
The Imperial Citadel of Thang Long Hanoi (Vietnam)

No 1328

Official name as proposed by the State Party:

The Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long-Hanoi

Location:

National Capital
Hanoi
Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Brief description:

The Thang Long Imperial Citadel was built in the 11th century by the Ly Viet Dynasty, marking the independence of the Dai Viet. It was built on the remains of a Chinese fortress dating from the 7th century, on drained land reclaimed from the Red River Delta in Hanoi. It was the centre of regional political power for almost thirteen centuries without interruption.

The Imperial Citadel buildings and the remains in the 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site reflect a unique South-East Asian culture, specific to the lower Red River Valley, at the crossroads between influences coming from China in the north and the ancient Kingdom of Champa in the south.

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*.

In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. (January 2008), Annex 3, this is also an historic town center in the category of *historic towns which are still inhabited* and an archaeological site in the category of *towns which are no longer inhabited*.

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 21 June 2006

International assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the nomination: 1 October 2007

Date received by the World Heritage Centre: 22 January 2009

Background: This is a new nomination.

Consultations: ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committees on Archaeological Heritage Management and on Historic Towns and Villages, and independent experts.

Literature consulted (selection):

Amis du Patrimoine Architectural du Viet Nam, *Colloque Unesco: Sauvegarde du centre historique de Hanoi*, 1993, Paris, APAV.

Brooks, G., Hanoi, Viet Nam – Conservation of an ancient city in transition, *The heritage and social changes symposium papers*, Sofia, BNC/ICOMOS, 1996, pp. 239-41.

Decoster, F., and Klouche, D., 1997, *Hanoi*, Paris, Institut français d'architecture & CNRS.

Logan, W. S., 2000, *Hanoi, biography of a city*, Sydney, UNSW Press.

Papin, Ph., 2001, *Histoire de Hanoi*, Paris, Fayard.

Sauvegarde et développement du patrimoine de Hanoi et Hué, 1994, UNESCO, Paris.

Technical evaluation mission: 19-22 September 2009

Additional information requested and received from the State Party: None

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 17 March 2010

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The nominated property is located in central Hanoi, in the heart of what has always been the seat of political and symbolic power of contemporary Vietnam. The city is located in the upstream section of the Red River Delta, west of one of the main meanders; this geographical location is the origin of the current name of *Hanoi* (= in the loop of a river). The property is in an alluvial region marked by the presence of many pools and stretches of water, along with canals and dykes. The hydrological context has formed the landscape and shaped urban development, requiring constant control of the water. Red River floods can be as high as 7.5m above low water level.

Vietnamese political power and its most symbolic contemporary manifestations are located within the immediate vicinity of the property: the National Assembly, the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, the Presidential Palace, the Headquarters of the Communist Party, Ba Dinh Square of the Proclamation of Independence, the Ministry of Defence, etc.

The property is made up of two adjoining sectors. In the east a long strip of land conforms with the north-south axis of the ancient Citadel or the Imperial Capital of Thang Long. It is bordered by four modern streets,

including a diagonal perspective in the south, Bac Son Street, built during the colonial period, which cuts off the southern edge of the ancient Citadel. The construction of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long began in the 11th century. Its central section corresponds with the Forbidden City, the Emperor's Residence; it is today Kinh Thien Palace and its annexes.

To the west of this first section, on the other side of Hoang Dieu Street and facing the central Kinh Thien Palace, is an L-shaped archaeological area known as 18 Hoang Dieu. It was immediately adjacent to the Forbidden City and excavations here have uncovered the oldest remains of the property.

The 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site was opened up and excavated starting in 2002, as part of the building work for the new National Assembly. Because of its continuous use, the archaeological site has revealed the lengthy chronology of the site, spanning around thirteen centuries of history (8th-19th centuries). It includes numerous testimonies in the form of traces of building foundations, hydraulic components, streets, and significant archaeological relics. The subsoil was found to be in a good state of archaeological conservation and the various stratigraphic layers are close to each other, but clearly legible, for a depth of around 5m. This favourable situation is due to the gradual abandonment of the site that started in the 17th century, without any destruction resulting from dynastic change. It was then protected against urban development because of its military and political role during the colonial period; it was finally occupied by the contemporary Vietnamese Army. The archaeological site provides a concentration of remains that directly reflect the different historical periods, in the heart of the millennial establishment of regional political power.

The most important discoveries in the earliest layers are the remains of palaces and Chinese foundations. The hydrological features of the soil required considerable ingenuity in constructing buildings. In the subsequent levels the foundations were improved by the use of a mixture of clay, gravel, and brick, which made it possible to erect larger buildings, starting in the Ly Dynasty, which were grouped in an ordered series within the Citadel.

A vast network of wells has been discovered, some of which contained ceramics and terracotta pottery, proving that the site was not only an administrative centre but also the place of residence associated with the reigning power.

A well designed drainage network covering the entire site served the palaces and residences. Excavation uncovered a large number of architectural elements from the palaces and houses, in particular decorative roof ornaments in the form of dragon-heads, phoenixes, tree and lotus leaves, chrysanthemums, etc.

The central sector of the Thang Long Citadel was the

political centre of a national or provincial state that reported to a distant authority, depending on the period, under various names and different dynasties, from the 7th to the 19th centuries. It included at its centre a Forbidden City inside a wall with five gates, only one of which has been preserved. A more or less rectangular wall with bastions surrounding the entire Citadel was built in 1805, most of which was destroyed during the colonial period. Its position is still clearly visible from the current road network. In the 19th century, under the Nguyen Dynasty, Hanoi ceased to be the capital and was replaced by Hué, further to south and more centrally located.

