
The Persian Garden (Iran) No 1372

Official name as proposed by the State Party

The Persian Garden
Islamic Republic of Iran

Location

City of Shiraz, Fars Province
City of Isfahan, Isfahan Province
City of Behshahr, Mazandaran Province
City of Mahan, Kerman Province
City of Yazd, Yazd Province
City of Mehriz, Yazd Province
City of Birjand, Southern Khorasan Province

Brief description

The Persian Garden is a collection of nine gardens selected from various regions of Iran. They provide a tangible representation of the diversity of designed gardens as well as the role they have assumed over the centuries and in different climatic conditions. They demonstrate the adaptability and longevity of the *Chahar Bagh*, or original principle of the Persian Garden, which has remained unchanged over more than two millennia. Its first mature expression can be found in the garden of Cyrus the Great's palatial complex, in Pasargadae.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of 9 *sites*.

According to *the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (January 2008) paragraph 47, this is also a serial designed *cultural landscape*.

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 2010

Background

This is a new nomination.

Consultations

ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committees on Cultural Landscapes and on Archaeological Heritage Management and independent experts.

Literature consulted (selection)

Stronach, D., "The Royal Garden at Pasargadae: Evolution and Legacy" in *Archaeologia Iranica et Orientalis: Miscellanea in Honorem Louis Vanden Berghe*, vol. 1, ed. L. de Meyer and E. Haerinck, Ghent, 1989.

Thacker, C., *The History of Gardens*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1979.

Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 1 to 12 October 2010.

Additional information requested and received from the State Party

ICOMOS has sent a letter to the State Party on 22 September 2010 requesting additional information on the following:

- The rationale underlying the selection of the nine components of the serial property and the reasons for their Outstanding Universal Value;
- The criteria adopted in defining the boundaries of the nominated components and their buffer zones;
- The legal and planning framework and provisions made for the protection of the nominated property;
- The overall management framework and instruments in place.

On 8 November 2010 ICOMOS received additional information provided by the State Party on these subjects. The specific information is discussed in the relevant sections.

On 13 December 2010 ICOMOS sent a further letter to the State Party concerning the following issues:

- Possibly extending the south-eastern boundaries of the buffer zone of Bagh-e Dolat Abad in Yazd between Enghelab St. and Iranshahr St. (now Rafiat St.) to reach Chahar Manar Alley;
- Possibly extending the buffer zone in Isfahan where the Chahar Bagh Avenue is historically a part of cultural landscape and already managed as a historical cultural axis in the urban master plan.

The State Party responded on 22 February 2011 and the specific information provided is discussed in the relevant sections.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

10 March 2011

2 The property

Description

The concept of the Persian Garden

'Gardens' were originally just plots of land enclosed by walls and where plants were grown, but this practice later evolved into a codified form of art.

There are two factors which are necessary to understand the Persian Garden: its internal organisation and its external setting. A variety of gardens have been created, among which the nominated ones, in particular, demonstrate a tangible expression of the original concept.

The basic elements of Persian Garden design are the use of right angles, the division of the garden plot into four right-angled sectors (with two axes perpendicular to each other), the role of geometry and symmetry, and well-defined delimitation using walls.

The division of a site into four sectors (*Chahar Bagh* or Four Gardens), opening out in the four cardinal directions through the two main axes (*Chahar Taqi*), is symbolic of the creation of Eden as well as the four Zoroastrian elements of sky, earth, water and plants. These should always be considered when creating a garden.

The design of the Persian Garden is dominated by geometry, which serves a mythical function. It reflects the cosmic order of the world in the Garden like Paradise on Earth. The role of symmetry is different, as it is only used to ensure that certain preferential viewpoints offer a symmetric view of the garden. Indeed the layout of the garden is rarely completely symmetric.

The sacred dimension of the Persian Garden also depends on the importance that water and vegetation have in this arid land.

The climatic conditions of the Iranian Plateau do not favour the growth of plants and the establishment of gardens; therefore the ecosystem of the Persian Garden is entirely artificial and carefully conceived to exploit the scarce resources available. The functional elements of the garden are nevertheless enriched with aesthetic meanings.

The main physical components of the garden are the surroundings, walls, entrances, the *Chahar Bagh* (which is also the original principle of all gardens), the two axes, water and related elements, vegetation, shade, and architectural features such as pavilions.

Water is a central element in that without it, no garden, or indeed life, would be possible. Water features include the pool at the intersection of the two axes, waterways, fountains, brooks and channels. Supplying a garden with water was difficult at first but this problem was overcome by Iranian engineers who developed the *qanats*, which appear to date back to the Achaemenid period (6th century BC).

Qanats are underground tunnels that conduct water from melted mountain snow for thousands of meters to settlements. The *qanat* usually releases its water into a garden pool from which it can be distributed to all parts of the *bagh* and then used to sustain the life of the community (e.g. milling, energy supply, irrigation).

The external surroundings of the garden highlight the symbolic nature of the Persian garden: the aridity of the land beyond the garden walls emphasises its cosmic representation.

The walls are a necessary component that ensure the protection of the plants and flower-beds from wind and dust. They also concretely delimit two different existential dimensions. Indeed, the entrances are magnified by complex pieces of architecture to show that they delimit not merely a physical threshold.

Water, as mentioned above, is a central element of the garden and plays both a functional and aesthetic role. Water is present in the original bi-axial structure of the *Chahar Bagh*, as the axes are formed by the central pool and the main waterways, which are subdivided into smaller channels or brooks. Fountains are used to draw attention to the sources of water.

Vegetation in the Persian garden consists of trees (evergreen or deciduous), shrubs (with or without flowers), bushes and flowers. Trees were carefully selected to provide shade and reduce the rate of evaporation. They were essential in maintaining the micro-climate of the garden in relation to its hot and arid surroundings.

Nine component gardens have been selected by the State Party to tangibly represent the various forms the Persian Garden can assume depending on different climatic conditions, locations and epochs.

1 Pasargadae

Pasargadae (249.65ha), the royal palatial complex, was built by Cyrus the Great in the 6th century BC and has been on the World Heritage List since 2004 under criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv). The establishment of the Achaemenian Kingdom and its language of art is materialised in its architecture which draws its features from a number of different civilizations. The Royal Garden is one of these original elements. Indeed, the main features of the Persian garden are fully expressed here: there is reference to the four basic elements of Zoroastrian religion and they are integrated into the architecture, as well as geometry, use of architectural elements and the presence of water. Basically, the Pasargadae Royal Garden followed the *Chahar Bagh* model which was consequently transmitted to subsequent civilisations virtually unaltered. Additionally, the layout of the buildings and of the open spaces conveys the sense that all the components work together to shape a royal residence in the form of a garden. Archaeological evidence shows that the water supply for the complex originated from a system of dams and canals built over the Polvar river, 35km north-east of Pasargadae. Since the second half of the 20th century, numerous

conservation campaigns have been carried out on the archaeological remains.

2 Bagh-e Eram

The nominated component (12.70ha) is located in Shiraz, in the mountainous region of southern Iran. The climate here has above-average humidity but overall is more balanced than other areas.

Bagh-e Eram occupies a rectangular terrain with a west-to-east slope on a longitudinal axis and is oriented east-west. The predominant building in the garden, an elegant, relatively complete mid-Qajar pavilion with a pool in front of it, faces east. Today, this is regarded as the main feature of the garden. It has three floors, a gable roof, a columned porch and large openings that let light filter into the entire structure. Delicate carvings and murals refine the architecture of the pavilion. There are two other buildings: the *Andarooni* building or seraglio, which lies behind the pavilion, and the Gholam-Neshin. The garden retains two of its façade entrances, both on the northern side of the garden. It is made of brick and decorated with coloured tiles. The garden used to be delimited by a wall but this was replaced in modern times with an iron rail.

