Tabriz Historic Bazaar (Iran)  
No 1346

Official name as proposed by the State Party:
Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex

Location:
Province of East Azerbaijan

Brief description:
Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex consists of a series of interconnected, covered brick structures, buildings, and enclosed spaces for different functions. Tabriz and its Bazaar were already prosperous and famous in the 13th century, when the town became the capital city of the country. The importance of Tabriz as a commercial hub continued until the end of the 18th century, with the expansion of Ottoman power. Closely interwoven with the architectural fabric is the social and professional organization of the Bazaar, which allows its functioning and makes it into a single, integrated entity.

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 three groups of buildings.

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 9 August 2007

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination: None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre: 29 January 2009

Background: This is a new nomination.

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Historic Towns and Villages (CIVVIH) and several independent experts.

Literature consulted (selection):

Meshkati, N. (compiled by); Behnam, I.; Pessyan, H.A.S.; Sepahbodi, I. Monuments et sites historiques de l'Iran, Organisation Nationale de la Protection des Monuments Historiques de l'Iran, Tehran.

Moradi Asghar, M., Nassabi, F., Bazaar of Tabriz; a sustainable architecture and urban area in Iran, in Proceedings of ENHR 2007 International Conference 'Sustainable Urban Areas',


Technical Evaluation Mission: 13–16 August 2009

Additional information requested and received from the State Party: ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 19 October 2009 on the following issues:

- Further justification of the serial approach to the nomination.
- Further explanation of how the three chosen sites relate to the overall outstanding value of the property and of how they are functionally linked, with reference to the Goi Machid and the Sorkhāb Bazārchā areas, in relation to the wider Bazaar area.
- Expansion of the description of the legal protection measures.
- Expansion of the description of the objectives and the measures of the planning instruments in force in relation to the factors threatening the property.
- Further explanation of the overall framework of the management system and of the state of advancement of the management plan in force, or under preparation – in this case, when it is expected to be implemented.

On 20 November 2009 ICOMOS received additional information provided by the State Party on these subjects. The specific information is discussed in the relevant sections.

ICOMOS sent an additional letter to the State Party on 16 December 2009 concerning the following issues:

- Description of how the provisions for the nominated area, buffer and landscape zones defined for the nominated property relate to the Master Plan and other planning instruments in force for Tabriz.
- Further clarification of whether the management plan mentioned at pp. 507 and 515 of the nomination dossier has been implemented or, should it be under development, when it will be approved and implemented.
- Assurance that steps were being taken to develop and implement a visitor management strategy and that information about the schedule of their drafting and implementation had been forwarded to ICOMOS.

The State Party sent a reply on 27 February 2010. The analysis of this information is included in the present evaluation.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 17 March 2010
2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The nominated property consists of three sites: the extant continuous core of the Grand Bazaar; the Goi Machid and the surviving parts of three small bazaars once connecting the Mosque with the main bazaar area; and the Sorkhāb Bāzārchāsi, one of the oldest in Tabriz. The whole property covers 28.973ha.

The nomination dossier provides a thorough description of the various types of building and their related functions that may be found in the nominated property.

The sārās (or khāns) are large complexes with a spacious central courtyard surrounded by one- or two-storey rows of rooms where goods could be stored and people lodged. Owing to the complexity of the activities carried out in the sārās, they are the most elaborately designed spaces in the Bazaar. In Tabriz, 26 sārās are still active, among which the most interesting from an architectural point of view are the Mirzā-Jalili, Jafariya, and Amir Sarāyi.

The timchas are structures with functions similar to those of the sārās but without accommodation facilities. Timchas are covered, often with complicated vaulted roofs, and have been used for the storage and trading of expensive goods. They may also act as entrance spaces for the sārās. In the Tabriz Bazaar twenty timchas have been identified, the most relevant of which are the Muzaffariyya and Amir Timchasi.

The rasta is the basic element of a bazaar: it consists of a double row of shops aligned along an often roofed linear path. In Tabriz, rastas are organized in parallel rows oriented north–south (e.g. Taza Rasta and Gadim Rasta) connected by perpendicular rastas (e.g. Bāshmakh-chilar and Misgar bazaars).

The chārsug is the vaulted intersection of two perpendicular rastas. In the Tabriz Bazaar there are four important chārsugs, among which two are worthy of mention: the Sādiqiyya and Butchular Chārsugs.

The dālān is a covered alley that connects two rastas or the interior and the exterior of the buildings. Dālāns also contain shops that sell goods of different kinds. In the Tabriz Bazaar 21 dālāns have been inventoried; among them the two most important are the Gāni and Khān Dālāns.

The bāzārchā is a small bazaar that usually serves a quarter. Bāzārchās have been always considered part of the Tabriz Grand Bazaar, in that they are built beside the entrance gates and connect peripheral spaces with the main Bazaar. Eight bāzārchās have been identified in Tabriz, the most important of which are the Sorkhab Bazarchasi, one of the oldest in the town, and the Karaney-khāna, Rahli, and Kohna Bāzārchās; once connecting the area of the Goi Machid with the core of the Bazaar.