The Imperial Citadel of Thang Long was arranged along a north-south axis, along which the noteworthy monuments of this part of the property are located. Starting from the south, following the ancient protocol for access to the Forbidden City, the following main elements are to be found:

- The Flag Tower (Ky Dai) was built in 1805, as part of the Citadel's fortification system, on the remains of the old outer south gate, Tam Mon. It has a square base and two stepped levels rising to a height of 33.4m. It was conserved when the fortifications were demolished during the French period. It is built in octagonal brick in the form of a pyramidal redan. A central spiral staircase leads to the top. It was an observation post before becoming a symbolic monument and an integral part of the Vietnam Military Museum.
- There is a 15th century square between Ky Dai and Doan Mon Gate. Colonial military buildings were built here; today, they have been converted into a military museum. On the far side a former racecourse forms a lawn in front of the gate.
- Doan Mon Gate was the formal entrance to the Forbidden City, which lay to the south. It has original sections dating from the 15th century and restored sections from the 19th century. It played an important role in imperial ceremony. Built of stone and brick, it has five central arched doors, differing in size according to their role within the protocol, and two side doors. The gate is covered with a wide terrace, in the centre of which there is a two-storey pavilion. The upper level is covered with a double-layer roof with upturned corners. The roofs are tiled and decorated with dragons and foliage.
- Doan Mon Gate was connected to Kinh Thien Palace by means of a path dating from the Ly period. Military administration buildings in Neoclassical style were erected here during the colonial period.
- Kinh Thien Palace, dating from the early 15th century, formed the main part of the Forbidden City, the residence and symbol of Imperial power. It was built on the foundations of earlier royal palaces from the 11th and 12th centuries in the time of the Ly and Ly-

Tran Dynasties. It was, however, demolished and rebuilt during the colonial period, at the end of the 19th century. Its presence today is defined by its foundations, which are visible in certain places, and the two flights of steps with their stone railing representing two imperial dragons, characteristic of the sculpture from this period. The morphology of the site and its symbolic values were derived from geomantic principles (*fengshui*).

- The 1886 French brick building, erected in the centre of the former palace, Neoclassical in style with colonnades, has two storeys. This was the military headquarters in the colonial period, later to be occupied by the Vietnamese Army after independence. It became a cultural and political centre in 2004.
- Building D67, built in 1967 north of the foundations of Kinh Thien Palace, was the political and military centre of North Vietnam in the Second War of Independence; an underground bunker was used for meetings of the Politburo and Military Commission.
- Hau Lau Palace (Palace of the Princess) is located behind the former Forbidden City. It was built in the 19th century for the ladies of the court, on remains dating from the 11th century when building of the Thang Long Citadel began. After being severely damaged at the end of the 19th century, it was rebuilt during the colonial period in accordance with the symbolic principles of ancient Vietnamese palaces. The archaeological excavations have also revealed remains of hydraulic and port works that antedate the Citadel.
- Bac Mon Gate, the northern gate to the Forbidden City, was rebuilt in 1805. It is a brick arch within a massive structure that formed part of the fortifications of the Citadel. On its upper terrace there is a pavilion with a double upturned roof. Archaeological excavations have uncovered earlier remains.

There is a certain number of secondary constructions that accompany the main buildings. Since many of them are later and without any particular architectural or visual interest, the State Party has announced that they will be demolished at an unspecified date. This part of the property also has many trees, most planted in the 19th or early 20th centuries.

ICOMOS notes that remains of the defences of the historic Citadel have not been included in the nominated property. ICOMOS highlights the fact that the subsoil in the overall Thang Long area potentially contains important archaeological remains that are needed for a better understanding of the site.

History and development

The Viet or Kinh, the majority ethnic group in contemporary Vietnam, see themselves as a people that go back to the creation of the world, for which they have their own cosmogony. According to legend the foundation of the Empire dates back to the 3rd millennium BCE, when some fifteen kings and queens met to elect the first Emperor of the Nam Viet (the lands of the southern Viet).

In the 6th century BCE an independent kingdom was established, known as Van Lang, which straddled modern Guangdong and northern Vietnam. The earliest written evidence indicating permanent human settlement in the Red River Delta dates from 211 BCE. A rural society with extensive hydraulic knowledge developed here, at the crossroads of cultural influences from the Chinese area to the north and civilizations in South-East and southern Asia.

Under the pressure of the Han Dynasty, the Viet Kingdom was reduced to the lower Red River Valley, which was finally conquered in 111 BCE. It then became one of the kingdoms of the southern marches of the Chinese Empire, and remained under its political and cultural control for almost one thousand years. The last phase of this long period of Vietnamese history is referred to as the Dai La Period. It was at this time that the first Chinese citadel was erected on the site of Hanoi, as indicated by the presence of wells and remains from the 7th-10th centuries CE.

Chinese domination of the Delta and the lower Red River Valley ended in the 10th century with the return of an autonomous dynasty (Dinh-Le) and the establishment of the independent Kingdom of Dai Viet in the lower Red River Valley. The development of a new citadel, Thang Long, on the site where the former had stood, confirmed this independence in the early 11th century (Ly Dynasty). The Citadel surrounded the enlarged Forbidden City built in brick in 1029 and was itself surrounded by a defensive wall. As the seat of power and the royal residence, a Chinese layout was adopted for the Citadel. It does, however, also illustrate the geomantic principles specific to Viet history and culture.

At the same time as the Dai Viet Kingdom asserted itself at the end of the 1st millennium CE, the Kingdom of Champa, a people with cultural influences from the Indian Ocean, developed in the centre and south of modern Vietnam. It was in contact with the powerful and rapidly expanding Khmer Empire, and it was an essential link between the spread in South-East Asia of cultures from India and southern Asia, Buddhism in particular.

