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# Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) No 1361

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## Official name as proposed by the State Party

Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah

## Location

Makkah al-Mukarramah Region  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

## Brief description

On the eastern shore of the Red Sea, Jeddah was a major port for the Indian Ocean trade routes, channelling goods to Makkah. The prosperity that this trade brought led to the development of a multicultural city between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which attracted merchants from the Maghreb, Arabia and as far afield as India and Southeast Asia.

Jeddah developed a distinctive architectural tradition, a fusion of Red Sea coastal coral building traditions with ideas and crafts from along the trade routes. The pinnacle of its prosperity was at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the opening of the Suez Canal and the introduction of regular steam ships extended the trade north to Europe. Wealthy merchant who benefited built elaborate, seven storey tower houses, with oriel windows shielded by pierced and fretted wooden screens known as *roshan-s*.

Jeddah had since the 14<sup>th</sup> century and maybe earlier acted as a port for pilgrims visiting Makkah from India, and from North, East and West Africa. This role expanded significantly in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and is reflected in the accommodation then offered by the city for as many as a 100,000 pilgrims a year.

## Category of property

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

In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (July 2013), Annex 3, this is also an *inhabited historic town*.

## 1 Basic data

### Included in the Tentative List

28 November 2006

### International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

## Date received by the World Heritage Centre

1 February 2013

## Background

A previous nomination was submitted in 2010 for the 'Historical City of Jeddah' that covered a larger area than the current nomination. Following a negative evaluation by ICOMOS, the nomination was withdrawn by the State Party.

## Consultations

ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committees on Historic Towns and Villages and Earthen Architectural Heritage and several independent experts.

## Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 23 to 26 September 2013.

## Additional information requested and received from the State Party

No additional information was requested from the State Party. On 28 February 2014, the State Party submitted two supplementary documents: an Additional Volume to the Nomination Dossier containing Action Plans and Annexes and Guidelines for Building Regulations. Both of these have been taken into account in this document.

## Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

6 March 2014

## 2 The property

### Description

The city of Jeddah lies on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, in the Tihana plains between the Hejaz Mountains to the North West and the Asir Mountains to the south-east.

Jeddah's prosperity was based on two distinct and sometimes overlapping roles. It was a major Red Sea mercantile centre between the Indian Ocean trade routes and the Hijaz region and beyond. Secondly it acted as a gateway for pilgrims to Mecca who arrived by sea. Both of these contributed to a vibrant, diverse and prosperous society. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the pinnacle of this prosperity, as a result of the building of the Suez canal, which extended the routes to Europe, and the introduction of regular steam ships.

Such was the strategic importance of Jeddah as a trading centre that it attracted merchants not just from the Hijaz, Najd or other parts of present-day Saudi Arabia or the Arabian Peninsula (notably the Hadhramaut), but also from Egypt, Syria, Turkey, the Maghreb, India, Central Asia, Southeast Asia or Africa. And many of these merchants eventually settled there, such was the ease with which newcomers were accepted and assimilated.

The pilgrimage shaped the rhythm of life of the inhabitants of Jeddah, as until the advent of steam ships, the arrival and departure of many pilgrims from the east was dictated by the Monsoon winds. Pilgrims came from West and East Africa as well as from Egypt, North Africa, and the northern Ottoman Empire and at certain times of year, Jeddah became a microcosm of the Muslim world. This is still perceivable today, even though Jeddah airport has largely taken over the role of the harbour.

These two twin strands, trade and pilgrims were reflected in the urban fabric through the provision of caravanserais (although most have not survived), suqs (markets), accommodation for pilgrims (in *wikala-s*, *ribat-s*, tower houses, coffeehouses), as well as in mosques and *zawiya-s* as places of worship.

Although the urban structure of the city in terms of streets, disposition of *ribat-s*, and the constrained plots of the houses, dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, very few buildings survive from that date – notably parts of two mosques. Most of the remaining historic structures reflect the prosperity of the 18<sup>th</sup> and particularly the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, although the architectural style of the tower houses is reflective of much earlier periods.

The city developed within the confines of an irregular encircling wall, the four gates of which were linked to the main thoroughfares. The city walls were demolished in 1947. Two of the gates have been reconstructed.

What has been nominated is the central part of the historic city Al Balad (around a third of the area enclosed by the city walls) where the evidence for its historic structures is densest. What has been excluded are areas to the east with high rise modern neighbourhoods, and to the west where the old port has been destroyed and its footprint included in a wide area of reclaimed land. The old city has thus lost its crucial link with its harbour.

Today this central heart of the city is no longer the thriving metropolis it once was and many of the houses are abandoned or sub-divided to host tenants, with only a few wealthy trading families keeping a house and maybe a shop as a sign of their attachment to the city.

Some of its buildings are fragile and vulnerable. When the first inventory of historic buildings was undertaken in the 1970s, 1,000 were identified. Since then the pressure for development has taken its toll and a survey in 2010 found only 350 remaining, of which 280 are in the nominated area. Overall, the proportion of historic to new buildings in the nominated area appears to be around 50%.

ICOMOS considers that although the nomination dossier provides a considerable amount of information on the history of the city and its characteristics, including in appendices, the Description section is lacking in specific

details for some types of structures, in terms of precisely what has survived and where.

The property consists of the following:

- Trading axis
- *Suqs*
- Pilgrimage axis and *Ribat-s*
- Mosques and *Zawiya-s*
- Residential quarters – *hara-s* - *Roshan* Tower houses characteristic of the northern part of the city
- Three-four storey houses in southern part
- Mixed residential and commercial areas

Trading axis

The trading axis has survived less well than the pilgrimage axis. Trading goods were offloaded in the port and traded in *suqs* or markets around the city. Huge *wikala-s*, or caravanserais, were constructed for the storage of goods and also provided accommodation for merchants.

The main *suq* near the shore, the *Suq al-Nada* which still houses much wholesale trade notably in clothes and, to the south, the *Suq al-Khasiqiyya*, are not included in the nominated area due to recent development, but both are within the buffer zone.