The two most important mosques are the Jumā-Machidi and the Goi Machid. The former is of ancient origin but it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1814 and it was subsequently reconstructed in a new, simpler form. It retains a Kufi inscription from the Ilkhanate. The Goi Machid (Blue Mosque) owes its name to the colour of its mosaic tiles. It was damaged by the 1814 earthquake and has recently been restored.

The nominated property has a buffer zone formed by the urban fabric and more or less corresponding with the walled city of Tabriz, covering 75.408ha. It includes areas of dense historic fabric, more modern, less dense areas, and high-traffic roads.

The property is further protected by a Landscape Zone covering 492.823ha, established as a precaution against the construction of high-rise buildings in the vicinity of the Bazaar.

The functioning of the Bazaar was (and in part still is) based on a highly structured socio-professional system, related primarily to four spheres: security, internal transport, administration, and commerce. Within the commercial sphere, for instance, a diversity of activities are essential for the functioning of the Bazaar: selling (wholesale and retail); an administrative–economic organization serving commerce (e.g. commercial companies and banks); private occupation (e.g. brokerage); workshops (production, repair, packing and distribution, storage). The totality of these functions, tasks, and professional figures has made the Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex into a very special form of 'environment.'

History and development

Archaeological evidence bears witness to human occupation of the area corresponding to Tabriz since the Bronze Age. However, this occupation did not assume a continuous nature until the Iron Age.

In the 9th century Tabriz was an important military base. In this period Tabriz began to develop as an economic and business centre, and in the 12th and 13th centuries it was the capital of the country, although not uninterrupted. The destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258 increased the importance of Tabriz as a trading centre.

Between 1316 and 1331 Tabriz experienced the high point of its economic and social life. Travellers such as Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta described it as one of the richest trading centres in the world.
During the 14th and 15th centuries the town’s prosperity increased thanks to its strategic location, where much used west–east and south–east routes crossed, to the development of highly regarded manufactured products (e.g. cotton and silk textiles, arms, pottery), and to a wise policy of tax exemption. The first vast official and ceremonial space, the Sahib-abad, was created in 1258, around which the most important public buildings were built and where the army could be paraded, but which could also be used as a meeting place.

In the early 16th century the Safavid dynasty chose Tabriz as the capital city of their kingdom and the town became a powerful government centre, even though the capital was moved, first to Qazvin in 1548 and then to Isfahan, which were considered safer from Ottoman threat. In the 16th and 17th centuries manufacturing grew and diversified (weaving, copper metallurgy, weapon and tile production, leatherworks, tanning, soap making) and the volume of trade expanded.

In the last quarter of the 17th century Tabriz entered into a period of economic depression. Nonetheless, accounts by travellers from this period of decline still depicted Tabriz as an important trading centre.

The 18th century brought a period of political instability owing to Ottoman attempts at expansion. In 1780, at the beginning of the Qajar dynasty, the most destructive earthquake in the dense seismic history of Tabriz completely destroyed the town; it was, however, rapidly rebuilt.

Another earthquake in 1817 caused a great deal of damage to the mosques and to the town. In 1826 Tabriz was occupied by the Russians, but it was regained by the Qajar rulers two years later. During the 19th century several changes were made in the town. The governmental centre moved from the Sahib-abad, where public buildings were arranged around a vast square north of the Mehranroud River, to its present location, south of the river, close to the Aala Gate. Sahib-ul-Amr square was built in the historical area of Sahib-abad, and the Jami Mosque was restored, which helped restore its central role to the Bazaar. In 1871 a flood caused extensive damage to the bazaars, which were mapped and evaluated by means of a field survey. These records provide information about the condition of the Bazaar at that time. Repair works were undertaken in the years that followed to various structures: for example, the Mozaffarieh Timcha was completed in 1905.

In 1906 Tabriz became the centre of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution: the Bazaar was closed and the people demonstrated against the government since the Constitution was signed by the king and the first Parliament was established.

During the 20th century several wide roads were opened, leading to certain parts of the Bazaar becoming separated from its core.

Over the last thirty years a number of restoration projects have been carried out on the Jami and Goi Machids as well as on several commercial structures, whilst the Pol-bazaar has recently been completely reconstructed.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis in the nomination dossier considers bazaars in Iran and elsewhere. The criteria selected to compare the bazaars are age, extension, variety of architectural structures, completeness of functions (past and present), and integrity. The Iranian bazaars identified for the comparison are those of Arak, Ardabil, Esfahan, Tehran, Zanjan, Ghazvin, Ghom, Shiraz, the Kerman Historical-Cultural Structure (Tentative List), the Bazaar of Qaisariye in Laar (Tentative List), and the Historical Structure of Yazd (Tentative List).