The water supply in the garden was provided by a brook branching off from a stream, formed from spring water and other several *qanats*, which also provided Shiraz with water. However, this system eventually collapsed and nowadays the garden is irrigated by the water from two wells.

The vegetation of the garden includes fructiferous and non fructiferous trees, bushes, creeping plants, and flowers, especially roses. Among the trees, we find one exceptional example of a cedar tree.

3 Bagh-e Chehel Sotun

The name of this nominated component (5.80ha) is derived from the symbolic number of columns (*chehel sotun*= forty columns) in the garden hall. The number forty is used to represent multiplicity.

Bagh-e Chehel Sotun is a pavilion garden. The main axes of the garden go from west to east and plain trees have been planted along them.

The pool is the most important manifestation of water here: the twenty columns of the hall porch are mirrored in the pool, thus becoming forty, which is an uncountable number. The palace as we know it today is the result of consecutive additions to an initial rectangular hall covered with three domes. The most recent addition is the columned portico. The palace, except for the portico, has the proportions of a cube. Much of the original decoration survives, including paintings, mirrors, stained-glass windows and inlaid works. The 18th century painted ceiling of the portico, with its battle scenes and prominent western guests, and the mirrored ceiling of the hall still exist, as well as other rooms with miniatures and wall paintings.

The variety of vegetation in Bagh-e Chehel Sotun is exemplary of the careful selection of trees and other plants in the Persian Garden. They would have been chosen on the grounds of their ability to adapt to climatic and soil conditions as well as to enrich the décor of the garden. The following species of tree are found in Chehel Sotun: Persian Pine, Juniper, Cedar (evergreen), Elm, Black Maple, Plane, Mulberry, Claw Leafed Maple, Aspen, Poplar, Acacia, Fig, Silk, Zalzalak, and Ash (deciduous). Among the shrubs, we find: Laurel, Box Tree (evergreen) and Turi (deciduous).

4 Bagh-e Fin

Bagh-e Fin (7.60ha) is located in a homonymous village close to Kashan city, in an arid region delimited by mountains on one side and desert on the other.

The garden has an approximately quadrangular shape with the pavilion being at the intersection of the two main axes. The pool is situated northwards, from which the main waterway originates.

Water at Bagh-e Fin is supplied by a spring 3km south of the garden. There are 17 wells in total, from where the water emerges until it reaches the garden. Here the water is divided into two branches, one supplying the water mills and the other feeding, via two artificial springs, the main and subsidiary water bodies of the garden, before heading out to the surrounding farms and fields. Water in the garden is sent to three main areas where the natural properties of gravity, water speed and pressure are used to create special effects, along with the aid of man-made features such as ponds, fountains, channels, hidden ducts and water tile pipes.

Bagh-e Fin contains several constructions, namely pavilions, alcoves, a women's quarter, a bath house, the ensemble of which is encircled by mud-walls with ramparts, only broken by a monumental entrance.

The planting of dense rows of cedar trees along the main axes has given the garden a clear order and spacing and a compactness which is particular to Bagh-e Fin. Subsidiary walkways contradict this feature and give a sense of openness to the garden. Tall trees at the boundaries separate the garden space from the exterior and help create a micro-climate favourable to the growth of fruit-trees and flowers.

The particularities of this garden include its pre-Islamic origin, the ancient and highly-developed water system, the organisation of the vegetation, the use of cedars, its asymmetry, and the building materials used for the structures (mud or sun-dried bricks).

5 Bagh-e Abas Abad

Bagh-e Abas Abad (420.20ha) is an example of how the Persian Garden model adapted to a rainy and vegetated environment in the Safavid epoch.

The garden complex is located amid a forest, in northern Iran, and consists of a garden, a dam, a dual brick tower, a water mill, a palace, stone-paved paths, and waterworks.

The garden receives water from a spring which supplies a basin, created by means of a dam. The water was channelled from the basin through an open canal or ceramic pipes to a basin which was the starting point of the irrigation system. The *Chahar Bagh* compound is the source of water for the entire garden, due to its relatively elevated position. The water runs through a system of pipes, canals and basins, and the flow is maximised by exploiting the slope, gravity and water pressure. Most of the structures in this garden are of archaeological interest today: the waterworks, pool and bath house; *Chahar Taqi* (in the dam basin) – both with functional use in water spill control (the central pier with meshed holes worked as an emergency valve) and recreational ones; two brick towers, conceived to work as safety valves, siphon traps and pressure relief devices.

The plan and features of this garden are unlike those of any other Persian Garden especially considering the culmination of waterworks engineering, represented by the interconnected system of the dam, the network of underground channels and pipes, the *Chahar Taqi* and the towers with their safety function.

6 Bagh-e Shahzadeh

The garden is located in an isolated area of desert 35km south-east of Kerman and 6km from Mahan.

The garden has an elongated rectangular shape and is structured along a longitudinal axis which intersects the main entrance and the pavilion, which is the only building inside the garden, the others being located along its perimeter. A high composite wall completes the enclosure. The internal organisation of the garden is based on flat steps laid along the main axis, corresponding to the typology of *Takht* (step) gardens.

The vegetation collaborates to build a refined design, in which the arrangement of different types of tree and shrub forms accurate patterns of shade and seasonal colours.

Water enters the garden from its upper section through *Tigran Qanat*, which collects waters from the surrounding mountains, and distributes it longitudinally to irrigate the flowers and lawn beds. The longitudinal axis and topography are also highlighted by means of brooks and a series of small cascades along the stepped slope.

The main building, *Sardar Khaneh*, is situated in the highest part of the garden. Centred on its main axis, it consists of a central pavilion flanked on both sides by two elongated wings. Its layout and elevation are somewhat Baroque in character. There are two other edifices in the enclosure: firstly, the residential building, *Bala Khaneh*, which is smaller and simpler with a central structure and two wings; secondly, *Zaeem Bashi* House,

in the southern section of the garden, whose original function is unknown, but it was probably designed for domestic animals. The building materials consist mainly of sun-dried or mud brick, thatch and gypsum plaster. Decorative elements are paired columns, stucco works and tiles. The particular features of this garden are the innovative irrigation system, which coupled functional and aesthetic goals, and its desert setting.

7 Bagh-e Dolat Abad

The Garden (8ha) is located in Yazd, a town lying at 1215 masl, surrounded by desert and sandy lands. The garden is rectangular in shape and is articulated along a strong east-west axis with flowerbeds divided by brooks. The garden served as a fruit and governmental garden, with a summer and winter residence. The water was supplied by Dolat Abad Qanat (water is now obtained from a well) which reaches the garden from behind the summer mansion and fills a basin from which the water is divided into two branches. One flows to serve the kitchen and the other feeds a series of basins, then reaches a water wheel, from where it flows to another set of pools and, from there, irrigates the surrounding fields. One of the distinguishing features of this garden is the wind-catching structure and several water basins and jets.

8 Bagh-e Pahlavanpur

The garden (3.50ha) is located south-east of Mehriz and, thanks to the abundance of water, enjoys rich vegetation. In fact, the area consists of a master's and a peasant's garden. It was conceived to host scholars but was transformed into a garden pavilion. Water is supplied by a *qanat*: it enters the garden and flows through a watermill, fills a basin, passes through the gutters then goes along the main axis of the garden before flowing again into a watermill, from which it irrigates the surrounding fields. The buildings are grouped into the winter and summer residence complexes and include subsidiary structures. Among the particular elements of this garden are the link between the water and the mansion (the main brook actually passes through the mansion) and the presence of two watermills which reap the benefits of hydraulic power.

