagan fortress. Today the city is of great economic and tourist interest, situated as it is in a region rich in production, and also rich in heritage related to the Portuguese period.

The design of the *Fortress of Mazagan* is a response to the development of modern artillery in the Renaissance. The star form of the fortress measures *c* 250m by 300m. The slightly inclined, massive walls are *c* 8m high on average, with a thickness of 10m, enclosing a patrolling peripheral walkway 2m wide. At the present time the fortification has four bastions: the Angel Bastion in the east, St Sebastian in the north, St Antoine in the west, and the Holy Ghost Bastion in the south. The fifth, the Governor's Bastion at the main entrance, is in ruins, having been destroyed by the Portuguese in 1769. The fort had three gates: the Seagate, forming a small port with the north-east rampart, the Bull Gate in the north-west rampart, and the main entrance with a double arch in the centre of the south rampart, originally connected to land via a drawbridge. A ditch, *c* 20m wide and 3m deep, formerly filled with seawater, surrounded the

fort. During the time of the French Protectorate the ditch was filled in with earth and a new entrance gate was opened leading to the main street, the Rua da Carreira, and to the Seagate. Along this street are situated the best preserved historic buildings, including the Catholic Church of the Assumption and the cistern.

Two Portuguese religious ensembles are still preserved in the citadel. *Our Lady of the Assumption* is a parish church built in the 16th century; it has a rectangular plan (44m x 12m), a single nave, a choir, a sacristy, and a square bell tower. The second structure is the chapel of *St Sebastian* sited in the bastion of the same name.

The 19th century *Mosque* in front of the Church of the Assumption delimits the urban square, the Praça Terreiro, which opens toward the entrance of the city. The minaret of the mosque is an adaptation of the old Torre de Rebate, originally part of the cistern, showing historical continuity.

A part of the ensemble in the citadel is the *Cistern*, the design of which is attributed to Joao Castilho. The building consists of a nearly square plan (47m x 56m), with three halls on the north, east, and south sides, and four round towers: Torre da Cadea (of the prison) in the west, Torre de Rebate in the north, the Tower of the Storks in the east, and the ancient Arab tower of El-Brija in the south. The cistern has a central hall (33m x 34m) which is partly underground and constructed with stone pillars and brick vaults in the Manueline manner (a version of Gothic from the reign of King Manuel I, 1495–1521). The waters are conducted to the cistern through a system of channels from the citadel.

The terrace of the ensemble had the *Residence of the Captain*, a small *hospital*, and the small *Church of the Misericordia*, of which only the ruins of the bell tower remain. The *synagogues* were built in the fortress following the arrival of Moroccan Jews in the 19th century. There is a *Spanish church* close to one of the mosques, a masterpiece of the late 19th century, which was used by merchants and ambassadors. There are a number of wealthy *residential buildings*, documenting the Moroccan cohabitation with Belgians, Dutch, French, Italians, and Spaniards at the beginning of the 20th century. Other impressive buildings of the same period exist in the proposed buffer zone outside the ramparts.

*History*

The Portuguese first settled the site of Mazagan in 1502, after it had been a Portuguese protectorate since 1486. The name Mazagan, which occurs in Arabic and foreign documents from the 11th century, was pronounced *Mazagao* in Portuguese. The only construction on the site was a tower called el-Brija. After some years in temporary shelters, the Portuguese decided in 1514 to build a citadel, designed by the brothers Francisco and Diogo de Arruda, who also worked on other fortifications in Moroccan medinas. In 1541, after the loss of Agadir, the Portuguese decided to enlarge the citadel into a fortification. The design was entrusted to a team of engineer-architects, consisting of the Portuguese Joao Ribeiro, the Spaniard Juan Castillo, and the Italian Benedetto da Ravenna. From 1541 to 1548 the governor of the fortress was Louis de Loureiro, already in Ceuta in Brazil and Mogador in Timor. In this period, Mazagan underwent rapid urban

development, including the construction of religious ensembles, responding to the requirements of this period of religious confrontation. By the end of the century, there were four churches and several chapels within the fortification.