The major difference that distinguishes the Tabriz Bazaar from those of other capital cities such as Isfahan, Tehran, and Ghazvin is the fact that their development was government-driven, whereas Tabriz grew because of the town’s location and the wise economic policies of its rulers. These bazaars have, moreover, partially lost their role within the town and today are almost exclusively dedicated to retail sales rather than production or wholesale operations. This reduced role has been accompanied by a loss of integrity as a result of urban development. Among the examples that have been evaluated, some have histories as ancient as that of Tabriz and acted as models for planning other famous bazaars – for example, Qaisariye Bazaar in Laar was the model for the Shiraz and Isfahan Bazaars, just as Tabriz was for the Teheran and Arak Bazaars – but these are generally much smaller than the Tabriz Bazaar and have to a very considerable extent lost their integrity as a result of urban development.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis with Iranian bazaars has been carried out in a thorough and systematic manner, although the comparison might have been limited to Isfahan, Tehran, and Ghazvin, which are more comparable in terms of size. Nevertheless, the comparison is convincing in demonstrating that Tabriz Bazaar (29ha) is larger, older, more lively, and more varied in its architectural structures and it has retained a higher level of integrity. The Tabriz Bazaar was also adopted as a model for planning more recent bazaars, such as those in Teheran or Arak, whilst the Sahib-abad Square in Tabriz formed the basis of the conception of Meidan Emam in Esfahan, which is on the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS notes, however, that a number of properties included in the Tentative List of Iran are or contain bazaar complexes, and that almost all of these are
propounded on the basis of more criteria than Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex. These are Kerman Historical-Cultural Structure under criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), and (vi), the Bazaar of Qaisaryye in Laar under criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (vi), and the Historical Structure of Yazd under all six cultural criteria. On the other hand, the comparative analysis for Tabriz set out in the nomination dossier convincingly demonstrates its superiority to the other properties selected for comparison, including those mentioned above.

The comparison with non-Iranian bazaars is less systematic and indirectly demonstrate the specificities of Tabriz Bazaar in respect of other historic bazaars included in World Heritage Sites, such as Kapalıçarşı Bazaar in the Historic Areas of Istanbul (1985, criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)); the souks of the Ancient City of Damascus (1979, criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v)); Khan el-Khalili in Historic Cairo (1979, criteria (i), (v), (vi)); Historic Centre of Bukhara (1993, criteria (ii), (iv), (v)); Chhatta Chowk and Meena Bazaar in the Red Fort Complex (2007, criteria (ii), (iii), (vi)); the Medina of Marrakesh (1985, criteria (i), (ii), (iv), (v)); and the Medina of Tunis (1979, criteria (ii), (iii), (v)).

Generally speaking, Arab souks are less often covered, are usually narrower, and provide less typological diversity. In Syria, the bazaar of Aleppo would have been a better choice for comparison than the Damascus bazaar in that the former has several masonry-roofed spaces whereas in Damascus the covering of the Souk al-Hamidiyya was added after its construction had been completed and is, furthermore, built in metal. The comparison with Istanbul, the capital city of a powerful rival empire, has not been completely developed.

ICOMOS notes that the comparative analysis has been extensive, dealing with properties that demonstrate similar values to those of the Tabriz Bazaar, whether or not they are inscribed on the World Heritage List or at national, regional, or international level.

The selection of the three components of the serial nomination is based on the fact that the Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex was formed by the Grand Bazaar and eight bazaars built alongside the eight gates of the town. Only two of the eight bazaars have survived in a state of integrity, authenticity, continuity, and vitality that would justify their inclusion in the nominated property in order to illustrate the system of a central bazaar with radial gate-bazaars that was established after 1780.

ICOMOS considers that the sites selected for the serial nomination include the most relevant elements that illustrate the 16th–17th century fabric of the Tabriz Bazaar as well as its functioning. The inclusion of these components is fully justified.

ICOMOS considers that, despite certain minor weaknesses, the comparative analysis justifies 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 Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex is one of the most complete examples of a commercial-cultural system that is traditional of Iran;
- The Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex is the largest, integrated covered architectural body and includes the most varied architectural spaces and buildings for commercial functions;
- The Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex is one of the most important trading centres along the Silk Road and has been a place of cultural exchange since antiquity.

The serial approach to the nomination is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the historic city of Tabriz included the Grand Bazaar and eight gates, beside which eight additional bazaars were built after the 1780 earthquake. The additional information received on 20 November 2009 explained that, although these bazaars were not physically linked to the central core, they functionally acted as a unified complex from an economic, cultural, and social point of view.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified because in this way all the relevant components of the Bazaar complex have been included as a single nominated property. At the same time, the entire walled city of Tabriz, the background against which the historic Bazaar flourished, has been included in the buffer zone, thus ensuring the understanding and the protection of the values of the nominated area.

**Integrity and Authenticity**

Integrity

The Bazaar is an integrated architectural complex in which each building, structure, and open space contributes to the stability of the others and the functionality of the whole. The nominated property contains all the elements that are necessary to convey its significance.