What is within the nominated area are two *suqs*, *Suq al-Alawi* and *Suq al `Bedawi/Juma'a*. The *Suqs* were single storey structures with long linear rows of shops. Smaller *suqs* could also occupy the ground floor of houses along the street.

It appears that none of the huge *wikala-s* (caravanserais) has survived.

Pilgrimage axis and *Ribat-s*

When the pilgrims arrived mainly by sea, the pilgrimage axis crossed the city from the port in the west, where the pilgrims' boats landed, to the Mecca gate in the east of the town wall, through which pilgrims departed for Mecca.

A large influx of pilgrims had to be accommodated in the city. The poorest slept where they could find a space on benches, roofs, squares etc. The richer pilgrim could rent rooms in large specially constructed buildings known as *wakala-s* or could lodge in private houses. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century *wakala-s*, mainly in the Yemen quarter in the south, could accommodate as many as 10,000 pilgrims.

Although *wakala-s* are mentioned as part of the justification for Outstanding Universal Value, ICOMOS notes that no details are provided in the nomination dossier as to their survival or location.

Pilgrims also lodged in *Ribat-s*, fortified buildings built originally for defence but also used for merchants as well as pilgrims. The nomination text states that eleven *ribat-s* survive in Jeddah, most of which are closed. Three are in the nominated area and one of these is in use as a shelter for poor widows. The architecture of the *ribat-s* is distinctive: crenelated horizontal facades decorated with stucco work. A programme of restoration is being launched – see below.

#### Mosques and *Zawiya-s*

Jeddah had mosques in all its main neighbourhoods. The Great Mosque roughly in the centre of the city was demolished in the 1990s and replaced with a new mosque, al-Hanafi. Nine historic mosques are in the nominated area. The two most important surviving mosques architecturally are Masjid ash-Shafe'i and Masjid al-Mi'mar. Masjid ash-Shafe'i was originally constructed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and all except its minaret was reconstructed in 1539 in Indian Mughal style – a clear expression of one of the many influences brought to Jeddah. It is currently being restored. The date of Masjid al-Mi'mar is unknown but it is before 1834.

Details of the other seven mosques are not provided.

The text also mentions *Zawiya-s* – religious schools – as well as other religious and charitable institutions associated with the mosques, but no details have been provided of the buildings that housed them.

Residential quarters – *hara-s* - *Roshan* Tower houses characteristic of the northern part of the city and three-four storey houses in southern part

The houses face outwards and were not built around courtyards. Instead the social spaces were public ones. What is distinctive about Jeddah are the numerous spaces for sociability at different levels, from the coffeehouses to the squares and the seating areas in front of houses. Off the main thoroughfares there are narrower streets, and off these cul-de-sacs or small squares.

The constraints of the urban plots led to tower houses being constructed, particularly in the north of the city. It was this form, with its elaborate timber and plaster decoration that characterised the city and was commented on by many travellers. These tower houses rose to seven stories in height. Those that survive were mainly constructed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Walls of tower houses were built of coral rubble and lime mortar with horizontal timber reinforcements. The exterior surfaces were protected by a lime plaster often decorated with Sgraffito work particularly at street level. In Jeddah, as well as in Farasan and Zabid, the finest examples of this type of decoration were found. Oriel windows with pierced and fretted wooden screens (*roshan-s*) provided privacy but also drew in air which flowed through the houses and was expelled through roof lights or wind towers. On the elaborately carved

doors, motifs reflected the influence of India and other Asian trading contacts.

The most renowned and famous house of these houses was the Bayt Baghdadi — a mansion built to the south-west of the Pasha Mosque, facing the sea. Built in the 1880s it was one of the finest examples of Jeddah architecture. It was demolished in 1959 in the course of street widening works.

Details of six of these tower houses are provided in the nomination dossier. But ICOMOS notes that it is not stated how many of these tower houses have survived.

In the southern part of the city, the houses were lower, rising to only three or four stories, similar to those built in other coastal cities on both sides of the Red Sea since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. No details are provided of these houses, nor of how many have survived.

#### Mixed residential and commercial use

A feature of Jeddah is the intermixture of residential and commercial use. Many houses had shops on the ground floor level. There are said to be around 1300 in the nominated area.

#### History and development

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the Persians settled in the city and developed the harbour. The role of Jeddah as a major seaport was firmly established in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, when the Arabs seized power.

As Makkah developed as the focus of Islam, and of a great empire, Jeddah became an active trade centre, channelling to the Holy City trade goods from Egypt, Southern Arabia, and India.

Although the importance of Western Arabia diminished with the shifting of the capital to Damascus (under the Umayyad Caliphs) and later to Baghdad (under the Abbasid), Makkah continued to enjoy prestige and prosperity from the annual pilgrimage.

Jeddah's role remained minor until the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when Fatimid-ruled Cairo eclipsed Abbasid Baghdad. The India trade followed the shift in regional power: and the Red Sea took over from the Persian Gulf as the main artery of commerce from the Indian Ocean. And Jeddah thus began to develop as a prosperous Red Sea port.

Its prosperity passed through a series of upheavals due to the changing political and economic situation in the Islamic world, particularly during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the city witnessed a loss of population.

After the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258 and the transfer of the capital to Cairo under the protection of the Mamluk Sultans, the Hijaz, as a former province of the Muslim Empire, soon became the object of annexation attempts by Egypt. From 1425, the Mamluk Sultan

stationed a permanent garrison in Makkah and took over the collection of customs duties in Jeddah.

After 1424, Jeddah began to take over Aden as the major harbour, soon becoming the only authorized port of entrance for eastern merchandise in the Arabian Peninsula.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Jeddah further benefited from the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453. The closure of the Bosphorus, and of the access to the Black Sea terminal ports of the central Asiatic overland routes, made for a brief period the Red Sea route the only safely practicable way for international East-West trade.