9 Bagh-e Akbariyeh

This garden was built 5km from the centre of Birjand and functioned as a resting place. The selected vegetation selected includes several indigenous species. The water was supplied by a *qanat*. Due to frequent severe water shortage, water was stored in basins to be used when needed. Ceramic elements were inserted into the slope to slow down the water and prevent soil erosion. Water enters under the garden and fills a basin which is divided into two branches that irrigate the trees through subsidiary canals. The buildings featured in this garden are the main entrance and other buildings added to the complex in subsequent periods: the *Miansara*, the main pavilion with the Mirror Hall, and the *Divan Khaneh*. The ensemble is completed by subsidiary buildings. The presence of exotic plants and rows of pine instead of

cedar trees along the main axis are particular features of this garden.

History and development

Gardens are an inherent element of Iranian dwelling culture and are also deeply linked to the religious beliefs of the pre-Islamic populations of modern-day Iran. The first patterns of the *Chahar Bagh* concept were found depicted on an earthen bowl in Samaria dating back to 2000 BC. Mention is made in Elamite and Assyrian scripts of holy gardens, which were treated as temples.

During the Achaemenids Reign, mythological notions were materialised in architectural forms: Pasargadae complex with its garden (6th century BC) is exemplary in this respect and it was during this period that the main elements of the Persian Garden, namely *Chahar Bagh*, were laid down.

Persia was later occupied by Alexander of Macedonia and Hellenistic culture absorbed elements of Persia into its garden art.

During the Sassanid period (3rd - 7th century AD) the role of water in the garden developed beyond its functional dimension, due to the influence of Zoroastrianism.

Arabs developed the aesthetic dimension of the garden and rules were elaborated to achieve refined results. Gardens from this period may be divided into two groups: those inside and outside the cities. The former were often linked to administrative centres whilst the latter were destined for summer time.

The Mongol taste for ornate decorations emphasised this aspect of the garden and its buildings, and the Persian tradition of garden-building spread to other parts of Asia, notably India and Pakistan where the art of the garden reached its peak in a handful of examples.

During the Savavid and later the Qajar Dynasties, contact with western civilisations influenced garden patterns, especially in the choice of plants and flowers.

Pasargadae

The palatial complex was founded by Cyrus the Great in the battlefield where he had defeated the Medes in 550 BCE. The royal residences and the garden are dated back to around 530 BCE. Former traces of human occupation date back to the Middle Palaeolithic Epoch (250,000-40,000 BP). Findings from subsequent epochs come from the Parthians (mainly consisting of different types of burial sites) the Sassanids (predominantly inscriptions) and the Islamic era (represented by holy shrines, caravanserais, castles, and villages).

Bagh-e Eram

This garden dates back to the 11th century CE. It was built during the Seljuk period, supposedly by the Governor of Fars. In the 14th century, the garden was used as the seat of government by the Inju Sheikh. Nothing much is known about this garden before the 19th century, although it is

likely that it underwent restoration works in the first half of 18th century. During the Qajar rule, Bagh-e Eram was used once more as the seat of government. The garden was confiscated by the government and restored in the period 1966-1971. It was listed as a historical heritage item on 3 August 1974. Until the 1980s the Belvedere building was used by the Faculty of Law, but it was moved to the university campus in 2003. Restoration work started soon afterwards.

Bagh-e Chehel Sotun

The garden dates back to the Safavid epoch, and the construction of the palace inside it seems to have been completed in 1674 AD, after two subsequent building campaigns. Documented conservation work date back to the second half of the 20th century: this led to the discovery of paintings and inscriptions, which help to understand the appearance of the building and its different phases.

Bagh-e Fin

The garden dates back to the pre-Islamic era according to historic sources, and one of its earliest features is the spring. However, the actual position of Bagh-e Fin was established in 11th century AH (17th century CE) and most of the structures were built in this period. After the end of the Safavid reign, the Zand dynasty took care of the garden, which, however, was extensively damaged in an earthquake which happened in 1743 AD. In the early period of the Qajars the garden was restored, expanded and enriched in decoration. However, later on in the Qajar epoch the garden fell into disrepair and it was only at its end when several restoration interventions were put forward. During the constitution movement in Iran, the garden was used as the insurgent headquarters and suffered damages and looting. From the 1930s, the importance of the garden, although severely damaged, was recognised and substantial restoration work was carried out.

Bagh-e Abas Abad

The garden was constructed in the 17th century CE in the context of a development programme to expand Ashraf village and transform it into Shah Abas' residence. Between the end of 16th and the beginning of the 17th century, during the civil war between Afghan rulers and in the Zand period, the garden complex was almost completely destroyed.

Bagh-e Shahzadeh

The garden was built during the Qajar reign (18th-19th century CE) and remained unfinished as its founder died. It was subsequently subdivided and neglected for political and social reasons and suffered much damage. The first conservation work started in 1959 and the garden was listed in the List of National Heritage in 1975. In 1981 an earthquake inflicted severe damage and conservation work had to be carried out again in 1991.

Bagh-e Dolat Abad

The garden was established in the Zand period (1750-1759 AD). After its founder died, the garden was

neglected and was only restored under Qajar rule. The earliest conservation works were carried out in 1354-1361 AH (1935-1942 AD) by the technical office for conservation in Yazd. On this occasion, the wind tower, which had partially collapsed, was restored. The garden has maintained its features and only the northern side of the garden was altered due to the opening into Dolat Abad Street.

Bagh-e Pahlavanpur

This garden was also built in the Qajar period and combines traditional elements along with others drawn from modernity and the influences of western culture.

Bagh-e Akbariyeh

The garden complex was established in two phases, in the Zand and Qajar eras. The garden buildings were later used as governmental edifices.

3 Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis was carried out with gardens from other geo-cultural regions, assuming that the Persian Garden is being nominated as a masterpiece of human ingenuity that materialises Paradise on Earth.

The State Party identified the following garden typologies and related examples as relevant for comparison: the Indian and Mogul Gardens, with specific aspects of the Islamic Garden in India (Taj Mahal, India, 1983, (i)); Fort and Shalimar Gardens in Lahore, Pakistan, 1981, (i), (ii), (iii)), the Arabic-Spanish Garden (Alhambra, Generalife and Albayzín, Granada, Spain, 1984/1994, (i), (iii), (iv)), the Chinese Garden (Classical Gardens of Suzhou, China, 1997/2000, (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v)), the Japanese Garden (Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara, Japan, 1998, (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi)), the Western Garden, articulated in the Italian Garden (18th-Century Royal Palace at Caserta, with the Park, the Aqueduct of Vanvitelli, and the San Leucio Complex, Italy, 1997, (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)), the French Garden (Palace and Park of Versailles, France, 1979, (i), (ii), (vi)) and the English Garden (Blenheim Palace, United Kingdom, 1987, (ii), (iv)). One or more examples of each typology were selected and accurately described, followed by comparison with the nominated serial property.

The State Party has concluded that the Persian Garden (*Chahar Bagh* model dating back to the 6th Century BCE) is original in its conception, and different from all other typologies in terms of selected concrete examples in design principles, layout, architectural features, use of vegetation and natural elements, water management, and symbolic meanings and uses.