The architectural integrity of the bazaar has been retained, although two large roads have resulted in some peripheral parts of the Bazaar being separated from its core. The multifunctional mixture of the Tabriz Bazaar is still alive despite the fact that certain activities, such as manufacturing, have been transferred to other areas. The visual integrity of the Bazaar has been maintained and the sequence of open and covered spaces can still be made out, despite some unsympathetic interventions.

In the opinion of ICOMOS the architecture of the Tabriz Bazaar conserves a rich repertoire of commercial buildings and the connection between the physical structure and its functioning is still clearly legible, and in
many cases alive. It is worth remembering, however, that the medieval Bazaar of Tabriz was destroyed by successive earthquakes and that the present one dates from after the 1780 earthquake. The ruins of earlier structures were levelled and new buildings were erected on top of them which exhibit good-quality design and workmanship. The integrity of the 18th century Bazaar is quite well preserved.

ICOMOS also considers that the components of the series have been selected to reflect the entirety of the Historic Bazaar.

Authenticity

The conditions of authenticity of the nominated property have been assessed for all the different types of buildings, in general taking four aspects into account: design, workmanship, setting, and material. The nomination dossier states that, generally speaking, the authenticity of the property has been retained, but it also acknowledges that some interventions have to a limited extent affected the overall authenticity. The nomination dossier also maintains that the authenticity of the Goi and Jami Machid, which have been recently undergone considerable restoration works, has been preserved.

ICOMOS considers that the rich documentary and iconographic historical sources bear credible witness to the importance of the Tabriz Bazaar over history and to the permanence of its layout, whilst its materials and design date back to the end of the 18th century, after it was destroyed by the 1780 earthquake. The fabric of the Bazaar still exhibits the design, workmanship, and materials of the period when it was constructed, despite the repairs that were made necessary by subsequent shocks and floods.

The Bazaar is still a lively and economically active place, attesting to its rich and long-lasting economic, social, and cultural exchanges.

However, ICOMOS notes that there is a tendency to reconstruct missing elements, which might pose problems concerning authenticity in case this trend is not readdressed.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met. ICOMOS recommends, however, that sound conservation principles and criteria should be adopted and implemented in any work in the nominated property.

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 Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex has been one of the most important international trading and cultural centres, thanks to the centuries-old east–west exchanges along the itineraries of the Silk Route. It is claimed that the nominated property exhibits one of the most varied and integrated assemblages of architectural buildings and spaces, as well as one of the most sustainable socio-economic structures, attesting to the wealth in trade and cultural interaction of Tabriz.

ICOMOS considers that the long history of the Tabriz Historic Bazaar complex and the fact that it has been completely rebuilt several times, most recently and comprehensively in 1780, at a time when its decline was already under way because of the role assumed in the region by the Ottoman Empire, demonstrates that Tabriz was a place of intensive commercial and cultural exchanges made possible by the town’s commitment to trade and its strategic location along highly used trade routes.

ICOMOS also notes that the relation of Tabriz with the Silk Route itineraries, especially for the earliest periods of the Route’s long history, has been based mainly on the study of artefacts from single archaeological excavations and the establishment of their provenance, but this is not mentioned in the description provided for the ‘Silk Road’ proposal in the Tentative List of Iran.

On the other hand, the literature survey attached to the nomination dossier clearly demonstrates that Tabriz has been a major commercial centre and an exceptional place for interchange of human values since the 12th –13th centuries, where merchants and traders from as far as the Mediterranean region, Russia, Central Asia, and India came together to supply and acquire goods.

ICOMOS also observes that the Tabriz Bazaar was a model for planning more recent bazaars, such as those of Tehran or Arak. Additionally, although this is mentioned only under criterion (iv), Sahib-abad Square, the first conceptualization of which may be found in Ghazvin Aalighapoo Square, had an influence on the subsequent construction of Meidan Emam in Esfahan which is included on the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has 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 Tabriz Historic Bazaar bears witness to its having been one of the most complete socio-cultural
and commercial complexes among bazaars. It developed from the early centuries of the Islamic era into a system where different guilds and crafts assume the responsibility of fulfilling functional and management tasks according to a tradition that still survives at the present day. The Tabriz Bazaar has also played a central role in spreading cultural trends, thanks to its long-lasting vitality as a trade centre. The complex interactions among people from different cultures and social levels have created a unique culture.

ICOMOS considers that the Tabriz Historic Bazaar is an exceptional physical, economical, social, political, and religious complex that bears exceptional testimony to a civilization which is living. Over the centuries it has developed into a socio-economic and cultural system in which specialized architectural structures, functions, and professions, along with people from different cultures, are integrated in a unique living environment. Thanks to its location and to wise policies of endowments and tax exemptions, the Tabriz Bazaar was given a long-lasting economic role, becoming an exceptional example of a multi-functional commercial-cultural complex.