The geographic discoveries of the Portuguese mariners Bartolomeu Diaz and Vasco de Gama opened new sea routes that ended the Arab monopoly on the Indian commerce at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

A series of fights and naval battles developed in the following years between the Arabs and Indians and the Portuguese. The growing influence of the Portuguese, who sought control over the trade routes in the Red Sea, menaced directly the city of Jeddah. The Portuguese tried to establish unchallengeable supremacy through the whole extent of the Indian Ocean.

In these years, the city of Jeddah began to build a new strong wall to withstand an eventual attack from the Portuguese. Portuguese fleet arrived in front of the city on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1517. The mission ended in disaster for the Portuguese. They tried again to challenge Turkish control on the Red Sea shores and organized further raids in 1520, 1526 and again in 1541.

Throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century, despite the new India route opened by the Portuguese, the Red Sea traffic was kept alive and boats continued to call at Jeddah for transshipment of goods to Egypt and the Mediterranean.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, however, when the Dutch and the English merchants supplanted the Portuguese monopoly and developed the Cape Route (free of Muslim control) transporting huge amounts of spices and other commodities directly to the European markets, Jeddah underwent a period of eclipse.

This period coincided with the arrival in power of the Ottoman Turks who swept over all of the Syrian and Palestinian Mamluk annexed the Red Sea provinces including Jeddah. Ottoman control that rule proved harsh on the Arabian provinces, lasted for four hundred years.

A major change in the city's history is related to the development of the Reform Movement that eventually conquered the whole of Hijaz in 1806, Makkah was conquered by the Najdi forces. The Ottoman Sultan decided to crush the growing influence and power of the Saudis. The military campaign in Arabia proved long and difficult, but finally ended with the destruction of the Saudi capital in 1818.

In 1849, the harsh re-imposition of Ottoman rule over Arabia provoked great discontent in the Hijaz. A *firman* prohibiting the slave trade, issued by Constantinople under European pressure, precipitated widespread subversion in Makkah. Almost ten years later, in 1858, xenophobic disturbances erupted in Jeddah and ended with the French and British consuls, and several other European residents of the city being killed in the riots. These events caused harsh international reactions and the leaders of the revolt were executed.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and the coming of steamboats that made the wind regime of the Red Sea irrelevant, marked the beginning of a new phase for the development of the city and of the region.

Though Ottoman control over the Hijaz was reinforced, the new waterway stimulated the growth of Jeddah as commercial trading port. Steam dealt a blow to the overland pilgrim routes, but proved a boon to the maritime ones.

Jeddah remained under Ottoman control until 1916, when a revolt in support of Arab self-rule led by the Sharif Hussein Ibn `Ali broke out. This Sharifian campaign, supported by the British, ended with the triumphal entrance into Damascus on 1 October 1918. Following the success of the Arab revolt, the city became the commercial capital of the short-lived Kingdom of the Hijaz. Abdulaziz Bin Saud became the uncontested ruler of the Hijaz and was crowned King of Hijaz in Makkah in 1926. In 1932, he proclaimed his reunited realm as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, becoming himself its first King.

With the security achieved under King Abdulaziz, the number of pilgrims and the related trade activities, coupled with oil revenues, greatly increased and Jeddah began developing outside its walls which were demolished in 1947.

### **3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity**

#### **Comparative analysis**

The comparative analysis is structured to compare Jeddah in three ways: as a Red Sea city, as an Arab city and as a Hijazi city.

This analysis highlights Jeddah's context as part of a network of cities along the Red Sea Coast. There were other harbours along the eastern shore, such as Yanbu, Al-Wajh, and Qunfudhah, while further south, partially along the Red Sea coast and partially on the Arabian Sea coast, were the urban centres of Hodeidah, Mokha, and Al Mukalla. On the African coast of the Red Sea, the main urban centres were Suakin (built by Jeddah merchants), now in Sudan, and Massawa now in Eritrea, and further south along the East African coast, Lamu and Zanzibar, in what is now Kenya and Tanzania respectively.

Of these Jeddah alone has preserved a large urban area with traditional houses: Suakin has almost completely vanished, earthquakes and wars have destroyed old Massawa; while Yanbu, al-Wajh, Hodeidah and Mokha have lost most of their importance - although some traditional buildings similar to Jeddah do survive. Lamu is inscribed on the World Heritage List as is Zanzibar and although both contain coral buildings, neither exhibit the all elaborate tower houses of Jeddah, rather they reflect a different Swahili style of building.

The main emphasis in the comparative analysis is on the tower houses and proving that nothing similar exists. As well as considering the Red Sea and the East African coast, the analysis also looks at the Arab houses of Cairo, Baghdad and Damascus. In these cities the houses are normally inward looking built around courtyards rather than outward facing as in Jeddah.

In terms of inscribed sites the most useful comparisons are made with Cairo, Sana'a and Shibam which all share some similar architectural characteristics for domestic buildings. One type of Cairo's courtyard houses, the *mashrabiya*, with their extensive wooden patterned screens is seen to have influenced the houses in Jeddah, albeit those in Jeddah had screens made of different types of wood and with different styles of carving. Although having visual similarities in terms of their height, the well preserved tower houses of Sana'a and Shibam are seen to reflect quite different climatic zones.

The final part of the analysis compares Jeddah with other cities in the Hijaz region, notably Makkah, Madinah and Taif. Although very few traditional buildings remain in these cities, it is clear that although the pre-19<sup>th</sup> century Jeddah style influenced the inland cities of the Hijaz, there is nothing compared to the final flourishing of Jeddah's tower houses existing in the region.

The concentration in the comparative analysis on the tower houses means that there has been no overall analysis of the urban pattern of Jeddah, and particularly the influence of the hajj pilgrims, and no comparisons made in terms of urban form with other towns and cities along the Red Sea and the East African Coast, or in the Hijaz region.

ICOMOS considers that what has been presented needs to be augmented to allow comparisons of the overall idea of Jeddah as a city area shaped by trade and by the numbers of hajj pilgrims that it hosted. The tower houses are one important facet – but the nomination is not putting forward an ensemble of tower houses but rather an urban area of which the tower houses are a part, albeit an important part.