After more than two and half centuries of occupation the Lusitanian period of Mazagan, the last Portuguese stronghold in Morocco, ended in 1769. Following the peace treaty with Sultan Sidi Mohamed Ben 'Abdallah (1757–90), the Portuguese were obliged to depart from the Seagate without taking any of their belongings. They mined the main entrance, which exploded when the Moroccans forced it, causing many victims. As a result of these explosions, the Governor's Bastion and a large part of the main rampart were destroyed. The city remained uninhabited for nearly half a century and was called al-Mahdouma (The Ruined). In the mid-19th century, Sultan Moulay 'Abderrahman ordered the Pasha of the region to rebuild the lost parts of the fortification (in a style differing somewhat from the rest), to build a mosque, and to rehabilitate this former Portuguese city. The name Mazagan was now banned, and the city was called *al-Jadida* (The New, The Novel).

The mosque of El Jadida became a sign of purification, but this did not mean destruction of all the testimonies and places of cult of the previous period. Muslims, Jews, Moroccans, and other nationalities cohabited in the ramparts; the Portuguese church remained in front of the mosque, although it was no longer used for cult purposes, and synagogues were erected elsewhere in the city. The religious and racial plurality was intensified with the arrival of new European merchants, missionaries, and ambassadors in the second half of the 19th century in this town, known then by the French as *Le Deauville marocain*, referring to a renowned bathing resort in France.

### **Management regime**

#### *Legal provision:*

The buildings within the fortification are mainly in private ownership, but the State and the local authority own part of the structures.

The site is protected under a series of legal orders for the protection of historic sites and monuments, inscriptions, works of art, and antiquities on the basis of the national legislation (Law No 1-80-341 of 25.12.1980, and Decree No 2-81-25 of 22.10.1981), which control any works of repair, restoration, or change and forbid any defacing or demolition of historic structures.

#### *Management structure:*

The management of the site is the responsibility of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs (Direction of Cultural Heritage, *Centre du Patrimoine Maroco-Lusitanien*, *Institut National des Sciences de l'Archéologie et du Patrimoine*), the Local Authority (Mayor of El Jadida) responsible for utilities, infrastructures, and planning, the Prefecture of the Province (coordination and supervision), and the Ministry of Tourism (finances and promotion).

Since its creation in 1994, the *Centre du Patrimoine Maroco-Lusitanien* (CPML), in collaboration with the Municipality of El Jadida, has been responsible for the definition of the strategies and objectives for the programme of activities. The scope of the institute is to prepare an inventory of historic structures, identify the typology of all buildings, contribute to research, restoration, conservation, and *mise-en-valeur* of the site, collect and diffuse traditional arts, and promote the study of the common heritage of Morocco and Portugal. There is still need to improve the maintenance and presentation of various parts of the site, which is the concern of the Municipality and the *Centre du Patrimoine*, and also of the *Association pour la Sauvegarde de la Cité*, a grassroots association created spontaneously by the inhabitants.

It was noted by the ICOMOS mission (2001) that there is a need for a clear management plan for the site and its surroundings, as well as coherent guidelines for interventions both in the public domain and in private properties. Particular attention should be given to establishing an extensive buffer zone, which should have appropriate planning control in order to maintain the visual integrity of the fortification. Height control even at a distance from the fort itself is therefore important.

#### *Resources:*

Finances for the management are provided by the different levels of administration, including state, province and city budgets, as well as the Moroccan-Portuguese collaboration.

There are 3,700 inhabitants in the Portuguese city of Mazagan, and ca. 2000 in the proposed buffer zone.

There are some 50,000 tourists / year lodging in hotels.