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 Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex is an outstanding example of an integrated multi-functional urban complex in which interconnected architectural structures and spaces have been shaped by commercial activities and their related needs. A large number of specialized buildings and structures are concentrated and connected with one another in a relatively compact area so as to form what is an almost single integrated structure, designed so as to be seismic-safe. Masses and open spaces are properly interrelated and interspaced in order to regulate the access of air and light. Open spaces and squares also provide places of escape and rescue when earthquakes strike. Among the relevant structures in the Tabriz Bazaar the Pol-Bazaar (bazaar on the bridge) is considered to be a prototype in its own right.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative study is particularly convincing in showing the Tabriz Bazaar to be an outstanding example of an architectural-urban ensemble which illustrates the long-lasting role in the world trade network through Central Asia played by Tabriz over several centuries. The interconnected system of buildings, structures, and spaces set up to respond to functional demands has given rise to an exceptional entity in which the architectural-urban structure cannot be disentangled from its socio-cultural and commercial functions.

ICOMOS considers that demonstration of the seismic safety of the complex would require more extensive research from both an historical and a structural perspective, taking into account also the fact that the physical fabric of the Bazaar dates back to after 1780, when a disastrous earthquake razed almost the whole of Tabriz to the ground. Similarly, consideration of the Pol-Bazaar as a prototype would have required a specific comparative analysis with similar structures such as the Rialto Bridge in Venice and the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. Additionally, today’s Pol-Bazaar is a complete recent reconstruction, a fact that contradicts the idea of it being a prototype.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified, with the exclusion of the considerations about the Pol-Bazaar.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified and that the selection of groups of buildings is appropriate to illustrate the values of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii), (iii), and (iv) and the conditions of authenticity and integrity and that Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

Description of the attributes

- The layout of the Bazaar, with its network of ṭāstās, ᴿālāns, ṭɪmḥas, ᵯārās, ᴽāzārčās, and the rhythmic alternation of covered and unroofed spaces;
- The religious, educational, and cultural buildings that are integrated into the Bazaar;
- The social and professional organization that still ensures that the Bazaar functions in a sustainable manner;
- The brick structures of the buildings, with their intricate lines.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Development pressures

The city is still growing (for example, in the areas south of the Bazaar the population has increased) and so it is likely that demands for new constructions will arise. However, at the present time the major factors affecting the property are the adaptation of buildings to new, incompatible functions, the installation of modern technical equipment in an unsympathetic manner, and the replacement of building components with others that are not compatible in either materials or technology.

ICOMOS recommends that principles for conservation, restoration, renovation processes, and good design for new buildings in the areas close to the Bazaar should be laid down. Control over the building permits in the
nominated property and buffer zone is vital in order to avoid threats from inappropriate building development.

Tourism pressures

At the present time there is no pressure from tourism. Nevertheless, ICOMOS recommends that training programmes on sustainable tourism should be developed for property owners and managers in order to ensure that they are prepared to tackle tourism issues.

Environmental pressures

There are environmental pressures caused by pollution (traffic, sewage, garbage) and by the climatic conditions (seasonal and daily thermal variation).

Natural disasters

Floods and earthquakes are major natural catastrophes that have repeatedly occurred in the region. Several studies have been conducted in collaboration with universities and external experts in order to understand how the vaulted complex behaves under the impact of an earthquake, in order to identify the weak points of the whole structure and develop ideas for possible reinforcement.

ICOMOS suggests that this research should be continued in order to identify the structural behaviour of the Bazaar and to make it possible for planning policies as well as flood-effect control systems to be implemented in order to reduce the flood threats.

Impact of climate change

ICOMOS considers that climate change may result in an increased frequency of natural disasters (floods). Higher temperatures and humidity may result in the development of fungi, moulds and other pests that affect building materials, especially wood.

Other factors

The lack of maintenance of the Bazaar structures has caused leakage and damp penetration. Rising damp has been counteracted by the creation of drainage channels.

ICOMOS considers that the low level of awareness of the Bazaar users towards sensitive interventions in historic areas is a major factor affecting the property. Several incompatible replacements and repairs have been carried out. There is a need for guidelines, combined with incentives to address this issue again.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are earthquakes, as demonstrated by the active seismic history of the region, and insensitive maintenance and upgrading interventions.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries of all the zones have been identified and described in a clear and unambiguous manner.

The nominated property corresponds with the monument protected in 1975 as the Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, which includes all the buildings and open spaces of the Bazaar. Two additional nominated areas have been defined and included in the nominated property – the Sorkhab Bazarchasi, one of the oldest in Tabriz, and the 15th century Goi Machid (Blue Mosque), which merits inclusion in the nominated property by virtue of its relation to the Karaney-khana, Rahli, and Kohna Bazaar-chashi and its importance as a monument on its own right.

The nominated property has two additional levels of indirect protection. The first is a buffer zone which coincides with the walled city of Tabriz, and the second is a much larger landscape zone which makes it possible to control permits for new constructions in the surrounding area and acts as a precaution against the construction of high-rise buildings around the historic centre.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are adequate to express the values of the nominated property and to ensure its protection.

