

---

## Golestan Palace (Iran) No 1422

---

### Official name as proposed by the State Party

Golestan Palace

### Location

City of Tehran, Tehran Province  
Islamic Republic of Iran

### Brief description

Golestan Palace is one of the oldest complexes in Tehran, originally built during the Safavid dynasty in the historic walled city. Following extensions and additions, it received its most characteristic features in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the palace complex was selected as the royal residence and seat of power by the Qajar ruling family. At present, Golestan Palace complex consists of eight key palace structures which surround the eponymous gardens and are mostly used as museums. The complex exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar era including the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.

### 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*.

## 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

30 January 2012

### Background

This is a new nomination.

### Consultations

ICOMOS has consulted several independent experts.

### Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 16 to 19 September 2012.

### Additional information requested and received from the State Party

ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 18 September 2012 requesting additional information with regard to the identification and exact boundaries of the property, the justification of Outstanding Universal Value, further details in relation to the comparative analysis, integrity, ownership and the existence of a management plan. Following its World Heritage Panel discussion, ICOMOS sent a second letter to the State Party on 20 December 2012 requesting additional clarification regarding a possible expansion of the buffer zone based on a visual impact study, the integration of the proposed or extended buffer zone into the Tehran Master Plan and the adoption of a site management plan, including risk preparedness and disaster management strategies. The State Party provided additional information in response to the questions raised in both letters on 29 October 2012 and on 28 February 2013, which is included under the relevant sections below.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

6 March 2013

## 2 The property

### Description

Golestan Palace is located in the heart and historic core of Tehran. It consists of eight palace complexes arranged around the Golestan Garden, a green shared centre of the complex, and surrounded by an outer wall with gates. Golestan Palace was not only used as the governing base of the Qajari Kings but also functioned as a recreational and residential compound and a centre of artistic production in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Through the latter activity, it became the source and centre of Qajari arts and architecture. Key to the reason for the variety and amount of artistic production during Qajar rule was the personality of the ruler Naser ed-Din Shah, a talented artist himself and predominantly the creator of the components of Golestan Palace which remain today. The eight key palace complexes which survive are *Ayvān-e Takht-e Marmar*, *Talar-e Almas*, *Chador Khaneh*, *Imarat-e Badgir*, *Shams-ol Imareh*, *Imarat-e Brelian*, *Kakh-e Asli* and *Kakh-e Abyaz*. A selection of these shall be described in further detail. The nominated area is 5.3 ha and the buffer zone is 26.2 ha.

*Ayvān-e Takht-e Marmar* is the oldest remaining structure in the palace complex and dates back to the Zand dynasty. As the terrace which hosted many coronation ceremonies of rulers, its decoration was revised several times and it is now dominated by a marble throne built during the Qajari reign. Despite its Zand origin, the wall decorations changed so substantially that at present the *ayvān* provides a rich reference to Qajari artistic production, including pictorial wall paintings and mosaic tile work.

The two most admired buildings in the complex are the *Shams-ol Imareh* and *Imarat-e Badgir*. *Shams-ol Imareh* was based on Naser ed-Din Shah's inspirations following

a journey to Central Europe. It represents the proportions, features and motifs of outwardly oriented European architecture and combines these with Persian architectural language and layout. It is also the highest structure of Golestan Palace and its two towers offer good views over the townscape of Tehran and the mountains beyond. *Imarat-e Badgir* was built at the order of Fat'h Ali Shah and executed by local master builders. The name of the building refers to the fine and high wind towers adorned with geometrical patterns, which characterize the outer silhouette and provide cool air in the interior halls during the summer months.

*Imarat-e Brelian* combines a few luxurious chambers and halls. Its interior decorations remain complete, including mirror works and chandeliers. The ceiling which is covered by quadrangular mirrors creates vivid reflections in the halls. *Kakh-e Abyaz* dates to the later years of Qajar rule and illustrates the continued reception and adaptation of architectural elements from 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Originally built as the Prime Minister's Palace, which included a storage facility for valuable state gifts received, it also hosted the cabinet of ministers. It is nowadays open to the public as a Museum of Anthropology.

### History and development

Golestan Palace is built on the first fortified core of the city of Tehran, the so-called *Arg*. In the Zand dynasty in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the *Arg* was expanded and the first segment of Golestan Palace, an audience chamber named *Divan Khaneh*, was built, today's *Imarat-e Takht-e Marmar*. When the Qajar family came to power in 1779, Aqa Mohammad Khan (1742-1797) chose Tehran as his capital. Golestan became the palace and administrative centre, which required extension to accommodate the various state functions.