The long history of this region of the lower Red River, and especially the Citadel that forms the nominated property, is characterized by the continuous interaction between Viet peoples and the various Chinese dynasties and their Confucian and Taoist traditions, and also with the Kingdom of Champa to the south, marked by

Buddhist traditions. It was an essentially agrarian civilization, with considerable expertise in drainage, dykes, and agricultural hydraulics.

Buddhist culture spread during the Ly (1010-1225) and Tran (1225-1400) Dynasties and played an essential role in the development of institutions and social and religious life. The Dai Viet Kingdom extended its influence and expanded. A change to the Le Dynasty (1428-1789) led to a return to Confucian values and to more rapid development, especially in the 15th century. Hanoi was at this time one of the most important South-East Asian ports. The erection of Kinh Thien Palace, in the heart of the Forbidden City, marked the apogee of the architecture and urban planning of the Viet culture itself. The Citadel reached its maximum size in the 16th-17th centuries, whilst a district of artisans and traders serving the rulers also developed. Thang Long Citadel, and especially the Forbidden City, played an essentially political and administrative role, along with the expression of royal etiquette. It was also the period of conquest of the Kingdom of Champa to the south, giving the dynasty a truly Imperial dimension.

However, a political change gradually took place, starting in the mid-17th century. The Emperor played an increasingly symbolic role, with the real power being exercised by two powerful families, the Trinh in the north and the Nguyen in the south. The latter prevailed at the beginning of the 18th century and established a new dynasty, with its new capital in the more centrally located Hué.

Thang Long still remained the northern Citadel, the Emperor's residence when travelling to the region. Its fortification system was rebuilt (1805), based on the European model of Vauban.

French colonial troops were present in modern southern Vietnam from the 1860s onwards. They undertook the conquest of the north in the 1880s. Thang Long once again became the centre of power. It was in particular the headquarters of the colonial power for the vast regional ensemble of French Indochina (modern Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia). Many palaces were rebuilt in a European style, generally Neoclassical, such as Kinh Thien Palace, the former heart of the Forbidden City (1886). The Governor's Palace (in the buffer zone) was built and the fortifications were razed so as to permit a European type of urban development, including wide boulevards around and within the ancient Citadel (end of the 19th century).

After the First War of Independence (1954) and the division of Vietnam into two entities, the Viet Min power settled in Hanoi and the ancient Forbidden City became the military headquarters for North Vietnam. During the Second War, against South Vietnam and the United States, the D67 underground command bunker was installed within the area of Kinh Thien Palace (1967).

The Ministry of Defence gradually abandoned its use of

the property between 1994 and 2004, handing it over for cultural and historic uses. The site at 18 Hoang Dieu Street, initially chosen for the construction of the National Assembly, was found to be of exceptional archaeological value (2002). The project was maintained, but on a smaller portion of the initial site.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Comparative analysis

The State Party proposes other centres of political power in the Far East which it believes to be comparable with the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long in Hanoi, as they are built to similar plans in comparable cultural and political contexts. They are the ancient Han capital (Chang'an, today Xi'an, in China), the Forbidden City in Beijing (China, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987), the Imperial Citadel of Nara (Japan, 1998), and the short-lived capital of the Viet Empire in Hué (Vietnam, 1993).

The emphasis is on the special and unique features of the Thang Long Citadel in Hanoi, notably the town-planning and building techniques, as well as the roof ornamentation from the Ly, Tran, and Le dynastic periods. It forms a unique synthesis of the influence of various Asian cultures. It is also unique in terms of the exceptional duration of its use as a centre of political power, which is not replicated in the other imperial cities.

ICOMOS considers the comparative analysis is inadequate, for the following reasons.

It is necessary to strengthen the typological and historical study of urban planning and their guiding principles, and of the architectural and decorative elements that form the originality of and similarities between each of the sites, as a function of the periods under consideration. The urban and architectural comparison within the region that is considered should be extended to other countries (Korea), and other cities and other remarkable palaces. Account should also be taken of the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the properties used for the comparison. The geographical location of Thang Long-Hanoi could also be analysed as part of a vast historic system of naval embassies with the Chinese Empire.

The comparative analysis should be extended to cover the influences from South-East and southern Asia, the importance of which is recognized today, notably through archaeological research at the 18 Hoang Dieu Site, which is an essential component of the property. In this respect, comparisons with other similar regional archaeological sites would be welcome in order to determine its importance.

It is necessary to consider a comparative approach to the geographical data, in terms of the lake and river substrate of the site of the Thang Long Citadel and the

city of Hanoi to which it gave rise. A similar comment can also be made regarding the defensive military components of the Citadel and their surviving remains.

The architectural and cultural testimony of the French colonial period should be put into perspective in relation to other similar properties, such as the Island of Saint-Louis (Senegal, 2000) and the Historic City of Grand-Bassam (Côte d'Ivoire, Tentative List). This would help determine its importance in Thang Long-Hanoi and, potentially, strengthen the property's symbolic urban and architectural values.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, in its current form, does not justify consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value

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

- The Imperial Citadel of Thang Long-Hanoi has unique historical value in terms of its virtually uninterrupted role as a centre of regional political power from the 7th century CE to the present. It bears witness to numerous conflicts that have led to the unification of the country and its independence.
- Thang Long bears witness to the development of a major and unique civilization in the lower Red River Valley for over 2,000 years. It is a synthesis and assimilation of influences from the Far East and from southern and South-East Asia. The property testifies to the cultural, philosophical, and religious contribution at various periods of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.
- The exchange of values in the cultural crucible of the Red River Delta is expressed in particular through the architecture, town planning, artefacts, and decoration. The Thang Long site bears exceptional witness to this through its monuments, its urban organization, and its 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site.