Ownership

The ownership profile is rather complex, including public property (passages, yards, arcades) 16%; private property (66%), and property owned by the Wqaf Endowment and Charity Affairs Organisation, i.e. mosques, schools, shrines, etc. (16%); and state property, i.e. banks or state-owned shops (2%).

Protection

Legal Protection

In Iran the legal provisions for the protection of cultural heritage are to be found in general (e.g. the 1920 Constitution Law and the 1996 Penal Law) or specific law, such as the 1930 Law for the protection of national heritage.

The 1930 Law defines the procedures for the identification of cultural heritage and establishes the National Heritage List, together with the criteria for inclusion on this list. It also defines provisions for archaeological excavations, further detailed by the 1980 Bylaw concerning unauthorized excavations. Further
provisions concerning the acquisition of property of cultural significance are to be found in the 1969 Law concerning acquisition of Land, Buildings and Premises, which regulates the modes of acquisition on the State’s part of immovable property for the purpose of protecting or improving the presentation of cultural property.

In 1979 the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organisation (later renamed the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organisation – ICHHTO) was established to ensure the management of cultural heritage. The Organisation is responsible for studying, investigating, surveying, identifying, and registering movable and immovable property of historical, archaeological, and cultural value. The ICHHTO is also responsible for preparing and implementing plans aimed at repairing and revitalizing monuments, buildings, and valuable cultural-historical complexes.

In 2001 it was decided that all public organizations must conduct studies to assess the cultural/historic impacts of major development projects at the earliest stage of the scheme.

The Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex was added to the List of Iran’s National Monuments in 1975, since when it has been covered by special protection and conservation measures.

Three different protection areas have been established: a core, a buffer zone, and a landscape zone. In the nominated area all activities involving repair, restoration, rehabilitation works, or changes of function require authorization by the ICHHTO. In the buffer zone no building may be higher than 7.5m high and all constructions and urban development plans must be approved by ICHHTO. In the landscape zone all large-scale plans (high-rise buildings, highways, subways, and infrastructures) must be approved by ICHHTO at the feasibility study stage.

ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 16 December 2009 asking how these provisions relate to the planning instruments in force for Tabriz.

The State Party has replied that, under the provisions of the law for urban planning passed on 2004, all works to be carried out in historic areas must be supervised by ICHHTO. The regulations concerning protected monuments are inserted in the comprehensive master plan and in the detailed plans for Tabriz historic city, which further includes specific and detailed provisions to ensure the safeguarding of heritage features of the urban historic fabric.

The aforementioned regulations were ratified in 1977 and came into force immediately. Since then all public and private urban development projects concerning the above mentioned areas have taken into account the zoning described above. One of the results of the zoning has been the diversion of the underground railway system route to outside the Bazaar area. Mosques and other monuments in the vicinity of the Bazaar have been registered separately at different dates: Goli Masjid was registered in 1932 and the registration process continued until 2005, when Sorkhab Bazarcha, the Kalkatechi Library, and Seyyed Golabi Bath were added to the List of National Monuments.

Traditional Protection

In the past the Bazaar was managed by the bazaar guilds and proprietors. This form of management has become less stringent, although recently a mixed management formula has been established which includes the guilds, the charity organizations, and the owners in the management process.

Effectiveness of protection measures

ICOMOS considers that a considerable effort has been made to ensure the protection and conservation of the Bazaar.

Nevertheless, ICOMOS notes that control over building permits in the nominated property and its buffer zone is vital in order to avoid the threats of inappropriate building development or adaptation and it therefore recommends that mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that such a control be effective.

Conservation

Inventories, recording, research

ICOMOS acknowledges that much research, survey, and documentation concerning the Bazaar and the adjoining buildings have been carried out.

However, ICOMOS notes that technical inventories (i.e. detailed and systematically recorded information about each monument) are not mentioned in the nomination dossier. The descriptions in the dossier lack basic information, such as dates of construction, repairs, styles of buildings, and their state of conservation. Most of the surveys reported in the dossier have been prepared recently and should be regarded as the first stage of analytical studies.

ICOMOS recommends that the efforts undertaken to document the built structures of the nominated property should be continued on a systematic basis, and that inventories should contain baseline data for the future monitoring of the property.
**Present state of conservation**

The nominated property has undergone extensive conservation efforts since 1979. Problems of rising damp have been dealt with and structural cracks are monitored, whilst leakage has been temporarily arrested through the use of provisional waterproof sheets over the roofs.

ICOMOS considers that these efforts should be continued in order to improve the state of conservation of the property, which has suffered from lack of maintenance. Considerable care should also be exercised in applying sound conservation principles and avoiding over-restoration.

**Active conservation measures**

Several conservation and maintenance projects are being carried out in the nominated property by craftsmen under ICHHTO supervision, which identifies the need, sets the priorities, and develops schedules for interventions. Along with repair activities, the removal of inappropriate elements is also being undertaken.

**Maintenance**

Maintenance is included in the conservation measures, since it has not been carried out for many years.