The Qajar expansion started with a new palace structure on the east-west axis of today's garden, the *Qsar-e Golestan*, which no longer exists. Construction works continued during the rule of Fat'h Ali Shah (1797-1834), who not only completed all constructions started by his predecessor but also initiated the creation of *Talar-e Almas* in 1801. His successor Mohammad Shah was not very active in the creation of architectural legacies. The most characteristic palaces in Golestan date back to the subsequent reign of Naser ed-Din Shah (1848-1896). These include the *Imarat-e Badgir*, already begun under Fat'h Ali Shah, the *Shams-ol Imareh* and the *Kakh-e Asli*. At the same time the *Arg* Castle was renovated, the *Divan Khaneh* expanded and the *Arg* Square restored.

Apart from the construction of these key buildings the Golestan Palace complex expanded generally with the addition of new structures in all directions of the garden. Naser ed-Din Shah's construction activities are often divided into five key phases: (1) the first phase in which *Imarat-e Badgir* was reconstructed and a museum for royal weapons was built (1848-54); (2) the second phase during which the new defensive wall with 12 gates and *Shams-ol Imareh* were added (1854-64); (3) the third phase, in which *Takiyeh Dowlat*, a large scale theatre

building, which has since been demolished, and a part of the governmental and administrative complexes of *Kakh-e Asli* were built (1864-1874); (4) the fourth phase in which the former palace of Fat'h Ali Shah was demolished and replaced by gardens including pools, flowers and trees (1874-1879); and finally (5) the last phase which produced the *Talar-e Brelian* and the *Kakh-e Abyaz*, the Prime Minister's Palace built in 1891.

In the Pahlavi Period (1925-1979) Golestan Palace and the historic *Arg* complex were subject to a number of alterations. Several earlier buildings were removed to allow for the construction of the modern complexes of the Ministries of Finance and Justice, which still dominate the buffer zone. Many changes were catered to facilitate official state visits, such as the removal of a portal to allow for the car entrance of an Iraqi King or construction of a new guest complex for the visit of Queen Elisabeth II. Unfortunately also, some of the most characteristic Qajari buildings, such as the *Takiyeh Dowlat* were demolished. After the Islamic Revolution, the palace was preserved in its previous condition and responsibility for it was transferred to the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO) in 1987. In the following decade efforts to restore most of the palaces were undertaken and, one by one, the palaces were made accessible to the public. At present most palaces are used as museums, while a few remain storage and office complexes.

## 3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

### Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis compares Golestan Palace with other palace complexes, initially those which are of Qajari origin and located in Iran. A second section compares a variety of other palace complexes, including several inscribed on the World Heritage List as well as some which may have been sources of inspiration for the integration of European motifs in Golestan Palace.

Among the Qajari palaces compared are *Kakh-e Negarestan* Palace and Garden in Tehran, *Kakh-e Saheb Qaraniyeh* Palace and Garden, *Niavaran*, *Kakh-e Masuodieh* Palace and Garden in *Dowlat* neighbourhood of Tehran, *Eshrat Abad Palace and Garden* north east of Tehran *Hisar*, *Lalezar* Garden and Palace north of Tehran outside the *Hisar-e Tahmasbi* and *Shahrestanak* Palace and Garden, *Sorkhe Hisar (Qasr-e Yaqut)*. It should be noted that this comparison also includes palace structures which no longer exist, as it aims to illustrate that Golestan was the most exceptional complex of Qajari arts and architecture ever created and not merely the most exceptional which has survived into the present time.

Among the international examples compared are the Topkapi Palace, integrated in the World Heritage Site Historic Areas of Istanbul, Turkey, inscribed in 1985 (criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)), the Imperial Palace of the

Ming and Qing Dynasties in Beijing, integrated in the World Heritage Site Imperial Palaces of the Ming and Qing Dynasties in Beijing and Shenyang, China (1987, 2004, criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)), Windsor Castle, United Kingdom, the Palace and Park of Versailles, France, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979 (criteria (i), (ii) and (vi)), the Palace and Gardens of Schönbrunn, Austria, inscribed in 1996 (criteria (i) and (iv)) and the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, inscribed on the World Heritage List as part of Kremlin and Red Square, Moscow in 1990 (criteria (i), (ii), (iv) and (vi)).