ICOMOS considers that the conserved parts of Thang Long Citadel and the associated 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site do indeed bear witness to an important and unique process of cultural development, at the crossroads between influences from China and South and South-East Asia. It was, moreover, a long-term regional process, combined with the historical definition of a national entity and the construction of its independence. However, the comparative analysis, integrity, and partial state of the archaeological knowledge of the property do not allow at present a decision as to whether it is of Outstanding Universal Value.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The State Party claims that the Thang Long Citadel and the 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site comply with the integrity criteria.

In general terms, the nominated property only corresponds to the central part of the Thang Long Citadel, especially the north-south axis of the Forbidden City which formed its core. The hydraulic components and the remains of the Citadel's defensive system are not included within the boundary of the nominated property or, at best, only to a minor extent.

ICOMOS considers that the condition of integrity as a citadel of the property in territorial and structural terms is only partial.

The urban integrity is mainly represented by the north-south axis, essentially in terms of the symbolic and political use of the property in the dynastic periods. It is marked by the alignment of major buildings.

ICOMOS considers that the legibility of this axis is confused by the predominant presence of later buildings, artefacts (museum aircraft), or trees that bear no relationship to this perspective and its meanings.

The presence of various phases of the occupation of the site since the 7th century is doubly highlighted by the historical chronological stratigraphy of the 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site and the various fragments of architectural evidence of Thang Long. The continuity of the phases uncovered by the archaeological excavations is remarkably complete; it is extensively documented and confirmed by the artefacts found.

ICOMOS considers that this is a site that has often been rebuilt, notably as a result of historical events in the 19th and 20th centuries. In architectural terms the conditions of integrity are clouded by the disparate nature of the buildings, and they lose their relevance in the light of the various reconstructions and rearrangements of the Citadel. It is, moreover, necessary to note the dearth of direct evidence of the dynastic periods prior to the Nguyen Dynasty (pre-1800). No building from this period has retained its integrity; at best they are partially rebuilt retaining the structure's original spirit (gates), but otherwise their presence is in the form of components integrated into recent constructions that lack any stylistic relationships (foundation walls, stairs, decorative components, etc.). The most convincing survival from the dynastic period is the flight of steps with the two dragons.

Given the highly convincing archaeological evidence, and despite the weakness of the direct architectural testimony prior to 1800, the integrity of the continuous use over thirteen centuries is physically proven.

ICOMOS considers that most of the basic data concerning the integrity of the dynastic Citadel is incomplete or absent (urban territory and structure and civilian and military architecture). The conditions of the architectural, structural, and landscape integrity of the property are therefore poor, incomplete, and difficult to read. Continuity of political use is demonstrated by the archaeological elements uncovered at the 18 Hoang Dieu site, coupled with the later built testimony of the Thang Long Citadel. Furthermore, only a small part of the property has been the subject of systematic archaeological excavations. Its contribution to the property's integrity is therefore only partial.

Authenticity

The State Party presents the Thang Long Citadel and 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site as meeting the authenticity criteria.

The authenticity is primarily expressed by the form of the outline of the Citadel, which was constantly adapted and reused, as well as the permanent presence of the Forbidden City as the heart of political power and the royal or imperial residence for almost one thousand years. All the elements that express these facts are perfectly authentic, even if no more than partial or incomplete.

The degree of authenticity illustrated by the archaeology, over almost thirteen centuries, and its legibility, due as much to its chronological and historical completeness as to the abundance and quality of the artefacts uncovered, is good.

The degree of authenticity expressed by the architecture of Thang Long is generally reasonable for the late 19th and 20th century buildings. The older buildings, dating from the dynastic periods, even when present, have been restored or modified, the Doan Mon and Bac Mon Gates and the Hau Lau Palace in particular. However, these modifications relate to the political history of the property. There has been no deliberate attempt at pseudo-historical restorations of the surviving property or of its immediate surroundings, a site of power and a place of national memory in Vietnam.

The archaeological excavations at the 18 Hoang Dieu Site provide an authentic source for useful cross-referencing with traditional written sources.

ICOMOS considers that the archaeological authenticity of the property throughout the lengthy history of the Thang Long Citadel is of a high level. It is, however, derived from a restricted area of excavations. The degree of authenticity of the architecture varies considerably, depending on the period considered, ranging from satisfactory for the colonial and contemporary buildings through incomplete for the early 19th century and to weak for the dynastic periods. Because of the complex history, the analysis of the authenticity needs to be refined and detailed for each of

the structures that contribute to the property's value.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the nominated property are not adequate. The conditions of authenticity are only fully satisfactory for the archaeological aspects, but then for only a limited area of excavations, and for the constructions dating from the late 19th and 20th centuries. They are inadequate for the monuments and built remains of the earlier periods.

Criteria under which the 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;

The State Party considers that the property bears witness to very important changes in the cultural values from China and South-East Asia, over a very long period of history, starting in the 7th century CE. The civilization of the lower Mekong Valley succeeded in creating an original and unique synthesis of the philosophical, religious, social, political, and aesthetic values derived from Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. This led in particular to the exchange of influences in the areas of architecture, urban planning, and decorative arts, particularly well represented by various material testimonies in the property.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property illustrates the meeting of influences, notably from China in the north and the Kingdom of Champa to the south. It is expressed through a series of important cultural exchanges that moulded an original culture in the lower Red River Valley. The comparative analysis must, however, be strengthened and the excavation programme extended to confirm its scope.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified 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;

For the State Party, the property bears witness to a continuous and millennial cultural tradition in terms of its number and diversity of archaeological, urban, and architectural remains. They demonstrate the long history of Thang Long as a major seat of political power and a centre of civilization in Asia.

ICOMOS considers that the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long and the 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site bear witness to the long cultural tradition of the Viet population established in the Delta and lower Red River

Valley. It was a virtually continuous seat of power from the 7th century through to the present day. The comparative analysis must, however, be strengthened and the excavation programme extended to demonstrate the breadth of its wealth and diversity.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified at this stage.