**Effectiveness of conservation measures**

ICOMOS observes that the efforts undertaken since 1979 have proved to be effective. Several conservation works have been carried out and some interventions (e.g. in the Goi Machid) demonstrate careful treatment. However, there is a tendency to overdo and to reconstruct missing elements or even parts of the Bazaar, a practice which may threaten the authenticity of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation efforts undertaken by the State Party have resulted in a general improvement of the conditions of the built fabric of the Bazaar. However, ICOMOS considers that the tendency to be over-elaborated requires to be readdressed, to avoid threatening the authenticity of the fabric.

ICOMOS therefore recommends that sound conservation principles should be laid down and guidelines developed to orientate interventions and combined with financial incentives. ICOMOS also suggests that priorities in conservation and maintenance works should be drafted and followed. Finally, ICOMOS recommends that the efforts undertaken to document the built structures of the nominated property should be continued on a systematic basis, and that inventories should contain baseline data for the future monitoring of the property.

**Management**

**Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes**

The management framework for the property is based on the integration of existing planning instruments (the Master Plan and the detailed Plan for Tabriz), administrative and technical bodies (the steering committee for Tabriz Bazaar and the ICHHTO Tabriz Bazaar Base), conservation objectives, SWOT analysis, implementation strategies, and operational programmes.

The ICHHTO has the responsibility of preserving all registered and non-registered cultural property. It fulfils its task through the High Technical Council and provincial Bases. Each Base refers to an advisory steering committee of distinguished experts. In the case of the Tabriz Bazaar, since the ownership and stakeholder pattern is complex, the committee also includes representatives of the stakeholders. This committee determines and explains the general adopted protection and management policies to all stakeholders involved in the Bazaar through the mediation of reliable market persons. Finally, the office of the conservation staff is very close to the Bazaar Complex which ensures a permanent staff presence.

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

According to the nomination dossier, the duration of the Management Plan for the property is ten years. The major objectives of the Management Plan mentioned in the dossier are: preparing a master plan for conservation works, developing educational programmes, carrying out surveys, and ensuring the follow-up of legal matters. On the basis of the goals identified, subdivided into short-, medium-, and long-term objectives, several detailed operational plans have been developed, including programmes for the presentation and promotion of the property. For each plan the financial needs have been identified.

ICOMOS has requested the State Party to explain further the overall framework of the management system and of the instruments on which management will be implemented (point 6, letter of 19 October 2009). The information provided in the State Party's letter of 20 November 2009 gives no information about the state of development and enforcement of the Management Plan, although this had been explicitly requested. ICOMOS raised this issue in a second letter, sent to the State Party on 16 December 2009.

The State Party replied that the management plan was being carried out and that a number of project mentioned in the nomination dossier had already been completed, including restoration plans, some pilot projects within the nominated area, educational and training plans (i.e. in the security sector), compiling regulations for the use of
traditional materials, establishing a database to inventory archaeological ceramic finds, holding training courses for university students, printing information brochures on the Bazaar, improving tourism facilities (information desk, tourist signage, restrooms, etc.), training of the ICHHTO base staff in the monitoring sector, monitoring the property, establishing cooperation programmes with the universities for research purposes.

In the same letter, ICOMOS requested that steps should be taken to develop and implement a visitor management strategy and that information about the timetable for completion and implementation should be forwarded to ICOMOS.

The State Party replied that a comprehensive tourism plan for Tabriz had been prepared by the Art University of Tabriz in conjunction with the organization of national and international tourism during 2001-2006 which includes a 20-year perspective for the development of tourism in Tabriz. A group of NGO and freelance consultants had drafted a Tourism Plan for the nominated property which will be examined by an expert committee at the end of 2010. This plan includes actions in the research, training, and presentation sectors.

ICOMOS considers that the management system in place is adequate.

ICOMOS appreciates the additional efforts undertaken by the State Party in this field and recommends that updated information on any progress in the finalization and implementation of the management and visitor plans that are under development should be transmitted to the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS.

Risk preparedness

The nomination dossier does not contain any reference to risk preparedness, even though the State Party is aware of the threats that are posed to the nominated property, especially by earthquakes, and has carried out applied research to prevent damage to the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that a risk-preparedness plan should be prepared that specifically addresses the threats posed by earthquakes and floods, which are the most likely menaces to the nominated property.

Involvement of the local communities

The involvement in the Tabriz Steering Committee of the head of the Guilds and Board of Trustees of the Bazaar, as well as the mediation of reliable Bazaar businessmen identified by authorities among the Bazaar stakeholders, makes it possible to reckon that the local community has been involved in the process, to a certain extent.

Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and training

The nomination dossier contains a table detailing past investments and indirectly also provides information on future financial needs. The Tabriz Bazaar ICHHTO Base has an administrative and technical organization which includes two architects, three restorers, 24 craftsmen, and ten students. In the research branch two posts for GIS and computer operators are vacant.