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ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis needs to be augmented in order that the property might justify consideration for the World Heritage List.

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### 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 old city of Jeddah:

- Represents a unique development of the Red Sea architectural tradition characterized by imposing tower houses, decorated by large wooden *roshan*-s, built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the city's mercantile elites.
- Is the last surviving, urban centre of this cultural region that still preserve its original urban fabric of isolated tower houses, lower coral stone houses, mosques, *ribat*-s, *suqs* and small public squares that together compose a vibrant space.
- Reflects a cosmopolitan population where Muslims from Asia, Africa and the Middle East resided and worked contributing to the city's growth and prosperity.
- Throughout the centuries, has had a symbolic role as a gate to Makkah for Muslim pilgrims reaching Arabia by boat as part of the *hajj* annual pilgrimage.

ICOMOS considers that in essence this justification could be appropriate but it has not been substantiated in the nomination dossier by adequate details of the town planning and buildings to show that sufficient attributes survive. Although the characteristic of the tower houses are set out, the corpus of these buildings is not. The tower houses are the most characteristic structures, but the richness of the overall urban ensemble needs to be better understood through more specific details of its form and layout, and of the distinctiveness of its defined quarters such as the Yemen, Mazloun and Sham quarters. More details are also needed of the architecture of the *suqs*, the seven mosques that have not been described, and the *Zawiya*-s, and *wakala*-s. It also needs to be clearer how these historic elements inter-relate with the overall pattern of the city.

Given that some 50% of the fabric that was standing around 50 years ago has now been lost, including 650 out of 1,000 identified historic structures, there is a need to identify precisely what remains as a basis for future conservation that could ensure adequate integrity.

ICOMOS considers that the Outstanding Universal Value also needs to be linked to a timespan which is reflected in what has survived. ICOMOS considers that the city form that now exists reflects the final flourishing of the Indian Ocean sea trade after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the introduction of steam ships that linked Europe with India and Asia. This brought enormous wealth to many merchants who built lavishly decorated houses, and it also led to developments of *suqs* and mosques. In addition, the increase in sea going vessels allowed many more pilgrims to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, resulting in an expansion in the provision of accommodation for these visitors.

## Integrity and authenticity

### Integrity

As the nomination dossier acknowledges, the dramatic growth and transformation of Jeddah over the past 50 years has impacted on its ancient core particularly with the transformation of the harbour and the development of high rise buildings within the perimeter of the old city.

Nevertheless it is suggested that the way the boundary has been drawn has allowed the most altered parts to be 'carved out' and sufficient attributes to be included that are needed to express its value. Large parts of the Yemen, Mazloun and Sham quarters are said to have been able to preserve their overall original structure, and 'notwithstanding some incongruous building that scar the historic core, the property does not have substantial parts that have lost their values'.

ICOMOS considers that this is one of the crucial points with the nomination: whether adequate attributes have been included in the boundaries. From the information available it is difficult to confirm that this is the case. More data is needed on what has survived.

As only 50% of buildings that were in existence 50 years ago still remain, and as over two thirds of historic buildings have been demolished in the same period, ICOMOS considers that at best integrity is vulnerable.

It has to be acknowledged that Jeddah no longer has integrity as an intact historic city. What needs to be clearly and specifically demonstrated is how, within the nominated area that is smaller than the entire city, sufficient remains to allow an understanding of its former role and influence.

ICOMOS considers that it is essential that a detailed survey is provided as the basis for the statement of integrity that clearly sets out what remains in term of urban form and buildings that reflect the once pivotal role of the city in terms of trade and pilgrimage.

The nomination states that the Municipality of Jeddah is preparing a GIS survey of the old city recording all its plots and buildings. The information from this survey together with the update of the 1970 survey of historic buildings, and other studies mentioned, should provide the basis for a precise delineation of what survives in terms of buildings and urban plan, as a basis for integrity and also for future protection and conservation.

As so much has been lost, there needs to be a clear understanding of the integrity of the area nominated related to what survives, and the threshold beyond which its integrity would no longer be intact if further buildings were lost.

### Authenticity

The nomination dossier states that the property is an authentic urban environment that conveys an image of

what this commercial Red Sea trade and pilgrimage city used to be.

ICOMOS considers that although its urban layout and some of the fabric in part of the old city still survives, it cannot be said that its former prosperity based on trade or its former strategic role in the *hajj* can be invoked by what now remains. The city is a shadow of the former thriving, prosperous place it used to be with many buildings abandoned or lived in by tenants who do not maintain them. However within the nominated area there are structures, and the remains of the urban layout that could be said to allow an understanding of the city's once pivotal role in the Indian Ocean trade and in the *hajj*. But this understanding will only fully emerge once many of the buildings are nursed back to life.

As with integrity, ICOMOS considers that this link between the urban ensemble and the earlier role of the city must be clearly made and to achieve this, more details are required.

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ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have not been met at this stage.

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### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

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

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

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the cityscape of Historic Jeddah is the result of an important exchange of human values, technical know-hows, building materials and techniques across the Red Sea region and along the Indian Ocean routes between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Jeddah was for centuries the most important, the largest and the richest among these settlements and today *Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah* is the last surviving urban site along the Red Sea coast still preserving the ensemble of the attributes of this culture: commercial-based economy, multicultural environment, isolated outward-oriented houses, coral masonry construction, precious woodwork decorating the façades, and specific technical devices to favouring internal ventilation.

ICOMOS considers that the heart of historic Jeddah could be seen as a response to the wealth generated by the Indian Ocean trade, that reflect the fusion of diverse cultural strands from this mercantile activity with the local Red Sea culture; it could also be seen to have influenced other inland cities in its hinterland such as Madinah, Makkah and Taif.

In order to justify this criterion, ICOMOS considers that it is essential that the attributes that convey this value are

more specifically defined. As set out under integrity, the historic fabric has been much reduced over the past fifty years and further erosion could reduce its ability to fully convey its value. The attributes thus need to be clearly defined to show what they are (in terms of buildings and urban form), how they are sufficient to reflect the influence that the city once had, and how they will be sustained in the future.