The additional information received by ICOMOS on 8 November 2010 explained that the nine nominated components for the Persian Garden were selected as the best examples showing the gradual evolution of the

Persian Garden in the layout, in the design of the architectural features (*Kushk*, Gateway, service and residential buildings), of the *Karts* and of the use of water for both functional and aesthetic purpose. Other element considered for selecting the gardens were: their environmental context, geometry, shadow, walls.

Each garden was selected by comparing it with others from the same epoch and region and on the grounds of their completeness and integrity.

Pasargadae was selected as a prototype of the Persian Garden in that it still clearly exhibits the *Chahar Bagh* structure.

Bagh-e Eram is reputedly the best example in terms of architectural design, vegetation and water systems.

Bagh-e Chehel Sotun was chosen for its magnificent architecture and water system, garden landscaping and arrangement of plants.

Bagh-e Fin exhibits significant elements of the Persian Garden pattern, organisation of waterworks, old vegetation and architectural and artistic elements.

Bagh-e Dolat Abad possesses the most complete layout among surviving Persian Gardens.

Bagh-e Pahlavanpur exemplifies the Persian Village Garden pattern, where traditional garden meets modern landscape.

Bagh-e Shahzadeh exemplifies the *Takht* Persian Garden model, created in an extreme climate with the help of innovative irrigation methods and the functional and aesthetic use of water.

Bagh-e Abas Abad may be held up as an example of how the Persian Garden can be adapted to a humid climate.

Bagh-e Akbariyeh is representative of South Khorasan Gardens in its architectural design, planting and water system.

ICOMOS observes that the State Party has elaborated a well-structured comparative analysis that includes examples from within the country, the same geo-cultural region, as well as from other regions around the world. Several other examples could have been taken into account in the comparative analysis i.e. the Aranjuez Cultural Landscape (Spain, 2001, (ii), (iv)), Würzburg Residence with the Court Gardens and Residence Square (Germany, 1981, (i), (iv)), Villa d'Este, Tivoli (Italy, 2001, (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi)), the gardens in the Residences of the Royal House of Savoy (Italy, 1997, (i), (ii), (iv), (v)). Other relevant properties would have been those on the tentative list of State Parties that are currently being nominated i.e. Bagh-e Babur (Afghanistan), Hiraizumi – Temples, Gardens and Archaeological Sites representing the Buddhist Pure

Land (Japan), and the West Lake Cultural Landscape of Hangzhou (China).

Nevertheless, despite the absence of a number of comparable examples, the comparative analysis convincingly demonstrates that the Persian Garden is missing from the list of historical gardens inscribed on the World Heritage List. Its originality is only partly reflected by Mogul and Arabic-Spanish garden morphologies, which derived from the Persian *Chahar Bagh*.

ICOMOS considers that, on the basis of the State Party's accurate examination of surviving gardens within Iran, the comparative analysis justifies the selection of the components.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the inscription on 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:

- Natural and manmade elements meet in the Persian Garden to create a unique artistic achievement that reflects the ideals of art, philosophical, symbolic and religious concepts.
- The perfect design of the Persian Garden, along with its ability to respond to extreme climatic conditions, is the result of inspired and intelligent application of different fields of knowledge including technology, water management and engineering, architecture, botany and agriculture.
- The notion of the Persian Garden permeates Iranian life and artistic expression and references to *Baghs* may be found in literature, poetry, music, calligraphy carpet design. These, in turn, also influence the arrangement of the gardens.

The nine selected gardens reflect and tangibly articulate the proposed Outstanding Universal Value in physical expressions from different epochs and climates. They demonstrate the flexibility and permanency of the *Chahar Bagh* originating principle at the heart of the Persian Garden in adapting to different terrains and climates, as well as to changing trends and cultural influences.

ICOMOS considers that this justification is appropriate because these orderly gardens, with their intersecting paths and waterways reflect an evolutionary process in terms of form and composition, while always adhering to the early geometric model of *Chahar Bagh*. This acted as an originating principle for gardens and soon spread beyond Persia, as far as India and Spain, where the art of gardening flourished, creating outstanding examples which have survived to this day.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The State Party has examined the integrity of each component from a visual, structural and functional point of view, and has concluded that the integrity of the nine gardens has been retained. From a functional perspective, all the selected gardens were used by the public, at the same time maintaining the integrity of their structural elements.

As for the rationale of the serial nomination, the State Party holds that these nine gardens were selected from amongst hundreds of gardens in Iran with a variety of background typologies and located in diverse climatic conditions and settings. This reflects the adaptability of the *Chahar Bagh* model to different conditions.

ICOMOS considers that each garden contains sufficient elements to express its Outstanding Universal Value. Furthermore, their respective sizes and components are the key characteristics and features of their importance. Finally, none of these gardens have been damaged by development or a lack of constant maintenance, although many of them have undergone substantial restoration work since their significance was officially recognised.

ICOMOS observes that the nine nominated gardens date back to different historical periods and belong to various climatic areas of Iran. These gardens belong to different provinces, from across Iran, and reflect the diversity of forms and layout that the *Chahar Bagh* principle can sustain. ICOMOS considers that the series is closed.

Authenticity

The State Party has examined the conditions of authenticity for each garden separately and concludes that overall, their authenticity has been retained with regard to design, technology, material and setting. As for water management and distribution, all the gardens, except Bagh-e Eram and Bagh-e Dolat Abad, have retained their traditional *qanat*-based system. Water circulation within the gardens has maintained its original layout. The setting of the gardens in rural areas or villages has retained its aspect, whereas the city gardens have experienced a modification in their setting. Despite this, planning regulations ensure that surviving elements of the original setting are preserved and the current environment is improved.

ICOMOS considers that the Persian Garden, as documented over the course of more than two millennia, has developed alongside the evolution of Persian society whilst always adhering to the early geometric model. These gardens may be considered true cultural landscapes in that they reflect an evolutionary process in terms of form and composition. The gardens of Pasargadae and Bagh-e Abbas Abad can be considered "fossils" in that today they are archaeological sites as their

evolutionary processes as gardens have come to a halt. The other seven gardens conserve their active role based on an early typology and, similarly to palimpsests, they have been subjected only to repairs, modifications or restoration, and sometimes the replacement of plants that died due to natural causes.

ICOMOS therefore considers that the nominated property bears credible and exceptional witness to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

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

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

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

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Persian Garden has been acknowledged as a masterpiece of human genius by numerous historians and travellers over the centuries. The oldest evidence of the innovative character and of the originating principle of the Persian garden is seen in Pasargadae (6th century BCE). Here, the wise management of water, careful selection of plants and garden layout based on straight and orthogonal lines were already present. The subdivision into four areas around two orthogonal lines – or *Chahar Bagh* – finds its roots in Zoroastrianism and is associated with the four elements, the four gardens of Creation and the four rivers of Paradise. The Persian Garden is, in fact, considered to be the symbolic representation of Paradise on Earth. It has evolved throughout the centuries in diverse forms, adapting to different aesthetic, functional and social exigencies and climatic conditions, its originating model always remaining intact. The arid climate of most of Iran forced garden builders to elaborate ingenious systems to obtain and channel water from the source to the gardens.

ICOMOS considers that the powerful originating principle of Persian Gardens - *Chahar Bagh* – though it originated in Persian civilization, possesses a strong symbolism associated with philosophical, mythical and religious concepts shared by several cultures. Its great flexibility has allowed the Persian Garden to evolve into diverse tangible manifestations, yet always exhibiting a necessary element of permanence.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

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

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Persian Garden has been the principal

reference for the development of garden design in Iran, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and in Arab countries, reaching lands as far as Spain. The geometrical layout, the use of symmetry, the water circulation and water management have particularly influenced the art of garden creation in different cultures.