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis comprehensively weighs the Golestan Palace against other Qajari and world renowned palace structures, although not all of the latter seem relevant comparators. With this methodology the analysis establishes that Golestan Palace is an exceptional example of palace architecture of the Qajari era. However, since Golestan Palace was not only proposed as the most exceptional testimony of Qajari palace architecture but also more generally of Qajari architecture and decoration, ICOMOS requested the expansion of the comparative analysis to also include other Qajari architectural creations.

The additional material provided by the State Party highlights that the key expression of Qajari architecture lies in the palace and pavilion architecture it created and that although a number of religious and commemorative complexes of high quality exist, these could not in the same way represent the artistic quality of Qajari arts and architecture.

---

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

---

#### **Justification of Outstanding Universal Value**

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

- Golestan Palace is presented as the most complete and only remaining example of a royal palace which is an architectural masterpiece of the Qajar era.
- The complex is presented as an outstanding example of successful integration of traditional Persian crafts and architectural forms from earlier periods, such as the Safavid dynasty, with Western influences. Based on this earliest architectural synthesis it is perceived as the origin of the modern Iranian architectural and artistic school.
- The artistic quality and variety of architectural motifs and interior decoration makes Golestan Palace a unique testimony of Qajari arts and aesthetics.

ICOMOS considers that Golestan Palace represents a unique and rich testimony of the architectural language and decorative art during the Qajar era represented mostly in the legacy of Naser ed-Din Shah. ICOMOS also recognizes the considerable inspirations of

European origin which are reflected in the palace complex and confirms that these are the earliest representations of merged European and Persian styles which became so characteristic of Iranian art and architecture in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As such parts of the palace complex can be seen as the origins of the modern Iranian artistic movement.

ICOMOS considers that the justification provided is appropriate because of the remarkable accumulation of Qajari architectural creations of the highest quality, which despite several losses and demolitions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century remain the most complete ensemble providing testimony to the Qajar era.

#### **Integrity and authenticity**

##### **Integrity**

As a representation of Qajari palace architecture, integrity requires that the delimitation of the palace compound includes all elements required to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The nomination dossier documents that the Qajari architectural heritage of Golestan Palace has been much richer in the past and that three quarters of the palace complex have been demolished and replaced under successive rulers. Demolished buildings include the famous *Takiyeh Dowlat*, a round theatrical building for religious shows and ceremonies, but were mostly auxiliary buildings such as stables and living quarters. At times the Golestan Palace complex expanded up to the boundaries of the designated buffer zone. Nevertheless Golestan Palace seems to combine the most complete expression of Qajari architectural and artistic heritage and all elements of Golestan Palace which have survived until the present time are included within the property boundaries. However, integrity cannot be confirmed with regard to expressions of Pahlavi rule, since more important architectural creations of this era are located outside the property boundaries.

The additional information provided by the State Party at ICOMOS' request clarifies that the site is free of any acute threats, especially those which could compromise the visual perspectives into the wider landscape from within the palace compound. The reason given is that the property and its buffer zone are embedded in a wider historic protection area, which is guided by a heritage-driven master plan and strictly applied protection principles. Despite this situation, a six storey structure has recently been built across the road to the east of Golestan Palace, a fact which casts doubt on the present effectiveness of the protection system for the site's wider surroundings. The State Party stated that processes were underway to reduce the height of this building.

ICOMOS recommends that all recent additions exceeding the height proportions appropriate to the palace complex need to be reduced and that the poorly built commercial structures flanking *Shams-ol Imareh* are rehabilitated to

ensure the integrity of the property and the important views to and from thereof.

ICOMOS in its second request for additional information inquired whether further emphasis could be given to the protection of visual perspectives from the inside of Golestan Palace and Gardens to ensure that the current visual disturbance of the complex by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture surrounding it when viewed from the main entrance gate remains a single exception. ICOMOS also questioned whether an enlargement of the buffer zone based on a three-dimensional visual impact study could be envisaged.