### **Justification by the State Party (summary)**

*Criterion ii:* The Portuguese city of Mazagan is testimony to considerable influences between Europe and Morocco, from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, concerning architecture, technology and urban planning. The notable buildings include: the cistern, the fortification, the ramparts, and the ditch.

*Criterion iv:* The city of El Jadida, on the route to India, is a foremost example of an architectural ensemble recording the Portuguese rule at the time of the great discoveries. The city is considered the most outstanding and the best preserved military ensemble of the Renaissance, and of the Portuguese expansion in the world.

## **3. ICOMOS EVALUATION**

### **Actions by ICOMOS:**

An ICOMOS expert evaluation mission was undertaken to the site in September 2001.

Following the ICOMOS recommendation, the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, in April 2002, decided the following:

*While recognizing the outstanding universal value of the proposed nomination, the Bureau decided that further consideration of this nomination be **deferred** subject to the*

*redefinition of the site to include the whole area of the defensive system (the ditches), the extension of the buffer zone, the completion and implementation of the management plan and conservation guidelines for the site, and the establishment of planning control for the surrounding area, including the clarification of the impact of proposed new development near the fortification.*

*Taking into account that the present nomination is limited to the Portuguese fortification of Mazagan, consideration should be given to the possibility of changing the name: "The Portuguese City of Mazagan (El Jadida)."*

### **Conservation**

#### *Conservation history:*

When the Portuguese garrison left the fortification as a result of the treaty with the Sultan Sidi Mohamed Ben 'Abdallah, in 1769, they mined the main entrance and a large part of the main rampart, which exploded when the Moroccans entered the fort. The city was then abandoned for some fifty years until it was rehabilitated by the Moroccan Muslim and Jewish population in the mid 19th century on the orders of Sultan Moulay 'Abderrahman. With the subsequent development the population formed an international trading centre, representing different religions and races. The destroyed ramparts were rebuilt, to a slightly different design, and the new constructions inside the fort included a mosque, synagogues, and high-quality residential buildings. There were relatively small alterations to the fortifications, even though some buildings (churches and chapels) were demolished and replaced with new. The typology of most of the Portuguese houses has since been altered but the original structure of the urban layout has been retained, and the Portuguese street names were again applied in 1937.

#### *State of conservation:*

Between 1994 and 1998 a number of restoration projects were undertaken in collaboration with Ministries, the Province, and the Municipality. These works have addressed about one-third of the listed buildings, including the external walls and a lateral hall of the citadel, part of the rampart walls and bastions, nearly half the round walk, and the bell tower of the Church of Assumption. Other works remain to be carried out in order to complete the programme.

Works have also included the rehabilitation of the church-synagogue of St Sebastian as a cultural centre, using some of the spaces of the citadel for exhibitions and the *Praça Terreiro* area as an open-air theatre. A project has been undertaken for the preparation of measured drawings of the buildings within the fortification.

#### *Management:*

The State Party has responded to ICOMOS' requests with letters dated 26 April and 31 May 2004, confirming that the authorities are implementing the recommendations formulated by the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee in 2002. It is noted that the urban master plan of El Jadida has been updated in 1993. On 15 May 2004, an architect has been appointed to prepare the management plan within one year. The plan will be legally enforced, and will include the norms to be applied in the

conservation management of the Portuguese city and its surroundings. It will also define more precisely the zones of protection and control. In the mean time, a commission, chaired by the Governor of El Jadida, has prepared a framework for the urban management of the area. This is currently being approved by the City Council.

Several projects have been undertaken inside and outside the old city in order to improve the infrastructures, parking, green areas, etc. The area containing the former fortification ditch, now filled in with earth, has been declared a "zone non aedificandi", ca. 50m deep. Here, some ruinous structures have been demolished, and the general condition of the area has been improved, with the introduction of a green area. On the seaside, the authorities have initiated a project restoring the old port area. The purpose is to liberate the eastern side of the fortification and to reveal the water ditch. A buffer zone has been established, ca. 100m deep, corresponding to the depth of two building blocks on the landside, where the building heights have been limited to 7.50m and 15.00m.