ICOMOS considers that the design and technological achievements adopted to create the Persian Garden have had a profound and long-lasting influence on a vast cultural region, as well as others with which Persian culture made contact.

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 civilisation which is living or which has disappeared;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Persian Garden has evolved over a span of more than two millennia, and in its manifestations along the centuries has shown deep links with every expression of life and culture: private residences, palaces, public and religious buildings were accompanied by gardens. This tradition has also influenced other cultural expressions such as poetry, music, painting, carpet making, architecture and urban planning.

ICOMOS considers that the notion of the Persian Garden has shaped Iranian culture so deeply that it is reflected in almost all other expressions of art.

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 illustrate (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Persian garden is an outstanding type of garden, resulting from the ingenious mix of natural elements and manmade components. It also integrates significant achievements in Persian culture and symbolic meanings into a refined and complex artistic manifestation. The Persian Garden may be considered as the prototype of Western geometrical garden design, as a counterpoint to the Chinese Garden which may be considered the reference for oriental garden design. The most important components of the Persian garden model are as follows: garden elements (water supply and circulation systems, walls, design, use of plants, use of geometry and symmetry); relationship with the surrounding environment; cultural associations. These components are described in the treatise on agriculture, written by Heravi in 18th century, which is one of the references for Western symmetrical garden design. The scarcity of water has stimulated the inventiveness of Persian garden builders to develop advanced systems and technologies to collect and use water and exploit the

properties of vegetation types to create a micro-environment favourable to the self-sustenance of the garden and to human delight.

ICOMOS considers that there are strictly geometric gardens in China, specifically the gardens of many places of worship and many public and private residences, especially in the cities.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified, with the exception of the reference to Chinese Gardens being considered a counterpoint to the Persian Garden model.

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

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Persian Garden is directly associated with several other cultural expressions of Persian culture, namely literary works, poetry, carpet design, miniature painting, music, architectural decoration elements. The Zoroastrian concept of four main natural elements (earth, heaven, water and plants), as well as the Heavenly Garden, merge with the Islamic concept of Paradise on Earth. The Persian Garden is a pleasant environment created to favour meditation, intellectual discussions, the composition of poetry, music and art.

ICOMOS concurs with this view.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified and that the selection of components is appropriate.

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

Description of the attributes

The attributes of the Persian Garden supporting the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are the following, considered materialised in all nine components:

- The layout of the garden expressed by the specific adaptation of the *Chahar Bagh* within each component and articulated in the *kharts* or plant/flower beds;
- The water supply, management and circulation systems from the source to the garden, including all technological and decorative elements that permit the use of water for functional and aesthetic exigencies;
- The arrangement of trees and plants within the garden that contribute to its characterisation and specific micro-climate;

- The architectural components, including the building, but not limited to these, that integrate the use of terrain morphology and vegetation to create unique manmade environments;
- The association with other forms of art that, in a mutual interchange, have been influenced by the Persian Garden and have, in turn, contributed to certain visual features and sound effects in the garden.

4 Factors affecting the property

Development pressures

The State Party states that the gardens in urban settings have suffered in the past from the pressure of urban development, resulting in the obliteration or separation of some portions of gardens for road openings and new constructions. In some gardens, such as Bagh-e Fin, development pressures are higher and come from the construction of the Qom – Isfahan – Kashan highway, as well as the increasing population of the surrounding neighbourhood and the presence of a parking lot near the garden. In Bagh-e Abas Abad the construction of visitor facilities in the nearby forest have altered the setting, although after the establishment of the office for the protection of the garden (ICCHTO Base), all projects have come to a halt.

Tourism pressures

The State Party holds that only a few gardens, i.e. Bagh-e Eram, Fin, Chehel Sotun, Dolat Abad, are subject to visitor pressure, although management policies have been established to control the impact of tourism.

ICOMOS observes that some damage caused by humans, such as graffiti, does occur, although existing security staff manages to limit these episodes.

Environmental pressures

Major effects of environmental conditions can be observed on the surviving structures in Pasargadae. Indeed, weathering, frost and thermal cycles have caused damage to the manmade structures as well as to vegetation in all the gardens. Uncontrolled vegetation growth is also responsible for some damage to garden components.

ICOMOS considers that the felling of 120 cypresses in Bagh-e Fin, killed or weakened by frost, is a cause for concern and recommends that any future measure of such drastic nature be carefully assessed beforehand and subjected to specific scientific investigation.

Natural disasters

According to the State Party, the major threat to the nominated property is from Iran being an earthquake-prone country, although not all components are located in areas with high seismicity. Other threats may come from fire.

Impact of climate change

ICOMOS considers that the most likely effects of climate change would be a reduction in snowfall and consequent shortage of water supply, unpredictable weather events, and increasing harshness of climate, especially in summer.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are urban development for those components located in urban areas, and environmental pressures where these are coupled with lack of maintenance.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries of each of the nominated Persian gardens were properly identified and are defined in both the nomination dossier and the attached maps with precise geographic coordinates. These boundaries have been selected with great attention and detail and correspond to those used to delimit the gardens for their protection under Iranian legislation.

In addition, the buffer zones for each component have been clearly delimited, officially notified and protective measures tailored to the needs of each garden.

The additional information received by ICOMOS on 8 November 2010 explained that the boundaries of the nominated components are laid down to include all elements conveying the significance of the garden and therefore contribute to express the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated serial property. The rationale for defining the boundaries of the buffer zones varies according to the setting of each garden. For those included within or close to urban areas the buffer zones have been designed to protect them from the impacts and effects of development pressures, in other cases the buffer zone acts as a prelude to the garden, where its values are somehow announced by the context.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated areas of each of the nine protected gardens include all the elements that make up the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial property. Furthermore, all of the proposals for regulating and protecting each of the gardens are appropriate and offer the best possible solutions for their conservation and enhancement.

ICOMOS further observes that the Pasargadae gardens are located in and are part of Pasargadae archaeological site, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2004, on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv).

ICOMOS, however, considered that the south-eastern boundaries of the Bagh-e Dolat Abad of Yazd buffer zone between Enghlab St. and Iranshahr St. (now Rafiat St.) are not well identified. Specifically, the line between points

B5, B6, B7 and B8 cut through a compact, old inhabited area with a long section of boundaries that are difficult to identify. ICOMOS deemed it appropriate to expand the buffer zone of this portion of the inhabited area so that it reaches Chahar-Monar Alley. This new solution was reputed more than necessary, given the value of the old inhabited area.

On 13 December 2010, ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party requesting to consider the possibility of revising the south-eastern boundaries of the buffer zone to reach Chahar-Monar Alley and the State Party officially informed ICOMOS that they have been modified according to ICOMOS' recommendation.

Additionally, ICOMOS considered that it could be appropriate to extend the buffer zone of Bagh-e Chehel Sotun in Isfahan where the Chahar Bagh Avenue is historically a part of the cultural landscape, and already managed as a historical cultural axis in the urban master plan.

ICOMOS has sent a letter to the State Party on this issue and the State Party officially responded that all the elements that make up the historical-cultural axis of Isfahan have been included within a protective zone since 1993 AD, with specific protective measures developed by Isfahan ICHHTO Base, which is also responsible for its management.

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

Ownership

All gardens comprised in the serial property, except for Bagh-e Dolat Abad and Bagh-e Akbariyeh, which are owned by the Waqf organisation, a charitable trust holding an inalienable religious endowment, are under state ownership (Bagh-e Eram is owned by the University of Shiraz, while the others are under the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organisation - ICHHTO).