ICOMOS considers that, owing to the importance of the structures and the structural stability of the buildings of the Bazaar, it would be important for at least one structural engineer with expertise in historic masonry structural behaviour to be hired to work with the staff of the ICHHTO Base.

Effectiveness of current management

The framework envisaged for the management of the property has taken account of its specificity and complexity, and also of stakeholder issues. The relationships between the authorities, the technical staff, and the Bazaar inhabitants seem to be solidly grounded. The results of conservation works carried out up to the present suggest that the system that has been put in place is an effective one.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate. The State Party, however, should consider including in the management plan under elaboration observations about the long-term vision for the nominated property. ICOMOS recommends that a structural engineer trained in historic masonry structural behaviour be hired to cooperate with the staff of the ICHHTO Base. Furthermore, the State Party should develop training programmes for the technical staff so as to increase the understanding of shared conservation principles and standards among the Bazaar community, professionals, and workers.

6. MONITORING

The nomination dossier states that monitoring exercises are implemented with the aid of the authorities responsible for the Bazaar, the ICHHTO Base, and research and scientific centres. The nomination dossier also identifies a number of indicators for monitoring purposes, grouped according to the aspect to be monitored: traffic, respect for regulations, economic and social issues, conservation, tourism, and development. For each indicator the periodicity of measurement and the place of data storage are provided.

ICOMOS considers that monitoring has been organized in a reasonable and sound manner.
ICOMOS recommends the State Party to implement the monitoring programme as soon as possible in order to confirm its applicability in the long term.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The nomination dossier illustrates in an extensive and detailed way the physical structure of the nominated property, its functioning, and its significance over the centuries with useful and well grounded references to the socio-architectural phenomenon of bazaars and the role played by Tabriz as a trading centre along one of the several itineraries of the Silk Road. It has been demonstrated that the property conforms with the proposed criteria and the conditions of authenticity and integrity have been met.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, Iran, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii), and (iv).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, located along one of the most frequented east-west trade routes, consists of a series of interconnected, covered brick structures, buildings, and enclosed spaces for a variety of functions - commercial and trade-related activities, social gatherings, and educational and religious practices. Closely interwoven with the architectural fabric is the social and professional organization of the Bazaar, which has allowed it to function over the centuries and has made it into a single integrated entity.

Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex has been one of the most important international places for commercial and cultural interchange, thanks to the centuries-old east-west trading connections and routes and to a wise policy of endowments and tax exemptions.

Tabriz Historic Bazaar bears witness to one of the most complete socio-cultural and commercial complexes among bazaars. It has developed over the centuries into an exceptional physical, economic, social, political, and religious complex, in which specialized architectural structures, functions, professions, and people from different cultures are integrated into a unique living environment. The rich historical sources bear credible witness to the importance of the Tabriz Bazaar over history and to the permanence of its layout. The fabric of the Bazaar still exhibits the design, workmanship, and materials of the period when it was constructed, after the 1780 earthquake. The Bazaar is still a lively and economically active place, attesting to its rich and long-lasting economic, social, and cultural exchanges.

Integrity and Authenticity

The nominated property contains all the elements that are necessary to convey its significance. The integrity of the 18th century Tabriz Bazaar is well preserved and its architecture conserves a rich repertoire of commercial buildings; the connection between the physical structure and its functioning is still clearly legible, and in many cases alive.

Management and protection requirements

The Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex was officially protected in 1975 and since then has been covered by special stewardship measures. Three different protection areas have been established (a nominated area, a buffer zone, and a landscape zone), which are subject to special regulations, incorporated into the planning instruments. Within these areas any kind of activity
needs authorization by the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO), which is the institutional body in charge of the protection of protected monuments.

The management framework for the property is based on the integration of existing planning instruments (the Master Plan and the detailed Plan for Tabriz), administrative and technical bodies (the steering committee for Tabriz Bazaar and the ICHHTO Tabriz Bazaar Base), conservation objectives, SWOT analysis, implementation strategies, and operational programmes that are included in the management plan.

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

- Transmitting to the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS updated information on any progress in the finalization and implementation of the management and visitor plans that are under development;

- Formulating and implementing principles for conservation, restoration, renovation, and good design for new buildings in the areas close to the Bazaar. Guidelines for conservation might be linked to financial incentives;

- Ensuring strict control over the building permits in the nominated property and buffer zone so as to reduce threats from inappropriate building development;

- Including observations on the long-term vision for the nominated property in the management plan;

- Continuing on a systematic basis the efforts undertaken to document and inventory the built heritage containing baseline data for the future monitoring of the property;

- Developing and implementing a risk-preparedness plan which specifically addresses earthquake and flood-related risks;

- Developing and implementing training programmes on sustainable tourism for the property managers, to ensure that the property is prepared to deal with tourism issues;

- Preparing and implementing training programmes for the technical staff in order to increase understanding of shared conservation principles and standards among the Bazaar community, professionals, and workers.
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property
General view of the nominated property

Amir Sarāyī
Interior view of Dar- Dallazan Rastasi

Interior view of Sadiqyya Charsugu