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

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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 *Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah* is the only surviving urban ensemble of the Red Sea cultural world and that its *roshan* tower houses are an outstanding example of a typology of buildings unique within the Arab and Muslim world. The development of the *roshan* tower houses in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, illustrates the evolution of the patterns of trade and pilgrimage in the Arabian Peninsula and in Asia, following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the development of steamboat navigation routes linking Europe with India and East Asia. This gave the city's merchants unique wealth and power that, in turn, permitted the creation of an extraordinary cityscape unrivalled along the Red Sea coasts. The property's major houses, dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are particularly remarkable for their typology, the quality of their architecture, and their constructive and decorative details. They are the sole remnants of an architectural style born in Jeddah.

ICOMOS considers that although the tower houses are highly distinctive, what is being nominated is more than an ensemble of these grand, sophisticated structures, it is the overall urban fabric of part of the core of historic Jeddah.

This nominated area might have the capacity to be seen as an outstanding reflection of the way Jeddah developed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the wealth generated by the greatly expanded trade resulting from the opening of the Suez canal and regular, faster steam ships, but the specifics of the way the city developed at that time need to be more clearly defined and to encompass not only the tower houses but all other remaining aspects of this urban ensemble as well. ICOMOS considers that it is essential that these aspects of the historic city are clearly and specifically set out to show how in total they could be seen as an outstanding reflection of the final flourishing of Jeddah's prosperity as a trading and pilgrimage city at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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

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Criterion (vi): *be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that *Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah* is directly associated, both at the symbolic intangible level and at the architectural and urban level with the *hajj*, the yearly Muslim pilgrimage to the Holy City of Makkah.

The association with the *hajj* is very evident in the urban structure of the nominated property, that include the traditional souks, the *ribat*-s and the *wakala*-s that used to host the pilgrims; in the architecture, notably in the façades and internal structure of the houses; and in the very social fabric of the city, where Muslims from all over the world mingled, lived and worked together.

The ensemble of these elements, tangible and intangible, is unique in the whole Islamic World.

ICOMOS considers that the Muslim pilgrims played a fundamental role in the development of the city, particularly in the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when Jeddah experienced an extraordinary prosperity partly from the greatly enhance number of pilgrims arriving by sea, (up to 100,000), and partly from much increased trade.

Since first the construction of the railway, then the opening of the airport at Jeddah, the relationship between the city and the *hajj* has become more symbolic with the special terminal at the airport being the gateway rather than the city, as pilgrims no longer need lodging.

Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that the city is directly and tangibly associated with the way the *hajj* was conducted over a period of several hundred years and particularly in the final flourishing of the sea-borne pilgrims.

As with the other criteria, ICOMOS considers that more specificity is needed in terms of identifying the influence of the pilgrims on the city and specifically the accommodation that was provided for them such as in *wakala*-s and *Ribat*-s.

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

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ICOMOS does not consider that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met at this stage and the criteria have been demonstrated at this stage.

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#### **4 Factors affecting the property**

Due to lack of maintenance and unsympathetic construction processes, many traditional buildings and public spaces are in relatively poor condition. As a result,

many have serious structural problems which are compounded by alterations, internal partitioning, lack of water drainage infrastructure and poor repair work. Some lie unoccupied which adds to their rate of deterioration.

The Strategic Plan acknowledges the lack of adequate conservation expertise and the need for the application of the international principles of 'integrated conservation'.

Another significant risk to the historic buildings of Jeddah is fire, either intentional or accidental. Before the 2011 new regulations came into force which limits the height of new building to that of the pre-existing building, voluntary destruction of buildings through setting fire to them was not unknown in order to allow the construction of high rise replacements buildings.

A fire fighting system has now been installed.

The generally poor social conditions in the old city combined with the lack of maintenance and conservation of the buildings contributes to the negative image of the nominated area and its surroundings and mitigates against the urban fabric being seen as something that is valued and needs to be sustained.

According to information provided to ICOMOS, the proportion of historic building to new ones within the nominated property is about 50%, a statistic supported by the architectural analysis presented in the nomination dossier. Also according to the nomination dossier, there are about forty new buildings in the nominated property, less than half of these being of a height that affects the cityscape. These buildings, built after the 1970 survey, are technically 'illegal', but at the time being that qualification has no practical implication for their future.

New urban regulations – see below – should ensure no further historic buildings are demolished and new buildings respect their context.

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ICOMOS considers that the main threat to the property is lack of maintenance and conservation that has led to a high proportion of historic buildings being in a poor or very poor condition, with some being structurally unstable.

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## **5 Protection, conservation and management**

### **Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone**

The boundaries of the property have been drawn to encompass an area within which the historic buildings remaining are at their most dense. Although this defines an area that is less than the whole old city, it is a reasonably coherent entity.

The buffer zone encompasses the whole of the remaining areas of the historic city and in place areas beyond that.

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ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are adequate.

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### **Ownership**

The majority of the 1,200 buildings in the property are privately owned and, in the case of houses, are rented out to poor immigrants.

A very small number are publicly owned (by the Municipality, the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) or other bodies). These include a group of recently restored buildings that now serve as offices the Historical Jeddah Municipality.

*Waqf-s*, a type of charitable trust, own some properties such as mosques, *ribat-s*, shops and also houses.

### **Protection**

The Antiquity Law, as stated by the nomination dossier, does not include provisions for the protection of "urban heritage." The New Draft Antiquity Law, which would provide a legal basis for that protection, is still under review and has been since 2007.

New urban regulations brought in 2011 ensure protection for existing historic buildings, defined as all buildings prior to 1950, within the perimeter of the old city walls. They also limit the height of new buildings to 22 metres and in addition any new building on the site of a destroyed historic building is limited to the height of the pre-existing building.