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;

According to the State Party the Thang Long Imperial Citadel is associated with important cultural and historical events, and leading artistic expressions and moral, philosophical and religious ideas. The succession of these events marks the process of formation and development of an independent nation over more than one thousand years, including the colonial period and the two contemporary Wars of Independence and the reunification of Vietnam. The importance of Thang Long in relation to these events is its central political role and its permanent role as a symbol.

ICOMOS considers that the philosophical and religious influences at the base of Viet society, over a long historical period, are real and important. They are, however, already recognized in the application of criterion (ii). The succession of the events affecting the history of Vietnam and their link with Thang Long, the continuous seat of power and its symbols, is also an intrinsic value of the property, already recognized in criterion (iii).

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (ii) and (iii) could be reconsidered, particularly in the light of an appropriate comparative analysis and expansion of archaeological research, and that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property has not been justified at this stage.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Development pressures

The property is located in the heart of the political and government centre of contemporary Vietnam, the Ba Dinh Political Centre, a continuation of the function demonstrated by the property itself. For the State Party this environment is a guarantee of the limitation and sustainable control of urban and economic pressures of the City of Hanoi on the property.

The situation needs to be re-examined for each of the elements that make up the property and the various parts of its environment:

The 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site is part of the parcel of land initially allocated for the construction of the National Assembly. The project is continuing in the south-western quarter of the initial parcel; this building site is located inside the buffer zone. The building will not be higher than 30 m.

The district includes the Ministry of Defence. It was excluded from the buffer zone, but reference is made to a written agreement with the Ministry of Culture to control the development of this unit. The Ministry's buildings appear to be nearing completion but they already include one that is 34m high.

Private commercial districts liable to undergo urban development are located to the north and south of the property. In the north, there is no buffer zone; in the south, the buffer zone is a public space, but in the south-west there is a private sector without any particular regulation immediately adjacent to the Ministry of Defence boundary.

ICOMOS considers that there are current or potential development pressures close to the property, notably because of the absence of a sufficiently large buffer zone in the east, north, and south-east. Within the buffer zone and in direct contact with the 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site, the potential impact of the architectural and environmental project for the future National Assembly on the values of the property needs to be clarified.

Tourism pressures

Urban tourism in Hanoi is considerable and expanding. Visitor numbers are estimated to be 1.3 million for the city as a whole (2007), but only some tens of thousands visit the Thang Long Citadel in its present condition, and the Archaeological Site is currently closed to visitors. This is a transition situation that will change rapidly, especially with the millennial anniversary of the founding dynasty of Thang Long and Hanoi, in 2010. Furthermore, Thang Long is largely an open and accessible public area; the monuments and some areas have controlled (museum) or strictly limited access.

ICOMOS considers that the very rapid growth in the number of visitors could pose a threat to the property if it is not carefully managed, notably in the open or potentially open archaeological zones that are by definition vulnerable.

Environmental pressures

The State Party provides a detailed analysis of the environmental and climatic threats to the property, on the one hand for the Archaeological Site and on the other for the built components of the Citadel. In the former case, humidity has significant consequences, both biological (moss and fungi) and technical (water infiltration in the remains and the ever-present risk of the site flooding because of its hydrogeological position).

Wind and sunlight can also affect the conservation of uncovered remains.

The old buildings of the Citadel are also affected by water, which can infiltrate easily owing to the use of brick and stucco. There is an extensive invasive flora. The frequently very abundant monsoon rain also requires roofs to be in an overall good condition and drainage systems to be regularly cleaned.

The effects of atmospheric pollution and road traffic are relatively reduced in the Citadel area because of its political and administrative functions.

ICOMOS considers that the combined effects of soil humidity and storm-water are the main environmental threats affecting the property.

Natural disasters

Flooding of the Red River is the main risk of natural disaster. The property is located in the heart of the Hanoi network of dykes and so it is not considered to be in a risk zone. The last two major floods of the city occurred in 1905 and 1972.

Although located near seismic fault lines, the Hanoi region is considered to be at low risk. The last substantial earthquake was in 1285.

ICOMOS considers that the risk of flooding is inbuilt, given the location in relation to the Red River.

Impact of climate change

The potential impact of climate change is from rising temperatures which risk causing more violent storms and wind.

ICOMOS considers that there is a potential climate-change risk: exceptional floods and tornadoes could become more frequent in coming years.

ICOMOS considers that there is a threat of public and private construction development in the immediate environment of the property. Humidity and its effects and the risk of exceptional flooding are the main climatic and environmental threats to the property.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The nominated property is made up of two adjacent parcels: the central part of the ancient Thang Long Citadel (13.865ha) and the 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site (4.530ha), i.e. a total surface area of 18.395ha. The boundaries are formed by the surrounding streets and boulevards and the boundaries

of the parcel allocated for the National Assembly adjacent to the 18 Hoang Dieu site. According to the nomination dossier, there should no longer be any inhabitants inside the property zone following the decision for a major heritage project and the Ministry of Culture taking control of the site. However, the Management Plan still refers to 23 families as being present.

The buffer zone mainly corresponds to the western part of the property formed by the Ba Dinh Political Centre and its commemorative sites. It comes under a special organization and management regime because of its governmental functions and the presence of the Presidential Palace. It occupies a surface area of 108ha. An inventory of its main component buildings is provided in the nomination dossier. The buffer zone is reported to have a population of around one hundred people.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the property lack consistency, currently forming a relatively unsatisfactory compromise between two approaches to the property: its definition as an archaeological site and its definition as a citadel. The definition of the property needs to be completed and clarified, principally by means of an improved comparative analysis and better analysis of the property's component buildings and archaeological spaces. The sole concept of the continuity of political power is not enough to provide a satisfactorily coherent definition of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the buffer zone is insufficient. It needs to be extended around the entire perimeter of the property (see Development pressures). In the public sector to the east the landscape agreement between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Culture would benefit from being formally recognized and included in the protection system for the buffer zone of the property. This needs to be extended in the residential and commercial sectors in the north and south-west so as to guarantee the visual quality of access points to the property, in line with its values, and ensure that urban development is managed so as to protect the visual landscape of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the issue of the number of residents in the property and its buffer zone needs to be clarified.