The State Party responded in the additional information provided that the 20<sup>th</sup> century structures surrounding Golestan Palace were monuments in their own right listed according to degree no. 10000 of 2003, and that according to recent government decisions these properties are being converted to urban museums, including the Ministry of Justice building, which shall become a Justice Museum and the Ministry of Finance, which shall become the Finance Museum of Iran. The Palace complex will accordingly be surrounded by urban museums which, following the explanation given by the State Party, will prevent any negative visual impact.

#### Authenticity

The characteristic architectural structures of the Qajari era combined in this property, retain their design and layout and have preserved the exceptional interior and exterior façade decorations. All conservation activities carried out have paid due respect to authenticity of material, design and workmanship.

The palace complex has partly retained its use and function, in particular those galleries and wings that were created as museums during Qajari times. Many of the residential, representative and administrative rooms have changed purpose but the palace is still used as a location for contemporary state activities. It is probably the setting of the Qajari monuments that has changed most significantly during Pahlavi times and the authenticity of which is only retained in fragmented form. While accepting this situation in light of the demonstrated authenticity in material and design seems possible, it is essential that all remaining references to the historic Qajari setting of the property are carefully managed and preserved.

---

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met but are extremely fragile and likely to be affected by changes to the site's setting.

---

#### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

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

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

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Golestan Palace is an exceptional artistic achievement integrating Persian arts and contemporary ideas from the West. This is said to be expressed in the exquisite craftsmanship involving the combined use of stone carvings, mosaic tiles, paintings, stuccowork and mirrors.

ICOMOS considers that the quality of the artistic expression and craftsmanship in the decorations and architectural details is indeed very intricate and high but that the justification provided for this criterion did not illustrate in what way these artistic expressions could be considered outstanding masterpieces of human creative genius. The combination of European influences with traditional Persian art which has since guided local and regional creativity and become a source of inspiration for modern Iranian art is better recognized under criterion (ii) discussed below.

---

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not 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 Golestan Palace exhibits an important interchange between Persian arts and crafts and European architecture and technology, which had considerable influence on Iranian contemporary architecture. This form of adaptation was triggered by the visits of Persian rulers to Europe and their cultural, scientific and educational contacts established in this context.

ICOMOS considers that Golestan Palace represents an important example of the merging of Persian arts and architecture with European styles and motifs and the adaptation of European building technologies, such as the use of cast iron for load bearing, in Persia. As such Golestan Palace can be considered an exceptional example of an east-west synthesis in monumental arts, architectural layout and building technology, which has become a source of inspiration for modern Iranian artists and architects.

---

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

---

*Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Golestan Palace bears an exceptional testimony to important cultural and political processes, which are reflected in the successive contributions by Qajari and Pahlavi rulers recognisable in its structure,

and that Golestan Palace has been the venue of key political events.

ICOMOS considers that although the reasons provided in relation to important political processes and historic events do not justify consideration of criterion (iii), in light of the additional information provided by the State Party at ICOMOS' request, it can be confirmed that Golestan Palace bears an exceptional testimony to the Qajar era. It contains the most complete representation of Qajari artistic and architectural production and bears witness to the centre of power and arts at the time. However, also taking into consideration the additional information provided, ICOMOS considers that Golestan Palace cannot demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value as an exceptional testimony of the Pahlavi era, since other architectural creations outside the property boundaries would be more representative of this era.

---

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified as representing a testimony of the Qajari tradition.

---

*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 Golestan Palace is a prototype of arts and architecture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Persian society underwent processes of modernization.

ICOMOS considers that Golestan Palace uniquely combines different typological influences from Persian and European arts and architecture, but has not developed a specific new type of architecture which has later been reproduced. While it has without doubt inspired later artistic production in terms of style and motifs, it has not created a new or unique type of building or architectural ensemble, which could be recognized under this criterion.

---

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

---

---

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iii) and the conditions of authenticity and integrity.

---

#### **Description of the attributes**

The attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are manifest in the Qajari artistic decorations and crafts products which ornament the interior and exterior facades of the palace structures. Special importance is to be given to those elements which illustrate the earliest combination of European 18<sup>th</sup> century architecture and technology with traditional Persian arts and crafts, which include amongst others wall decorations with figurative paintings and facades integrating Western architectural language.

## **4 Factors affecting the property**

Golestan Palace is located in an area of 5.3 hectares in the historic centre of Tehran. Like other capitals with many inhabitants and commercial activities, it is affected by air pollution caused by vehicular traffic and industrial production. In combination with regular rainfall, this pollution turns into acid rain which affects the delicate decorations on the outer facades. This factor is well known and evaluated by the local team and continuous maintenance works are undertaken to minimize the negative effects.