The project for a new tourist ensemble, foreseen just outside the fortification, has now been suspended. A new project, AZUR, named tourist project "Mazagan", has been launched to be built on the north side of the old town.

#### *Risk analysis:*

The principal risk of the Portuguese city of Mazagan concerns its visual integrity in relation to the surrounding urban area of El Jadida. The town has been built on the plane of the seashore. At the moment, the Portuguese city is harmonious with the surrounding modern town. However, any tall constructions even further behind would easily risk to break the visual integrity of the site. Considering that the current buffer zone is relatively small, the authorities should be encouraged to complement it with a more general building height control

### **Authenticity and integrity**

The significant phases in the history of the city of El Jadida include: 1. Portuguese domination from the 16th to the 18th centuries, followed by abandonment; 2. 19th century rehabilitation; and 3. modern development.

Even though a part of ramparts was damaged in the 1769 explosion, the fortification has well resisted the effects of time. The destroyed area was rebuilt in the 19th century in a somewhat different form. The general layout of the urban fabric inside the fortress has been retained, and a number of historic buildings remain from the Portuguese period, including churches and the cistern. However, most of the residential buildings date from the Moroccan period, i.e. from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The constructions and modifications obviously form part of the historic evolution of the site.

The site continues being inhabited by the local population, who mainly work at fishing and in administration. The fortification wall, which has isolated the fortress from the rest of the town, has helped to maintain its original character until the present day. As mentioned above, the surrounding ditch was filled in and a new entrance gate was opened leading to the main street. The precise outline and the external appearance dominate the views over the harbour area and are obviously an essential feature to

maintain. From the point of view of integrity, the urban area surrounding the old town of Mazagan should be given serious consideration in view of the control of any changes or new constructions.

As a whole, the site can be seen to pass the test of authenticity and integrity.

### ***Comparative evaluation***

The development of firearms and military tactics from the 15th century brought about important changes in the design of fortifications. Many leading Renaissance artists and architects were involved in the development of new design criteria, often associated with the planning of ideal towns. They included, in the 15th century: Alberti, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Filarete (the ideal city of Sforzinda), and Biagio Rossetti, Ferrara (designed in 1497; inscribed in 1995/1999; criteria ii, iii, iv, v, vi), and in the 16th century: Antonio da Sangallo, Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Dürer, Michelangelo, and Girolamo Marini (Vitry-le-François, 1545).

Parallel to these developments, Portugal became the first leader of European colonization overseas, from the late 15th century, establishing strongholds in Africa, Asia, and South America. The new ideas were introduced into the design of fortifications in the 16th century. The fortress of Mazagan (1541–48), built by the team of the Italian Benedetto da Ravenna, the Portuguese Joao Ribeiro, and the Spaniard Juan Castillo, can be seen as one of the earliest examples of the implementation of these new design concepts; its architectural form is also distinct from other Portuguese fortifications built in this period or earlier.

In the World Heritage site of the Forts and Castles, Volta Greater Accra, Central and Western Regions in Ghana (inscribed in 1979; vi), the Elmina Castle can be seen as the closest reference to Mazagan. It was built in the 1480s as the first Portuguese stronghold in this region, but was conquered by the Dutch in 1637. This fort, however, still represents a medieval type, and it is a much smaller structure than Mazagan. The other castles in Ghana are mainly 17th century. In the 15th century the Portuguese also founded the settlement on the Island of Gorée in Senegal (inscribed in 1978; vi), but here the existing constructions are much later in date.

The Portuguese founded a large number of settlements, many of them in West Africa, as well as in Mozambique, Sri Lanka, India, and Brazil. Many of these settlements were later occupied by others, such as the Dutch and the British, and the Portuguese constructions were often substantially modified or replaced. The nomination dossier also refers to Mazagao Nova in Brazil, built by the Portuguese after their departure from Mazagan in 1769, but this is a more modest structure in a different cultural context.