Protection

Legal Protection

The legal provisions for the protection of cultural heritage in Iran are to be found in general (e.g. the 1920 Constitution and the 1996 *Penal Law*) and 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 1979 *Law concerning acquisition of Land, Buildings and Premises*.

This regulates the modes of acquisition of immovable property on the part of the State for the purpose of protecting or improving the presentation of cultural property.

Legal provisions specific for natural resources that are relevant also for the protection of the nominated property are: art. 50 of the Constitutional law (1920), the Environmental Conservation Act (1974), the Act for the Conservation and Promotion of Green Spaces in Urban Areas (1980), the Law for Natural Disasters (1991), the Forest and Natural Resources Act (1992).

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. This 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/historical impacts of major development projects at the earliest stage of a scheme.

The nominated Historical Gardens of Iran have been registered in the list of Iran's national monuments with the reference numbers below: *The Ancient Garden of Pasargadae* was inscribed with no. 19 in 1931; *Bagh-e Eram* with no. 1013 in 1974; *Bagh-e Chehel Sotun* with no. 108 in 1932; *Bagh-e Fin* with no. 238 in 1935; *Bagh-e Abas Abad*, Behshahr with no. 745 in 1967; *Bagh-e Shahzade*, Mahan with no. 1012 in 1975; *Bagh-e Dolat Abad* with no. 774 in 1967; *Bagh-e Pahlavanpur* with no. 6334 in 2003; *Bagh-e Akbariyeh*, Birjand with no. 2326 in 1999.

Each nominated garden in the list is also protected by means of specific regulations set up for the 'core' and 'buffer zone', according to Iranian legislation. These provisions must be respected by all planning instruments in force.

The additional information received by ICOMOS on 8 November 2010 explained that ICHHTO is responsible for developing the protective measures for listed national monuments. Maps of the boundaries of the 'core' and 'buffer zones' of protected national monuments are presented at Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD) which has the duty to transmit them to the consultants charged with the preparation of the master/development plans for urban areas.

Urban Master Plans are approved by the Higher Council for Architecture and Urban Planning (HCAUP), which also contains the Head of ICHHTO. The HCAUP has four main functions: developing overall urban planning policies,

commenting on bylaws affecting land use and zoning, adopting urban regulations and bylaws, and approving urban master plans. Plans are prepared at a provincial level by consultants hired by Housing and Urban Development Organisations (HUDO), which are provincial branches of the Ministry for Housing and Urban Development, and are then reviewed and approved by HCAUP. Detailed plans are approved at a provincial level by a specific Commission which includes representatives from local administration and ministries.

All nine Gardens are covered by a master plan which has taken into account the values of the nominated components as items listed in the National List of Monuments.

Effectiveness of protection measures

A specific ICHHTO base has been established for each garden with responsibilities ensuring that provisions and regulations issued for the buffer zones are respected and conservation and maintenance work is carried out. A National Base for the Persian Garden has been established and is responsible for coordinating all the activities of provincial bases, providing technical advice, supporting documentation activities and scientific research.

ICOMOS considers that overall, the system of legal protection is adequate. The planning provisions and regulations that have been set up are appropriate to protect the value of the nominated property.

ICOMOS observes, however, that the regulations for the buffer zones of Bagh-e Dolat Abad and Bagh-e Akbariyeh include a provision which does not appear fully adequate to the specific context, in that new buildings are only permitted to have one storey and a maximum height of 4.5m while existing buildings in the area have an average of two storeys. ICOMOS therefore suggests that the State Party considers modifying this provision to better reflect the existing situation, by accepting also new buildings with two storeys with the same maximum height of 4.5m, so that the character of the area is better preserved.

As a general observation, ICOMOS considers that the provisions for the nominated properties and their buffer zones should be tailored to their specific situations and needs, to ensure protection of the value and character of the areas involved. Measures should not be limited to the height of the buildings but should also include size of building lots, materials, architectural language, and functions.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate. ICOMOS observes that the protective measures for the property are adequate overall, but suggests that the State Party considers the possibility to amend the provisions concerning the height of the buildings in Bagh-e Dolat Abad and Bagh-e Akbariyeh buffer zones to allow buildings with two storeys and a

maximum height of 4.5m, to preserve better the character of the area.

Conservation

Inventories, recording, research

The State Party informs that systematic inventorying of plants in all gardens is almost concluded. Research and investigations into the water supply and circulation systems in Pasargadae and Bagh-e Abas Abad are underway.

Present state of conservation

The State Party reports that conservation programmes are being implemented in all nine gardens.

Most of the gardens have undergone repeated restoration/conservation campaigns. The constant and regular monitoring and conservation activities ensure that the architectures included in the gardens, consisting of pavilions and other structures, are in an appropriate condition. In the archaeological gardens of Pasargadae decay phenomena related to frost and other environmental factors have been detected. In the garden of Abas-Abad, superficial damage caused by humidity has occurred but is currently under control by means of regular interventions and monitoring.

The traditional water management systems have survived in most of the gardens and have been repaired and restored to functional use.

Active Conservation measures

The State Party reports that each garden is covered by a thorough conservation programme that includes a variety of conservation and maintenance measures which started several years ago.

ICOMOS recommends that conservation work be based on the principle of minimum intervention and that over-restoration be avoided in order not to threaten the authenticity of the nominated property.

Maintenance

Maintenance appears to be part of the conservation programmes.

ICOMOS recommends that plans for the programmed maintenance of the gardens be established to ensure the correct and timely prioritisation of interventions, thus maximising the use of available resources and reducing the need for substantial restoration work.

Effectiveness of conservation measures

The conservation measures have proven to be effective in enhancing the conditions of the nominated property.

ICOMOS, however, recommends that conservation activity always be based on the principle of minimum intervention.

ICOMOS considers that overall the present state of conservation of the nine components of the nominated property is adequate. The conservation activities and measures cover a range of aspects that guarantee the transmission of the protected values. However, ICOMOS recommends that conservation work respect principles of prudence and minimum intervention and that programmed maintenance plans be developed for each garden, to maximise the available resources.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The management framework of the property is based on the integration of legal protection provisions, existing planning instruments, administrative and technical bodies (National Garden ICHHTO Base and the provincial bases), 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. Provincial bases are composed of distinct teams for conservation, research, public affairs, security, and funds.

The National Base for the Persian Garden is in charge of the overall management system and strategies and of the coordination and harmonisation of management objectives and activities for each component.

Additional information received by ICOMOS on 8 November 2010 provided detailed description of the objectives set up for each component of the nominated property.

All the nine gardens have sufficient facilities for visitors, although there is an acknowledged need to improve such facilities. A programme to strengthen presentation and promotion has been elaborated, this includes increasing awareness of the importance of the Persian Garden among the public, promoting the cultural value of the nominated property, identifying the economic benefits of promoting the nominated property and working with local partners in this direction.

ICOMOS observes that the National ICHHTO Base for the Persian Garden guarantees that the management framework is one for all the individual components.

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

The Management Plan is articulated in objectives common to all components of the serial property and others, specific to each garden. The Plan provides for short-, mid- and long terms objectives for each nominated component.

All nine gardens have sufficient facilities for visitors, although it has been acknowledged that improvements need to be made. Additionally, a programme for strengthening presentation and promotion has been elaborated. This includes increasing public awareness of the cultural value of the nominated property, identifying the economic benefits of promoting it and working with local partners towards these goals.

ICOMOS observes that the architecture of the management framework and of the management plans for each garden is adequate and covers all relevant aspects to ensure proper management of the property. However, it is not clear whether the Management Plan is already in place and officially enforced.

Risk preparedness

There is no heading in the nomination dossier on this subject.