In terms of potential hazards and catastrophes, Tehran is located in a seismically active area and earthquakes have occurred previously. Although the State Party argues that previous earthquakes have not caused severe damage to Golestan Palace, ICOMOS considers that it seems necessary to give adequate consideration to earthquake preparedness and response strategies in the disaster and risk management planning for the property. Fire may constitute the most immediate threat to the property and is likely to inflict severe damage to the timber roofed palace structures. Although the complex has been well-equipped with fire extinguishers, the functionality of which is regularly monitored, ICOMOS considers that more strategic consideration should be given to fire risks and detection in the management of the property.

Development pressures are said to be well controlled as a result of the specific regulations for the buffer zone and the wider historic area surrounding the buffer zone. Despite the existing regulations, buildings which exceed the regulated height and proportions have been constructed. ICOMOS considers that the potential negative impact of inappropriate development is high, and that well-defined and endorsed strategies and regulations are necessary to guide future development of the surrounding areas of Tehran bazaar and city centre.

Golestan Palace and its museums are well-visited and attract an average of 800 daily visitors with considerably higher peaks on weekends and public holidays. ICOMOS considers that the palace complex is large enough to welcome these and even much higher numbers of visitors without noticeable risks to the historic structures. However, in response to the very high number of visitors during the annual *Nouruz* holidays, it may be advisable to develop entrance limitations to the climatically most sensitive interiors on this day.

---

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are fires and earthquakes as well as development pressures in the surrounding historic district.

---

## 5 Protection, conservation and management

### Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries of Golestan Palace contain all key buildings and gardens of the Qajari era and coincide with today's administrative boundaries of the museum complex. The proposed buffer zone is explained as having been defined on the basis of visual characteristics and contains those areas where visual intrusions would negatively impact on the Outstanding Universal Value. Regulations for the buffer zone require that any development, including architectural and infrastructural projects, would need to be approved by ICHHTO. In addition several improvements of historic facades and streetscapes are required by the buffer zone regulations. ICOMOS considers that although beautification of the buffer zone may be desirable, this has to be conducted with the aim of preserving the historic character and atmosphere of the setting and retaining its already fragile authenticity.

The State Party argues that the buffer zone is further protected by the surrounding historic districts which are equally subject to development restrictions. ICOMOS observed that at least one construction project to the east of Golestan Palace has been implemented with undesirable height and proportions, which casts doubt on the effectiveness of the regulations for the wider historic district.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed buffer zone, in particular towards the east, is not sufficient to protect the visual perspectives from the palace compound towards its surrounding landscape. ICOMOS inquired in its second request for additional information whether the State Party could consider expanding the buffer zone boundaries to cover wider areas of the surrounding historic quarters, ideally on the basis of a three-dimensional visual impact study conducted to set the maximum construction heights in each area based on the visual relations between Golestan Palace and its gardens.

The State Party responded that it considered the buffer zone adequate given that the other surrounding districts of Bazaar, Sangladj, Chaleh Meydan and Udlajan were subject to the special regulations of the historic core of Tehran and under the supervision of ICHHTO. ICOMOS considers that these regulations have been in place prior to this nomination proposal but have not succeeded in preventing at least one inappropriate new construction. Possible future strategies such as reorganization of land use for Udlajan raise further concerns. Given that strict regulations are already in place, ICOMOS considers that an extension of the buffer zone seems a formality and would like to see any form of extended view protection area designated in its relation to Golestan Palace.

---

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property are adequate and that the buffer zone should be expanded to cover wider areas of the surrounding historic fabric.

---

### Ownership

In the additional information provided by the State Party at the initial request of ICOMOS, it was clarified that the entire property is in government ownership and administered by the ICHHTO. The same applies to the majority of the proposed buffer zone, which is further administered by other government agencies and includes a few privately owned commercial structures in the eastern-most part.

### Protection

Golestan Palace is classified as a national monument according to the Law for Protection of National Heritage (1930). It has further been transferred into government ownership according to the Law Concerning the Acquisition of Land, Building and Premises for Protection of Historic Properties (1969) and is accordingly protected by both legislative means and property ownership.

The buffer zone is protected by legal regulations, which were approved by ICHHTO. These limit construction and infrastructure developments, the cutting of trees, create a pedestrian zone and suggest a variety of measures for the improvement of facades and structures.