ICOMOS considers that the property boundary needs to be reconsidered, either to present a more complete archaeological site in its own right, or to adopt an approach more consistent with an imperial citadel. ICOMOS considers that the buffer zone must be extended to ensure effective control of private and public urban development.

Ownership

The property is owned by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Ownership rights are currently exercised by

various ministries (Construction, Defence, etc.) and by the People's Committee of Hanoi (municipality). It is planned to eventually combine ownership under the sole authority of the People's Committee of Hanoi, to be exercised by its property management body, the Hanoi Ancient Wall-Co Loa Remains Preservation Centre.

The buffer zone comes under the special public ownership regime for the Ba Dinh Government and Presidential Centre.

ICOMOS notes that the clarification between the various public authorities currently exercising ownership of the property that has been announced needs to be confirmed.

Protection

Legal protection

Protection of the nominated property comes under two laws:

- The Law on Cultural Heritage Management (2001) ensures protection of the various recognized artefact and built components of the property;
- The Law on Construction for all building projects.

When the application of the two laws conflict (e.g. a project within the spatial territory of the nominated property) the Law on Cultural Heritage Management takes precedence.

The inscription procedure for the entire property under the protection of the Law on Cultural Heritage Management resulted from a series of prior decisions:

- Decision 100/VH-QD (1989) for the Flag Tower;
- Decision 22/1999 for the Hanoi Ancient Citadel.

The protection procedure was then defined and proclaimed in respect of the property through a series of specific decisions and decrees:

- Decree 92/2002,
- Decisions 17006/2001, 05/2003 and 3855/2006,
- Decision 16/2007 of 28 December 2007 lists and updates the earlier decisions regarding Thang Long Citadel and includes protection of the 18 Hoang Dieu parcel as an archaeological site.

These texts define the protection measures and classify the Thang Long Citadel and the 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site at the highest level of recognition and national protection. The State authority responsible for their implementation is the Ministry of Culture. There is an agreement with the Ministry of Defence during the transition ownership phase.

The Law on Construction is applied by the People's Committee of Hanoi (Municipality).

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection regime is adequate.

Effectiveness of protection measures

Heritage protection measures are applied by the Thang Long Citadel management authority which, depending on the opinions of its experts, alerts and requests the intervention of the Ministry of Culture.

The municipal services are responsible for applying regulations governing new construction.

The Prime Minister has sole authority for implementing protection of the Ba Dinh Government Centre.

ICOMOS considers it necessary to specify the mechanisms for implementing the protection of the wider buffer zone under public and private ownership. In particular, it is necessary to define the mechanisms for consultation and decision-making between the municipal department in charge of issuing building permits and the property management authority, the Hanoi Ancient Wall-Co Loa Remains Preservation Centre.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate for the nominated property, but that it should be expanded and detailed in the context of a larger buffer zone.

Conservation

Inventories, records, research

There is extensive written and iconographic documentation about the property and its history in the Mandarin tradition. Abundant historical documentation about the property and Hanoi in general was produced in the 19th and 20th centuries, most notably in the form of maps, drawings, and photographs, especially during the colonial period.

Various inventories of the buildings and archaeological artefacts from 18 Hoang Dieu have been produced and recently updated, in particular, a 2004 inventory report, topographical surveys in 2006, a report on the Citadel in 2007, and annual reports on the archaeological excavation campaigns from 2003 to 2008.

Excavation is under the authority and control of the Vietnam Institute of Archaeology.

The inventories, reports, and archives are conserved in four main institutions:

- Department of Cultural Relics Management, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism;
- Hanoi Ancient Wall-Co Loa Remains Preservation Centre;
- Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO;

- Vietnam Institute of Archaeology.

ICOMOS considers that the level of documentation and research results obtained are adequate. However, the archaeological studies only concern a small part of the ancient Citadel, further reduced by the parcel allocated for the National Assembly. They would be improved by being extended to other parts of the Citadel so as to form an overall programme aimed at uncovering all the urban, architectural, and cultural elements of the entire property.

Current state of conservation

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the buildings and the moveable artefacts uncovered during the archaeological excavations is and remains fragile, because of the humidity and its consequences, coupled with rain and storm risks. Archaeological and architectural conservation demands permanent and close attention.

The important and significant buildings of the Citadel are in a reasonably good state of conservation.

Active protection measures

The State Party indicates that the 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site and excavation area have benefited, notably since 2005, from active measures for protection against humidity, the effect of the sun, and rising groundwater levels during periods of rain. Light, portable shelters have been installed above the excavations over a total covered surface area of around 1.90ha. A comprehensive drainage system has been installed for the entire site. Mould on the timber components is under control, as is the growth of moss and grass on the earth sections. The most fragile excavated remains have been backfilled with sand.

Temporary storage buildings for the excavated archaeological artefacts have been arranged in the immediate environs of the property.

The specific nature of the excavations and the conservation of the uncovered remains continue to be the subject of research, involving significant international cooperation (Japan and France).

A programme for the demolition of anachronistic constructions that clash with the property's values is in place at the Thang Long Citadel. This is a programme for restoration of the environment of the remains of the Citadel. These constructions are relatively recent, generally dating from the 20th century and built purely for the operational purposes of the military during periods of conflict.