For the buffer zone, four protective zones have been delineated, with the first zone enclosing the property and others radiating out beyond. The first zone includes the most historic buildings and these will be protected; in terms of new development this will be less restricted than within the property. In zone two, which contain many high-rise buildings, new regulation aim to reduce the height of further new constructions but also to protect what historic structures remain. Zone three, outside the line of the city walls, contains few historic buildings and will be managed to control heights and densities of new construction. Finally zone four beyond the ring road will be protected to ensure there is no 'uneven' development.

In February 2014, the State Party submitted Guidelines for building regulations to be applied within the nominated property and its buffer zone. These Guidelines do not have a formal legal status; they provide the conceptual and technical basis for the regulations that will be developed by Jeddah Municipality and will be integrated into the Municipal Building Regulations. Such regulations will ensure that all surviving historic buildings in the nominated property and the buffer zone will be preserved and restored according to internationally approved standards. They also set out



principles directing all architectural principles for the restoration of historic buildings, the reconstruction of historic buildings and the construction of new buildings.

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ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place needs to be strengthened and priority should be given to approving the new Antiquities Law that has been under review since 2007.

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### Conservation

Lack of conservation is the greatest challenge facing the nominated area, coupled with the lack of detailed surveys and inventories of individual historic buildings.

The municipality is planning a GIS survey of the historic buildings that remains from the 1970 survey. This will be a crucial basis for actual conservation work and for planning priority work.

Stabilising and conserving the 280 historic buildings within the nominated property and updating them with modern service is a project of enormous proportions. Given the serious structural problems that many face, ICOMOS notes that there is a need for immediate intervention in some cases. On the other hand, if the character and authenticity of the heart of the old city is to be sustained, then conservation should be done slowly, based on adequate evidence, and using craftspeople trained in traditional skills related to coral, lime mortars, plasters and woodwork, in order to optimising the retention of original fabric, to provide the necessary capacity building and to allow for traditional hand working all takes time.

ICOMOS considers that there is therefore an inherent tension between the urgent need for intervention and the need for interventions to be timely.

Conservation work is now beginning. Work on conserving four houses was started in 2008. These are now used by the Historic Jeddah Municipality, and the Jeddah Unit of SCTA. The supplementary information provided indicates that bidding for future restoration projects has now been started for seven heritage buildings in historical Jeddah within 18 months, and for twenty-seven heritage over 36 months, as well as for urgent consolidation projects for endangered heritage buildings.

It is also acknowledged that a longer term plan is of the utmost importance and the Jeddah Municipality is currently planning a five year programme. Supportive funding will need to be approved in forthcoming government funding plans.

One of the many difficult issues associated with conservation of domestic buildings is absentee owners. In order to address this issue, the supplementary information provided indicated that the Saudi Government is planning to take over these properties and create a special "Trust" in charge of their

management. At this stage no further details have been provided.

The restoration of the Masjid ash-Shafe'i, was begun in 2011 and should be completed by 2013. Preliminary research work for the conservation and rehabilitation of the Masjid al-Mi'mar has been completed and work should start soon.

Agreement has been reached between SCTA and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs concerning the preservation of historic mosques. This agreement allows SCTA, under the supervision of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, to have responsibility for overseeing the restoration of major mosques across the country, with the restoration work being implemented by the Turath Foundation. The ongoing restoration of Ash-Shafe'i mosque is part of this programme.

A restoration project is also being planned for three *ribats* (Khonji al-Kabeer, Khonji al Sareer and Manoufi) in the nominated property, to be followed by some 8 more in the rest of the old city, to be used as cultural and social venues for the residents of the area. The additional information explains that this programme has been delayed.

The supplementary information states that SCTA is finalizing an agreement with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs for the acquisition of the ensemble of *Awqaf* properties (buildings associated with religious institutions) in Historic Jeddah. Some 115 buildings would be involved, including the 11 ribats.

Funding for these projects is in place – see below.

Some private initiatives are also emerging. The Conservation Society of Architectural Heritage in Jeddah, an association of owners, is considering the restoration of three small houses for use as studios or showrooms.

In terms of capacity building, regular training workshops were carried out on four historic buildings restored by the Municipality in 2008/2010. These were for contractors, workers and some local engineers. However, currently the employees and technical personnel of the Municipality, and of the Historic Jeddah Municipality, have not received specific training in conservation or in site management.

A Conservation Manual has been commissioned from the Ecole d'Avignon.

Overall there is high awareness of the need for appropriate training in traditional building techniques, for employing recognised heritage professionals, for identifying sources of traditional materials and above all to identify, and document sites within the property of historic and archaeological significance.

ICOMOS considers that a detailed road map that sets out how the massive, long-term conservation project to turn round the fortunes of the nominated property, through stabilising and conserving the historic buildings and generating new uses, still needs to be initiated, resourced and approved.

Such a road map will need depend on private initiative as well as public support and the ability of businesses to find innovative investment models. It will also need the support of property owners and the involvement of tenants. It should also be underpinned by detailed surveys and analysis of the properties.

As development of the tourism industry is now seen as a political and economic priority, provision for both visitors and pilgrims is seen as being part of the revitalization of the urban city centre.

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ICOMOS considers that the overall conservation of the nominated area is a massive long term project which needs to be supported by a much more detailed road map and underpinned by a detailed database.

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## **Management**

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The Municipality of Historic Jeddah is a branch of Jeddah Municipality that was formed in 2010 to coordinate the management of Al Balad, the area formerly within the old city walls. It thus encompasses the nominated area and much of the buffer zone.

This municipality works with the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) on the day-to-day management of the nominated property.

A property management team is composed of representatives from the Historic Jeddah Municipality and the Jeddah SCTA Unit. This team reports to a Committee under the Governor of the Makkah Region and is supported by a Technical Committee created in 2012. Unlike the arrangements envisaged in 2008, at the time of the first nomination, when the rehabilitation of the city was linked to an overall 'private developer', ICOMOS notes that what is now envisaged are a number of public-private initiatives under the umbrella of the Municipality.