It is essential for the protection of the property that the regulations for the buffer zone are complemented by recommendations regarding height, proportions and styles for new constructions and renovations. ICOMOS further considers that the key governmental bodies located in the buffer zone, including the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice, the Foreign Investment Administration and the Public Revolutionary Court have to be fully committed to these regulations.

---

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection for the property and the protective measures in place for the buffer zone are adequate but should be strengthened by regulations concerning heights and proportions of new constructions and alterations in the wider setting.

---

### Conservation

Research and documentary records for the structures in Golestan Palace have been conducted in an exemplary fashion. A 3D high definition laser survey allowed very accurate technical drawings. Likewise the trees and plants of the garden have been meticulously surveyed.

Over the past two decades conservation activities were undertaken at various buildings of the complex which in principle followed an approach that respected the historic material authenticity of the site. These measures included specifically developed conservation approaches for the intricate *Orsi* windows (sash windows) and the elaborate mirror works. Only damaged tiles in the wall decorations needed to be occasionally replaced.

However, the living craft tradition in tile production which has continued in Iran allowed for the production of replacement fragments which carry the exact or at least very similar material characteristics of the originals.

As a result of the often extensive conservation activities, the present state of conservation can be judged as satisfactory. A conservation plan for Golestan Palace was compiled in 1996 and was approved by the Technical Committee of ICHHTO. This plan is still being followed in the programming and implementation of conservation activities. The plan is evaluated and revised on an annual basis. The results and documentation of all activities are presented in annual reports and assessed by the Steering Committee of Golestan Palace. The procedure for decision-making on conservation priorities and the assessment of results is participatory – involving up to seven technical advisory committees – and seems very effective.

However, one smaller area in the complex, the area north of *Shams-ol Imareh*, seems to have been neglected by these procedures and is at present used as a storage yard and plant nursery, including a small greenhouse. As a working and storage area, this section is in a rather poor state of conservation. The State Party informed ICOMOS that it was in the process of shifting these auxiliary functions elsewhere and that anticipated conservation work will integrate this space into the museum function. ICOMOS recommends that an alternative location for the storage and nursery functions should be identified to allow for proper conservation and maintenance of the area north of *Shams-ol Imareh*.

---

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the property is adequate and that conservation planning and procedures are effective, but that the area north of *Shams-ol Imareh* needs to be given closer attention.

---

## Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The management of the property is guided by short, medium and long-term objectives which emphasize the conservation and restoration of the palace complex. Responsibility lies with the Golestan Palace Base, a subsection of ICHHTO exclusively responsible for the property and functioning as a site management office. It is supported by both a technical and the previously referred to Steering Committee, which among other tasks assesses the conservation quality and the management effectiveness.

The team at Golestan base consists of the Director and 17 professional staff with technical skills in conservation, restoration and maintenance as well as researchers and personnel dedicated to interpretation and presentation. In addition, a number of general staff including security personnel, cashiers and guides are employed. The core team, which comprises the Director and the heads of

units, meets on a monthly basis to review management priorities and procedures.

ICOMOS noted a need for management procedures in cases of emergency, especially fires or earthquakes. Risk preparedness and risk response plans for such incidents do not exist and managerial competences in case of emergencies are not clarified. ICOMOS recommends the establishment of a detailed risk preparedness and emergency response plan.

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

The management system of Golestan Palace is based on 15 strategic objectives dedicated to conservation, restoration, monitoring, security arrangements, research, private sector involvement and training. The management of the buffer zone, in particular the management of new construction and modification permissions, is notably absent in the management strategies. Despite existing municipal plans and procedures for the buffer zone and the wider historic district, a framework for participatory decision making involving the World Heritage managers, the municipal representatives and urban planning authorities does not seem to exist, although ICHHTO is consulted in municipal approval processes. As the development of the site's setting is one of the most critical elements in its protection and conservation, ICOMOS recommends even closer links between the local office of ICHHTO and the urban planning authorities.

The strategic objectives are linked to action plans for the short, medium and long-term. Like the objectives these are exclusively focused on the Golestan Palace Complex and do not consider its surroundings. The action plans provided remain on a rather general level and do not cover specific measures to be implemented, specific timeframes, responsibilities for implementation or indicators for quality assessment. The bullet-points of actions proposed could be considered as an initial guidance for the establishment of a comprehensive management system. As yet, a management plan does not exist. ICOMOS requested additional information with regard to progress in its drafting and expected finalization.