This works programme is detailed in an additional document sent by the State Party, 'Principles for the development of the north and south sectors of Thang Long Citadel-Hanoi' (January 2010). Its implementation,

notably in the north and south sectors of the Citadel, is dependent upon the transfer of ownership from the Ministry of Defence to the Municipality of Hanoi.

As already indicated, there are now very few remains from the dynastic periods, and they have for the most part been incorporated into later restorations or reconstructions. Particular attention is paid to the conservation of the dragon steps at the entrance to Kinh Thien Palace.

The main difficulties encountered in the conservation of the 19th and 20th century buildings are humidity and its effects, such as mould and fungus growth, especially on the timber roof-frames, but also on brick and stucco structures. Some buildings are also suffering from the consequences of tree-root growth.

A specific programme for the protection of buildings from the French period, which are in relatively good condition, is set to start in 2009. It follows on from other specific programmes implemented in recent years: protection work on the foundations of Doan Mon Gate (2006), repairs to the Clock Tower at Bac Mon Gate (2003), repairs to Hau Lau Palace (2002), and restoration work on Doan Mon Gate gardens (1999).

ICOMOS considers that the conservation work undertaken is appropriate and that it needs to be constantly pursued.

Maintenance

Standard maintenance of the buildings is continuous and extensive. It is performed as a direct part of the property conservation programmes given the continuing threats to the property. It is carried out by staff from the Hanoi Ancient Wall-Co Loa Remains Preservation Centre, in liaison with the property management and conservation plan.

ICOMOS considers that the maintenance work is adequate and emphasizes its importance for the conservation of the property.

Effectiveness of conservation measures

ICOMOS considers that, given the high level of risk and maintenance and conservation requirements, the conservation measures taken by the State Party are adequate and effective.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation and maintenance measures are adequate and that they need to be constantly implemented.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The Hanoi Ancient Wall–Co Loa Remains Preservation Centre, also called the Thang Long/Co Loa Centre, has been made responsible for managing the property by the government of Hanoi City since 2006. It reports directly to the city and is working on measures to transfer ownership and expertise from the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Construction. It has been established as the sole entity for decision-making and managing the property, under the control and responsibility of the People's Committee of Hanoi. It maintains institutional scientific and professional partnerships with experts in the Ministry of Culture, the Archaeology Institute of Vietnam, the National Commission for UNESCO, the Academy of Social Sciences, the Ministry of Defence and the Museum of Military History, the Ministry of Construction, and the Communist Party of Vietnam. The Centre has its own Consultative Scientific Committee in which institutional partners are represented.

The Centre's executive structure includes a management unit with a director and three deputy directors, along with a series of specialist divisions: administration, management, and conservation of the remains, planning and financial administration, and information and communication. Provision is made in the management plan for a Steering Committee to prepare decisions and monitor their implementation.

The Centre is entrusted with the management of two geographically distinct sites. It is responsible for the Thang Long Citadel and the Co Loa Citadel and Gardens, nearly 20km from Hanoi.

ICOMOS considers that the management authority is well defined and already operational. However, the fact that it is responsible for other properties, with a status and level of recognition that would differ in the event of Thang Long being inscribed on the World Heritage List, requires clarification and a more specific identification of the staff and services responsible for Thang Long Citadel.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

The management plan, drawn up by the People's Committee of Hanoi in 2008 and finalized in 2009, will come into force in 2010, along with the transfer of ownership already mentioned.

The conservation and development programmes for the site, which have already been mentioned, will aim to assess and prevent the long-term risks and threats to the property. Furthermore, the Plan aims to forecast and organize the tourism and cultural development of the property, and also to operate within a sustainable

development strategy. Its preparation was based on a series of studies and reports. It also makes provision for consolidating the human and financial resources required for its day-to-day administration, implementation of its conservation programmes, and development for the tourism and cultural use of the property.

The tourism and cultural development plan is essentially based, for the coming years, on promoting the central sector of Thang Long (i.e. the heart of the ancient Forbidden City) and the archaeological sector. It will include interpretation circuits and the presentation of scientific results. With regard to the interpretation of the sites, two approaches will be developed. First, the rehabilitation and restructuring of the museum located in the southern sector of the property, which will help improve distribution of the tourist traffic across the property's entire territory, and secondly, an interpretation centre to be set up in the existing buildings of the Citadel. A programme for the creation of visitor infrastructure is included in the management plan: car parking in the avenues adjacent to the property, a main entrance for visitors, two WC blocks, a restaurant and two cafés, etc.

The management plan has also been developed in harmony with the city's general development and infrastructure plans. However, the exceptional situation of the property in terms of its position and legal status (Ba Dinh Government Centre) means that it will not be affected by the major projects for the city's future growth.

ICOMOS considers that the measures included in the management plan are adequate overall. However, the State Party must make it a priority to ensure that the planned tourist infrastructure is well integrated in the property's various landscapes and perspectives in order to protect its visual value. It is also necessary to detail the scientific content and structure of the projected interpretation centre, notably with regard to the results of the archaeological excavations.

Risk preparedness

The issue of risk preparedness is approached by the State Party from two main angles: first, natural risks, such as humidity and raised water levels that permanently or occasionally affect the conservation of the property, and secondly, the future management of mass tourism at the property. The creation of tourism infrastructure, including a medical post, tracking visitor numbers, and monitoring the quality of information and the cultural level of guides, is also proposed.

To prevent the risk of wilful damage to the site, the property has access through the Centre to its own guards. Its location in the heart of the Ba Dinh Government Centre places it firmly within the ambit of this district's surveillance and monitoring resources. The same applies for other potential risks, such as fire or an accident involving large numbers of people. Additionally,

the existence of boulevards and relatively wide streets along all the property's boundaries facilitates access for emergency services.

ICOMOS considers that the measures planned in response to the risks involved with mass tourism at the property need to be detailed – for example, the existence of access routes reserved for emergency services within the Citadel.