The nomination dossier asserted that the current staff of SCTA Jeddah does not include any Architect and "cannot cope with the complexity of the ongoing projects". At the time of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, this lack of expertise was being addressed and arrangements made to fully staff a local SCTA property management office which it is anticipated will be completed by the end of 2013. The supplementary information provided states that a new Director of the SCTA Historic City Office has been appointed and confirms that the office is fully staffed.

The Government has already allocated \$55 million over the next four years for studies, urgent conservation, and current projects, which should ensure that current projects are adequately funded and temporary protection is provided for unstable buildings.

In terms of future resources, the nomination dossier states that the national Government is committed to supporting the on-going and planned programmes on an on-going basis. The supplementary information also states that the Saudi Government is planning the creation of purposely designed "Special Fund" to financially support the revitalization process in Historic Jeddah.

Two national programmes are being developed to support private initiatives. One is the Tamkeem programme that aims to develop local technical, financial and administrative coordination for heritage projects. The second, the Credit programme, provides interest free loans. Currently operating in al-Ghat, it is anticipated that it will be extended to the nominated property.

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

A short management plan was developed in 2008 at the time of the first nomination and this has been implemented since 2010. This plan set out economic, social, heritage conservation and rehabilitation objectives and guidelines for action and the basic management structure which has since been augmented and refined as noted above.

The nomination dossier states that a new management plan is being developed by the SCTA and Jeddah Municipality, and will be implemented with the funds that the Central Government plans to allocate in the coming years.

As the scope and size of the nomination has changed since the first submission, as well as the way rehabilitation and conservation will be organised, ICOMOS considers that the revised management plan needs to be completed and approved as soon as possible to guide the way the substantial challenges that face the property will be addressed.

Jeddah's location between Madina and Makkah and its proximity to Makkah has made the city a principal pilgrimage gateway to the two Holy Cities. Most Hajj and Umrah pilgrims pass through Jeddah either on their way to or following their journeys to the Holy Cities.

According to the statistics gathered by SCTA and the Municipality, the city of Jeddah receives some 12 millions of pilgrims per year. Pilgrims land in the city before reaching Makkah and it is estimated that some 30% of them stopover in the city.

Cultural tourism is at an early stage of development and the number of tourists in the old city is still very limited, although recent Festivals are beginning to attract visitors from other cities within Saudi Arabia. The development of suitable facilities to receive tourists is one of the elements of the plans being developed jointly by the Municipality of Jeddah and the private sector. Three new museums are now being planned (one in the nominated area).

It is stated in the supplementary information, that the SCTA and Jeddah Municipality are finalizing an agreement for the expropriation of 10 historic buildings located along the main historic axes / tourist trails to be restored and reused for tourism-related activities.

Awareness raising programmes are being developed on the SCTA official website to provide an overview of the ongoing and planned projects and of the efforts being paid by SCTA for the revitalization of the nominated property.

Overall the management structure is still in its infancy and has yet to be proved in terms of its effectiveness in driving forward conservation and regeneration programmes. Nevertheless there appears to be strong support at national and local level to make it work.

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ICOMOS considers the management system as a structure appears to be satisfactory but has still to be tested in terms of how it might facilitate and drive forward the major conservation work that is needed in the nominated area through fostering public-private initiatives. There is a need to complete, approve and implement the revised Management plan as soon as possible in order that it may be used as a framework for the substantial rehabilitation and conservation work that need to be addressed.

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## 6 Monitoring

Monitoring is a process that has the highest applicability for this property in terms of assessing the full significance of the assets, their stability and state of conservation and future conservation and development projects.

A number of indicators are set out in the nomination dossier related to rate of deterioration, number of fires, number of restoration projects, tourist statistics, etc., most monitored on annual basis. Whereas these might be appropriate for a property where the buildings are adequately conserved, they are in no way adequate for the core of the old city where, it is acknowledged, urgent action is needed to halt degradation, address abandoned and squatted buildings and kick start a massive urban regeneration project.

ICOMOS considers that the first and most urgent monitoring tool relates to putting in place an adequate

database of the historic fabric, the urban plan and the corpus of historic buildings.

ICOMOS notes that the nomination dossier states that the new management plan and the funding promised to implement it will permit the implementation of a monitoring strategy. As monitoring would appear to be of the utmost urgency, this means that the finalisation of the management plan and the allocation of funds to implement it are also urgent.

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ICOMOS considers that the monitoring process needs to be underpinned by a detailed database of the heritage assets and put in place in the immediate future.

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## 7 Conclusions

The significance in general terms of Jeddah as a strategic and prosperous port for the Indian Ocean trade, and as a base for sea borne pilgrims on their way to Mecca, especially in its final period of prosperity at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has been well set out in the nomination dossier in general terms: what is missing are the specificities.

Only part of the historic city is nominated and within that area much of the urban fabric has deteriorated or disappeared over the past fifty years.

If what is left in the nominated areas is to be seen as a microcosm of the once thriving multi-cultural port city, that reflects all its facets and especially those that underpinned its prosperity: trade and the *hajj*, then the attributes that convey those links must be clearly and specifically set out.

Although the nomination dossier is much augmented since the first nomination, it does not provide the necessary detail to show how what has survived is sufficient to substantiate the proposed value of the nominated area.

ICOMOS considers that such a detailed database must be provided to show the specific and precise details of the surviving historic built fabric, not only for the aesthetically remarkable tower houses, but also for the dense accumulations of lower houses, the ensembles of structures that related to trade, religion and the accommodation of pilgrims, and for the overall urban form and its division into clearly defined quarters.

The nominated area is now a pale reflection of the prosperous city it once was. Many of its buildings which were built to reflect the wealth and influence of its successful citizens are crumbling through lack of maintenance and some are structurally unsound. In the nominated area only about 50% of the buildings that were there fifty years ago remain. Integrity is thus stretched and it is essential that there is no further erosion of the urban fabric. The detailed database

should also define the integrity of the area nominated and the threshold beyond which its integrity would no longer be intact if further buildings were lost.