In the additional information provided, the State Party outlined that the material presented provided a sufficient basis for the management of the site and that no further drafting of a management plan is planned. ICOMOS considers that the material provided does not fully correspond with international standards of World Heritage Management Plans and that the site would benefit from a Management Plan which integrates specific activities, timeframes, responsibilities and quality assessment indicators. It would also be beneficial if the management system made explicit reference to comprehensive risk preparedness and disaster management plans, as well as a public participation and outreach strategy.

## Involvement of the local communities

There are no systematic attempts to involve the local community in the management of Golestan Palace, which may in part result from the fact that the property is completely in government ownership. However, as the upgrading of surrounding structures is planned as part of the buffer zone regulations, including of those commercial structures in private ownership, ICOMOS recommends involving merchants and residents in decision-making processes on upgrading, including on the conversion into a pedestrianised zone, access regulations, utilities and design. ICOMOS recommends designing a public participation and outreach plan as part of the management strategies for this purpose.

---

ICOMOS considers that the management processes are strongly focused on conservation of the complex but do not adequately cover the surroundings of the property. ICOMOS further considers that management strategies and actions are defined too broadly and need to be specified. ICOMOS considers that this could ideally be achieved through a revised and approved management plan. ICOMOS recommends that the management system be expanded to include risk preparedness, disaster response, public participation and outreach.

---

## 6 Monitoring

The coordinated monitoring system is well documented, comprehensive and covers various aspects of Golestan Palace, including the architectural structures, gardens, irrigation systems, museum objects and urban development. Tables provided establish indicators and periodicity of the monitoring exercises. Historic and contemporary photographs at different angles and in different sections of the palace function as references for the monitoring of façade conditions and visual intrusions. ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system is commendable.

---

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system is adequate.

---

## 7 Conclusions

ICOMOS considers that Golestan Palace represents a unique and rich testimony of the Qajar era and provides reference to the exchange between European architecture and technology and local Persian traditions of crafts and decoration. Although parts of the complex were lost as a result of demolitions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it remains the most complete ensemble of Qajari architecture. ICOMOS considers that for the above-named reasons the property justifies criterion (ii) as an exceptional example of the combination of European and traditional Persian architectural motifs in monumental arts and architectural design as well as an early example of adaptation of European building technology, which has become so characteristic of

Iranian architecture ever since, and criterion (iii) as an exceptional testimony to the Qajar civilization.

ICOMOS further concluded that the property meets the conditions of integrity and authenticity, however both are very fragile and depend on improved protection and management of the property's surroundings. One recent construction activity has cast doubts on the effectiveness of the protective system in place, which also is not yet well integrated with the property's management system.

While the property boundaries suggested are adequate, the delimitation of the buffer zone does not cover a large enough area to provide for the long-term protection of the property's setting. ICOMOS recommends expanding the buffer zone to cover all areas within the historic quarters, in which new developments or alterations could create a negative visual impact by altering the visual relations from within Golestan Palace.

The state of conservation of the complex as well as the conservation and restoration activities carried out are adequate. Only a small area north of *Shams-ol Imareh* has so far been neglected and is used as an auxiliary yard, storage space and plant nursery. ICOMOS recommends that an alternative location for these functions should be identified to allow for proper conservation and maintenance of the area north of *Shams-ol Imareh*. The monitoring system provided is commendable.

ICOMOS considers that the management system is not adequate and a management plan does not exist. The management system is too focused on conservation and does not consider the wider surroundings of the site, risk preparedness strategies or community involvement. ICOMOS recommends that the management system be expanded to include sections on risk preparedness and disaster management as well as strategies and a programme for public involvement and outreach. ICOMOS further considers it essential to create closer links between the site management and the formal mechanisms for urban planning and development.