ICOMOS recommends that a strategy for dealing with natural or manmade disasters be implemented as soon as possible for each garden, following common principles established for the entire serial property.

Involvement of the local communities

There is no specific heading on this matter in the nomination dossier, however, involvement of stakeholders is a recurrent goal in each management objective chart.

Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and training

The financial resources for the nominated property are derived from several sources, namely governmental budget, revenue from admission fees, charges for special events and the sale of gadgets. In the last three years a total amount of 60,000 millions IRR (around 6,000,000 USD) has been distributed for the management of the nine gardens.

The National Base for Persian Garden received 6,200 millions IRR for research and restorations in 2009.

The technical and professional human resources for each of the nominated components are sufficient in number, and adequate in technical preparation and training. The expertise of permanent staff and hired professionals covers a wide range of fields, namely archaeology, architectural conservation, botany, natural sciences, structural engineering, gardening, security and computer science. Each ICHHTO Provincial Base has a monitoring

and a maintenance team, encompassing virtually all relevant expertise.

Effectiveness of current management

ICOMOS considers that the management structures put in place appear effective, although it is not clear whether this framework has been formalised and implemented or if it is still in a developmental stage.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate. However, ICOMOS recommends that the Management Plan for the nominated property be approved and implemented as soon as possible.

ICOMOS further recommends that a strategy for dealing with natural or manmade disasters be implemented as soon as possible for each garden, following common principles established for the entire serial property.

6 Monitoring

The monitoring system identifies its overall aim as the preservation of the value, integrity and authenticity of the Persian Garden. Accordingly, the following relevant areas for monitoring have been identified: architecture, irrigation system, plants, tourism and development. Each area encompasses a number of sensitive components and for each component, indicators, monitoring actions and frequency have been determined. Monitoring is carried out by each ICHHTO Provincial Base, in which both a monitoring and a maintenance team have been established. Data collected remains at each provincial base, which reports to the National Base for the Persian Garden. The nomination dossier gives a detailed description of the monitoring objectives for each garden as well as the results of previous monitoring exercises, focussing mainly on visitors and environmental parameters.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring strategy, aims and objectives are appropriate. However, ICOMOS notes that the successful implementation of this monitoring framework requires a continual exchange of information with other authorities and agencies. ICOMOS therefore recommends that at each Base a monitoring body is established that includes representatives from all relevant institutions and agencies for monitoring purposes.

7 Conclusions

The nomination dossier convincingly demonstrates through learned, documented and clearly exposed arguments, that the Persian Garden represents one of the highest achievements in the conception and creation of art. Philosophical, mythical and religious concepts, as well as literary and artistic aims, are materialised in outstanding tangible manifestations through the ingenious and skilful application of water management technology,

engineering, architecture, agriculture and botany. The Persian Garden encompasses a variety of tangible manifestations, whilst always exhibiting an evident unity of conception in the use of the *Chahar Bagh* model throughout the centuries and in diverse climatic conditions.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Persian Garden, Islamic Republic of Iran, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Persian Garden consists of a collection of nine gardens, selected from various regions of Iran, which tangibly represent the diverse forms that this type of designed garden has assumed over the centuries and in different climatic conditions. They reflect the flexibility of the *Chahar Bagh*, or originating principle, of the Persian Garden, which has persisted unchanged over more than two millennia since its first mature expression was found in the garden of Cyrus the Great's Palatial complex, in Pasargadae.

Natural elements combine with manmade components in the Persian Garden to create a unique artistic achievement that reflects the ideals of art, philosophical, symbolic and religious concepts. The Persian Garden materialises the concept of Eden or Paradise on Earth.

The perfect design of the Persian Garden, along with its ability to respond to extreme climatic conditions, is the original result of an inspired and intelligent application of different fields of knowledge, i.e. technology, water management and engineering, architecture, botany and agriculture.

The notion of the Persian Garden permeates Iranian life and its artistic expressions: references to the garden may be found in literature, poetry, music, calligraphy and carpet design. These, in turn, have inspired also the arrangement of the gardens.

The attributes that carry Outstanding Universal Value are the layout of the garden expressed by the specific adaptation of the *Chahar Bagh* within each component and articulated in the *kharts* or plant/flower beds; the water supply, management and circulation systems from the source to the garden, including all technological and decorative elements that permit the use of water for functional and aesthetic exigencies; the arrangement of trees and plants within the garden that contribute to its characterisation and specific micro-climate; the architectural components, including the buildings but not limited to these, that integrate the use of the terrain and vegetation to create unique manmade environments; the association with other forms of art that, in a mutual interchange, have been influenced by the Persian

Garden and have, in turn, contributed to certain visual features and sound effects in the gardens.

Criterion (i): The Persian Garden represents a masterpiece of human creative genius. The design of the Persian Garden, based on the right angle and geometrical proportions, is often divided into four sections known as *Chahar Bagh* (Four Gardens). The creation of the Persian Garden was made possible due to intelligent and innovative engineering solutions and a sophisticated water-management system, as well as the appropriate choice of flora and its location in the garden layout. Indeed, the Persian Garden has been associated with the idea of earthly Paradise, forming a stark contrast to its desert setting.

Criterion (ii): The Persian Garden exhibits an important interchange of human values, having been the principal reference for the development of garden design in Western Asia, Arab countries, and even Europe. It is the geometry and symmetry of the architecture, together with the complex water management system, that seem to have influenced design in all these gardens. The word Paradise entered European languages from the Persian root word "Pardis", which was the name of a beautiful garden enclosed behind walls.

Criterion (iii): The Persian Garden bears exceptional, and even unique, testimony to the cultural traditions that have evolved in Iran and the Middle East over some two and a half millennia. Throughout its evolution, the Persian Garden has had a role in various cultural and social aspects of society, becoming a central feature in private residences, palaces and public buildings, as well as in ensembles associated with benevolent or religious institutions, such as tombs, park layouts, palace gardens, Meidans, etc.

Criterion (iv): The Persian Garden is an outstanding example of a type of garden design achieved by utilising natural and human elements and integrating significant achievements of Persian culture into a physical and symbolic-artistic expression in harmony with nature. Indeed, the Persian Garden has become a prototype for the geometrically-designed garden layout, diffused across the world.

Criterion (vi): The Persian Garden is directly associated with cultural developments of Outstanding Universal Value. These include literary works and poetry for example by Sa'di, Hafez and Ferdowsi. The Persian Garden is also the principal source of inspiration for the Persian carpet and textile design, miniature painting, music, architectural ornaments, etc. In the *Avesta*, the ancient holy book of the Zoroastrians, the Persian Garden and its sacred plants are praised as one of the four natural elements (earth, heavens, water, and plants). The *Chahar Bagh* is a reflection of the mythical perception of nature, and the cosmic order in the eyes of the ancient Iranian peoples.

Integrity

The Persian Garden comprises a sufficient number of gardens from across Iran and each garden contains sufficient elements to concur to express the Outstanding Universal Value of the series. The component gardens are in good conditions and well maintained.

Authenticity

The Persian Garden, through its components, has developed alongside the evolution of the Persian society, while adhering to its early geometric model, the *Chahar Bagh*. Pasargadae and Bagh-e Abas Abad may be read as fossil landscapes while the other seven gardens retain their active role within their physical and social contexts.