Involvement of local communities

The local communities are involved through the institutional intermediary of the People's Committee of Hanoi (municipality) and the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Resources, including staffing levels and training

The Hanoi Ancient Wall–Co Loa Remains Preservation Centre has around one hundred employees, including its executive management. They include two doctors, five senior executives, around ten guides and interpreters seconded to the property, around twenty qualified technicians and employees, and around fifty researchers and conservation specialists working at the 18 Hoang Dieu Archaeological Site.

The Centre's operational budget is mainly provided by the People's Committee of Hanoi (municipality) and by the Government for the Archaeological Site. The Government of Vietnam has also provided funding for the conservation of the property and various promotional operations for a cumulative total up until 2008 of 6.3 million US dollars. It has committed a further 3 million USD for the 2008-2009 transition period. Various sources of international aid have also contributed to specific conservation, research, and study projects (the Japanese Government, the UNESCO Committee of Japan, the City of Paris, and the Île-de-France Région).

The management plan has projected the financial revenue for the property based on visitor numbers of around 1.2 million expected by 2015. This income plus the activities deriving from the property should then generate a substantial annual income that will be sufficient to cover the operation and standard maintenance of the property.

ICOMOS considers that it is necessary to differentiate more clearly between the staff allocated directly to the property from the staff employed in general services at the Centre with its multiplicity of activities. It is necessary to specify their technical functions and their professional qualifications. It would also be useful to identify which staff report to the Archaeology Institute and which depend on international aid, especially for the 18 Hoang Dieu site.

Effectiveness of current management

The future management (2010) will be provided by a

single organization, the Hanoi Ancient Wall–Co Loa Remains Preservation Centre. This organization has acquired considerable experience in heritage management. The maintenance and protection already being implemented is evidence of the effectiveness of the current management.

ICOMOS considers that it is necessary to specify the professional qualifications of the Centre's personnel involved in the conservation and management of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate overall. ICOMOS considers that the general directions of the management plan are adequate. It needs to be promulgated and implemented; and the provisional works programmes outlined in the plan must be approved. The professional qualifications of the personnel involved in the conservation of the property need to be specified.

6. MONITORING

The nomination dossier begins with a list of the objectives designated for monitoring the property: the state of conservation of the structures and the archaeological site, material and environmental changes attributable to visitors, the stability and durability of the architectural and archaeological structures, environmental and climatic impacts, monitoring of humidity and groundwater levels, monitoring restorations and the demolition of buildings without any particular significance in order to restore the authenticity of the urban fabric of the Citadel, etc.

Five main monitoring indicators that are regularly checked are then described, listing the units responsible for them. They are designed to form the basis for monitoring documentation and to enable diagnostics to be made and the conservation policy of the property to be directed. They are:

- Regularly checking the conditions for archaeological artefacts and their storage (every three months);
- Recording climatic and environmental data in the archaeological sites (monthly);
- Conservation and archaeological monitoring of the Doan Mon Gate (every three months);
- Checking and verifying the state of conservation of registered monuments (annually);
- Checking the state of conservation of elements liable to suffer deterioration (every six months).

The Vietnam Institute of Archaeology and the Hanoi Ancient Wall–Co Loa Remains Preservation Centre are responsible for the monitoring.

ICOMOS considers that monitoring of the state of conservation of the property currently relies mainly on the quality of the scientific reports produced by the

various archaeological programmes, and not on an effective, global, and coherent policy. The indicators mentioned do not appear in the management plan as areas of monitoring to be implemented.

ICOMOS considers that monitoring of the property is only defined in very general terms at the present time and that it needs to form the basis of a complete programme in the next management plan, guaranteed in terms of human and material resources.

7. CONCLUSIONS

ICOMOS recognizes the importance of Thang Long Citadel, notably its historic importance as a continuous centre of political power in South-East Asia and as the site of an assimilation and unique synthesis of cultural elements from various parts of Asia.

The Outstanding Universal Value of the property has, however, not been demonstrated at this stage, for several reasons. The definition of the property is at the present time an insufficiently justified compromise between a promising but too restricted archaeological site, and an imperial citadel for which the architectural evidence of the dynastic periods earlier than the 19th century is either very incomplete or of only limited authenticity. The property as it is presented suffers from a low level of integrity, with too heavy an emphasis placed on the single historical concept of the continuity of power. The attributes of the value of the property, moreover, need to be justified as the result of a more extensive and in-depth comparative analysis given the complexity of the component parts of the property.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of the Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long-Hanoi, Vietnam, to the World Heritage List be **deferred** in order to allow the State Party to:

- Reconsider the definition of the property so as to give it a material and cultural basis that demonstrates precise attributes in support of its potential Outstanding Universal Value;
- Strengthen and extend the archaeological study of the property;
- Complete the comparative analysis of the property to take proper account of its archaeological, urban, architectural, and cultural significance, in order to justify its potential Outstanding Universal Value;
- Strengthen and extend the discussion of the perceptions of the authenticity and integrity of the property in the light of their complexity, which is attributable to the history of the Thang Long Citadel and the weakness of the architectural and urban

evidence from the dynastic period;

- Give consideration to a buffer zone that surrounds the property and clarify the management rules to be applied to private construction projects within this area;
- Promulgate the management plan and approve the associated specific provisional programmes, and implement the management plan with all its programmes;
- Add a detailed monitoring programme to the management plan, in accordance with the general orientations set out in the nomination dossier.

ICOMOS considers that any revised nomination with revised boundaries, would need to be considered by a mission to the site.

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party should take into consideration the following points:

- Guarantee and specify the professional qualifications of the personnel involved in the conservation of the property;
- Pay particular attention to monitoring the tourism growth, which is expected to be both significant and rapid.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



Archaeological excavations



The Flag Tower



Bac Mon Gate



French building