## 8 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of Golestan Palace, Iran, be **referred back** to the State Party in order to allow it to:

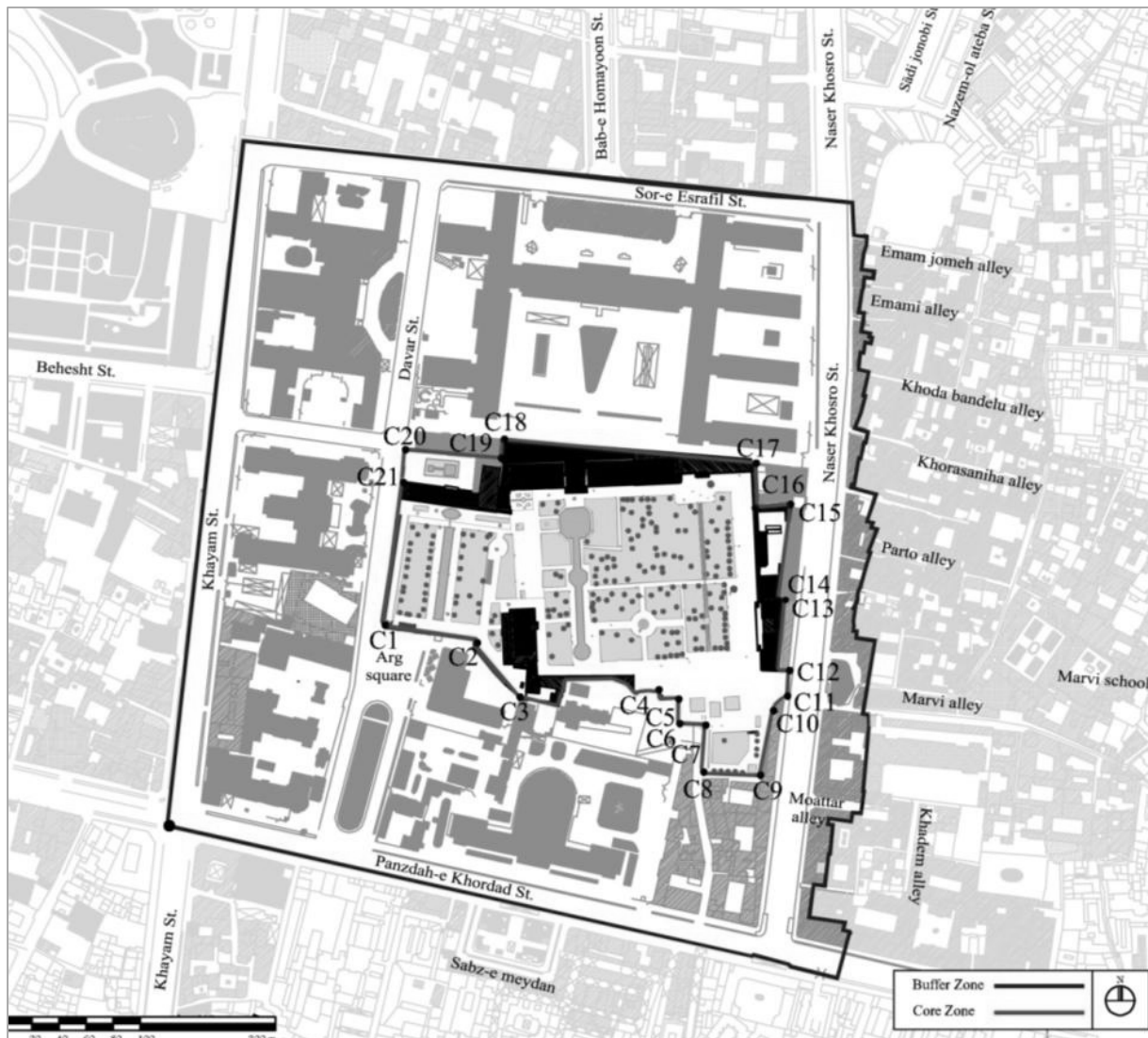
- Expand the buffer zone to a wider area which will allow for long-term protection of the property from potential negative visual impacts;
- Integrate within the management system a comprehensive risk preparedness and disaster management plan, a public participation and outreach strategy as well as the management of the wider surroundings of the property with the focus on an extended buffer zone.



**Additional recommendations**

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

- Reducing the recent six-storey construction to the east of Golestan Palace to ensure that it does not constitute a negative visual impact on the property;
- Identifying an alternative location for the storage yard and plant nursery north of Shams-ol Imareh to allow for adequate conservation of this section of Golestan Palace as well as future public access.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



The Golestan Garden



*Ayvân-e Takht-e Marmar, façade*



*Shams-ol Imareh, east façade*



*Imarat-e Badgir, interior view*