As the majority of its historic structures are in private ownership with owners that are absent, the task of sustaining them for the future is immense. Although the nomination dossier exudes confidence that this can be achieved and provides commitments to support this process, the difficulty of putting in place public-private partnerships to achieve this goal cannot be overestimated, nor of controlling the overall process.

ICOMOS considers that currently the nominated property could be seen to be in danger in term of its vulnerability to erosion of historic fabric.

ICOMOS considers that a desired state of conservation for the property should be provided that sets out what condition could be achieved once the current decline of many buildings has been reversed.

An detailed overall road map of the way forward also needs to be provided, within the context of a revised and approved Management Plan, to show how such a state of conservation might be realised. The supplementary information provided in February 2014 suggests that such a road map is being envisaged and needs to be developed.

## 8 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the examination of Historic Jeddah, the Gate to Makkah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the World Heritage List be **deferred** in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to:

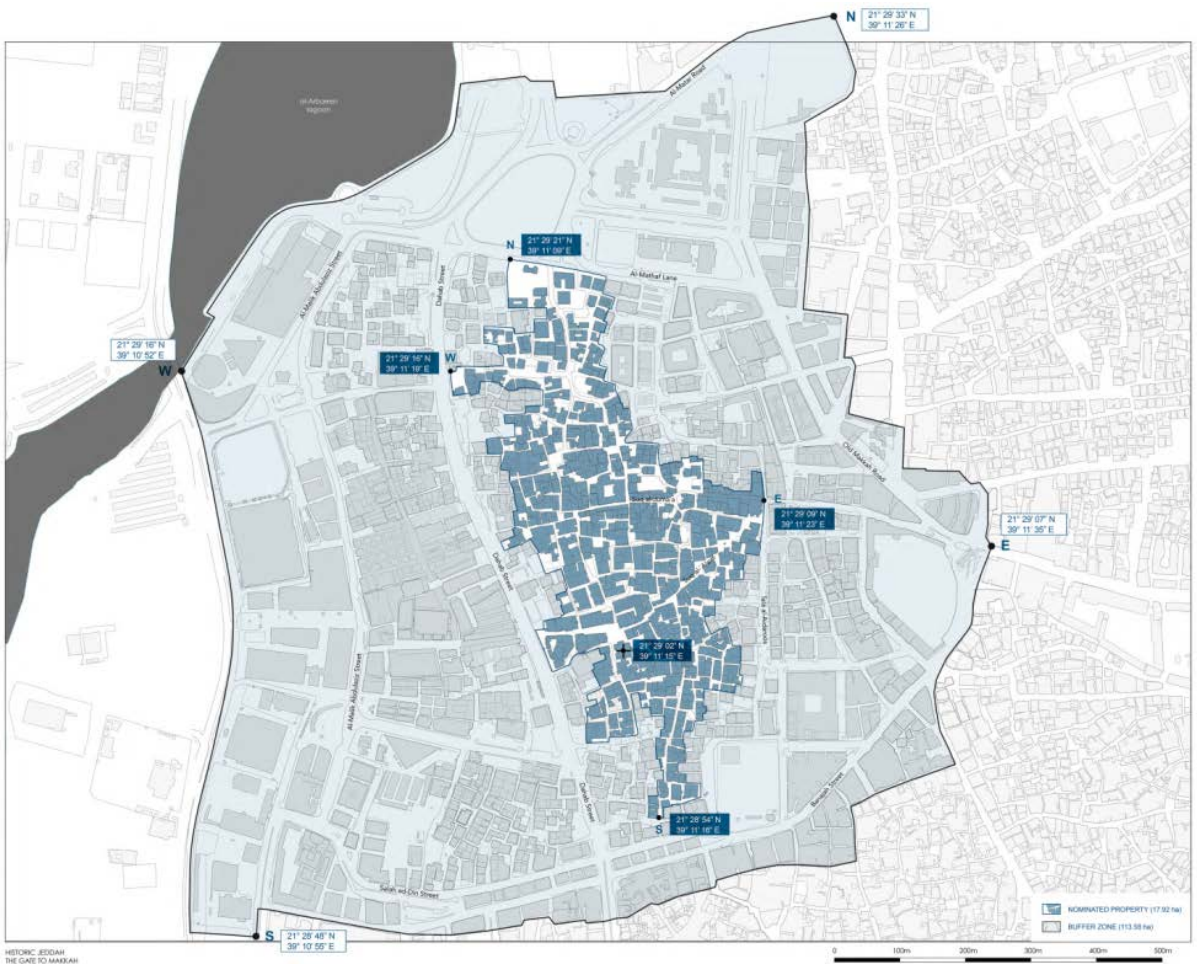
- Provide detailed database of all attributes relating to the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the property and in particular details of all the tower houses, other urban houses, the *wikala-s*, *wakala-s*, *ribat-s*, mosques and *Zawiya-s*; and of the urban form and defined urban quarters, in order to show how these might be said to reflect all the facets of the once thriving multi-cultural port city, especially trade and the *hajj*;
- Strengthen the comparative analysis to encompass elements related to urban planning, trade and the accommodation of pilgrims;
- Put in place national protection, through approving and implementing the 2007 Antiquity Law currently under revision;
- Complete, approve and implement the revised Management Plan;

- Provide an overall assessment of the state of conservation of the 280 historic buildings in the nominated area and a desired state of conservation for the whole nominated area, including a definition of the integrity of the nominated area and the threshold beyond which its integrity would no longer be intact if further buildings were lost;
- Set out a detailed overall road map and timescale to show how the desired state of conservation of the nominated area will be achieved and how systems to ensure long term conservation will be established.

ICOMOS recommends that the name of the property be changed to 'Historic Jeddah, a Gate to Makkah'.

ICOMOS remains at the disposal of the State Party in the framework of upstream processes to advise them on the above recommendations.

ICOMOS considers that any revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the site.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



Urban fabric of the historic city



Suq al-Alawi



Masjid al-Mi'mar



Tower house