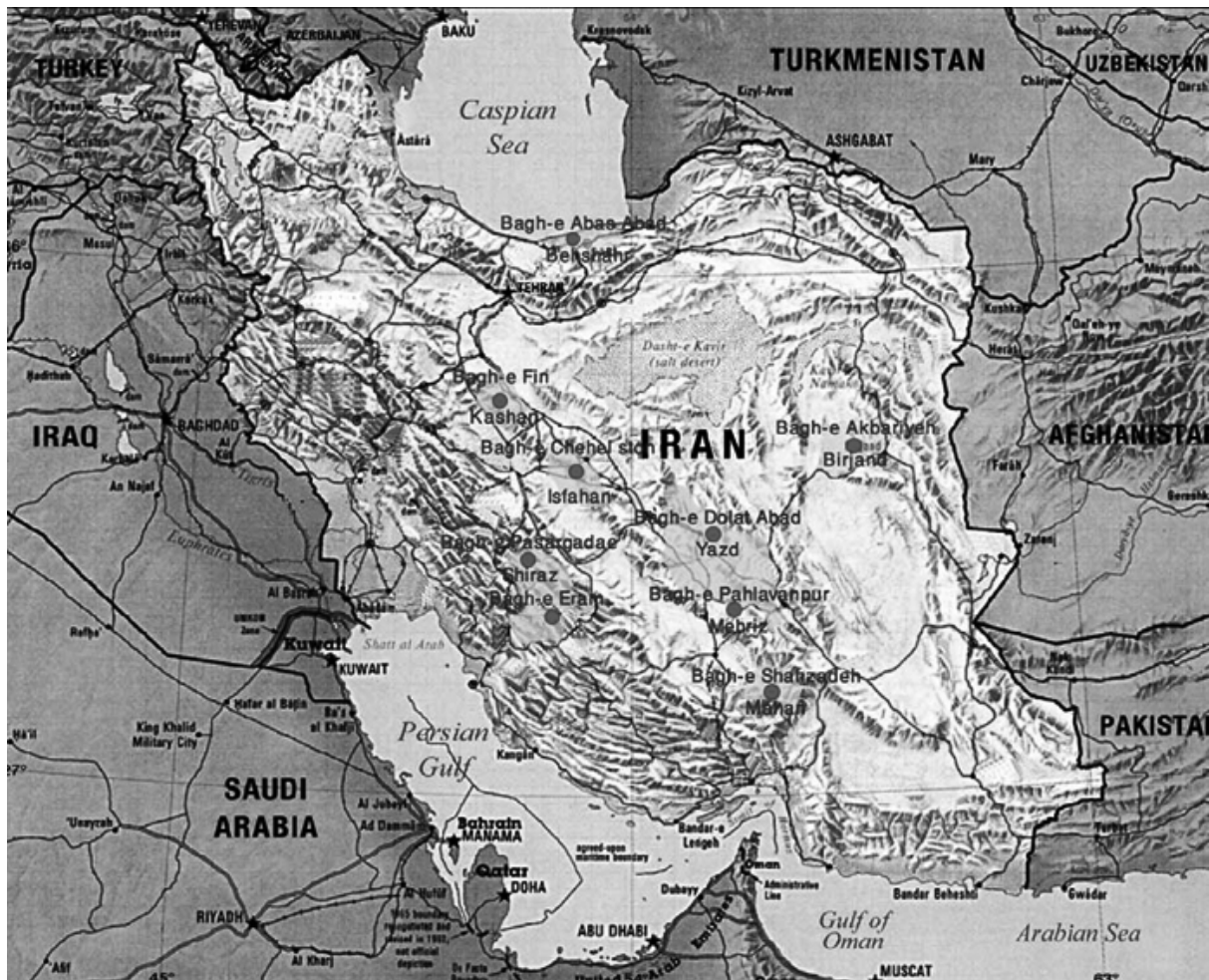
Management and protection requirements

Each garden is registered in the National Heritage List and therefore protected according to the Iranian legislation. Protection provisions established for the gardens and their 'buffer zones', defined according to the Iranian law in force, are also included in the Master Plans, the approval of which is issued by the Higher Council for Architecture and Urban Planning, in which sits also the Head of the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organisation (ICHHTO).

The existence of the National ICHHTO Base for the Persian Garden ensures that the management framework is one for the whole series, granting the coordination and harmonisation of strategies and objectives. The Management Plan includes objectives common to all component gardens of the series and a programme for strengthening presentation and promotion to the public has been developed.

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

- Establish at each ICHHTO Provincial Base a monitoring body that includes representatives from all relevant institutions and agencies for monitoring purposes.
- Finalise and approve the Management Plan for the Persian Garden and for each of its components;
- Amend the provisions concerning the height of the buildings in Bagh-e Dolat Abad and Bagh-e Akbaryeh buffer zones to allow buildings with two storeys and a maximum height of 4.5m;
- Ensure that conservation work respect principles of prudence and minimum intervention and develop programmed maintenance plans for each garden, to maximise the available resources;
- Assess carefully any possible future measure concerning the replacement of plants beforehand and on the basis of specific scientific investigation;
- Implement a strategy for dealing with natural or manmade disasters as soon as possible for each garden, following common principles established for the whole serial property;



Map showing the location of the nominated properties



Ancient garden of Pasargadae



Bagh-e Eram



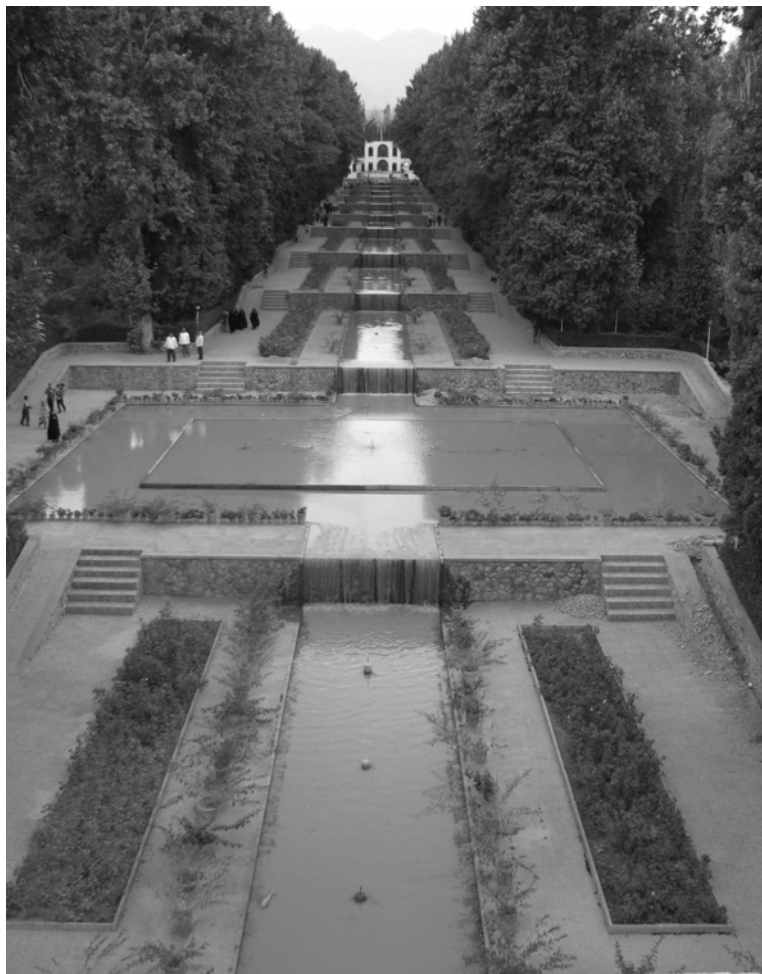
Bagh-e Chehel Sotun



Bagh-e Fin



Bagh-e Abbas Abad



Bagh-e Shahzadeh