It should be noted that the following historic towns in Morocco are on the World Heritage List: the Medina of Fez (1981; ii, v), the Medina of Marrakesh (1985; i, ii, iv, v), the Ksar of Ait-Ben-Haddou (1987; iv, v), the Historic City of Meknes (1996; iv), the Medina of Tétouan (formerly known as Titawin) (1997; ii, iv, v), and the Medina of Essaouira (formerly Mogador) (2001; ii, iv). However, these

cities were founded much earlier, from the 8th to the 11th centuries, and have different characteristics compared to Mazagan, which dates from the 16th century.

### ***Outstanding universal value***

#### *General statement:*

The Portuguese City of Mazagan (El Jadida) is an outstanding example of the exchange of influences between Europe and Morocco from the 16th to the 19th centuries. The brothers Francisco and Diogo de Arruda built the first citadel of 1514. This was expanded in 1541–48 into a star-shaped fortress, constructed by Joao Ribeiro and Juan Castillo to the design of the Italian architect Benedetto da Ravenna. The fortress is an early example of the introduction of new Renaissance ideas and their implementation in the context of Portuguese colonies in Africa. After the departure of the Portuguese in 1769 and the subsequent abandonment, the city was rehabilitated in the mid 19th century as El Jadida (The New), becoming a commercial centre and multi-cultural community with Muslim, Jewish, and Christian members.

#### *Evaluation of criteria:*

*Criterion ii:* The proposed nomination can be considered an outstanding example of the interchange of influences between European and Moroccan cultures. The Portuguese were leaders in the early exploration and exploitation of other continents as colonies starting in the 15th century. The site of Mazagan was one of their early settlements in West Africa, and it was also a stopping place on the route to India. The different cultural influences continued from the Portuguese period through to the 19th century, when the city became an important commercial and cultural centre on the Atlantic coast, a multicultural society with Moroccan Muslim, Jewish, and Christian components. These influences are well reflected in the architecture, technology, and town planning of the site.

*Criterion iv:* Parallel to the exploration of new continents, new types of firearms were developed, leading to the need to improve design concepts in the construction of fortifications as a permanent bastioned systems. An outstanding example of the implementation of the new trends is represented in the Portuguese fortress of Mazagan, an early example reflecting Renaissance ideals integrated with Portuguese construction technology. The admirable choice of the position and the outstanding quality of the design of the fortress no doubt contributed to its defensibility over the two and a half centuries of Portuguese occupation here.

The design and construction of the star-formed fortification represents an outstanding and early example of the new design concepts of the Renaissance period. The form and the overall layout of the fortress have been well retained, representing an outstanding example of its kind. The historic fabric inside the fortress reflects the various changes and influences over centuries. The existing monuments from the Portuguese period include: the cistern, an outstanding example of its kind, and the Catholic Church of the Assumption, both representing late Gothic architecture, the so-called Manueline style of the early 16th century.

#### 4. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

##### *Recommendation for the future*

ICOMOS compliments the State Party for the efforts already made to meet the requirements for inscription. At the same, it stresses the need to control the building heights and any changes in the existing urban environment, even beyond the buffer zone, so far as these could impact on the visual integrity of the nominated property.

##### *Recommendation with respect to inscription*

That the property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii and iv*:

**Criterion ii:** The Portuguese city of Mazagan is an outstanding example of the interchange of influences between European and Moroccan cultures, and one of the early settlements of the Portuguese explorers in West Africa, on the route to India. These influences are well reflected in architecture, technology, and town planning.

**Criterion iv:** The Portuguese fortified city of Mazagan is an outstanding and early example of the realisation of the Renaissance ideals integrated with Portuguese construction technology. Notable buildings from the Portuguese period include: the cistern, and the church of the Assumption, built in the Manueline style of the early 16th century.

ICOMOS, June 2004