

**Identification**

<u>Nomination</u>	The historic centre of Bukhara
<u>Location</u>	City of Bukhara
<u>State Party</u>	Uzbekistan
<u>Date</u>	4 October 1990

**Justification by State Party**

The City of Bukhara is nearly twenty-five centuries old. Not only a large number of mosques, medressehs, and mausolea have been preserved to the present day, but also whole districts with their ancient layouts. The architectural ensembles grew over the course of centuries, but they are indissolubly linked in their layouts and use of space. The historic part of Bukhara, which is in effect an open-air museum, combines the city's long history in a single ensemble (criteria ii and iv).

**History and Description**History

Archaeological excavations have revealed that the settlement on the site of latter-day Bukhara became part of the Kushan state as early as the 2nd millennium BC. In the 4th century BC it was incorporated into the Ephtalite state. Before the Arab conquest, Bukhara was one of the largest cities of central Asia, owing its prosperity to its site on a rich oasis and at the crossroads of ancient trade-routes. The ancient Persian city covered an area of nearly 40 hectares, with the ark (citadel), the residence of its rulers, in the north-west quarter (where it survives as a huge rectangular earthen mound).

It became a major cultural centre of the Caliphate of Baghdad in 709. In 892 Emir Ismail ibn Amad (892-907) created an independent state and chose Bukhara as the capital of the powerful Samanid kingdom. There followed a period of great economic and cultural growth, when the city grew enormously in size, especially under the rule of the Karakhanids from the 11th century onwards. In 1220 the city was sacked by the Mongol horde of Chinghiz Khan (1220) and was not to recover until the second half of the 13th century. In 1370 it became part of the great Timurid empire, whose capital was at Samarkand. Bukhara was still the second city of Maverannahr, and building was renewed.

The late 15th century saw much feudal strife in the declining Timurid lands, with the result that Bukhara was occupied by Uzbek nomadic tribesmen led by Khan Sheibani, under whose dynasty it became the centre of the Uzbek state. The

Bukhara khanate was assiduous in promoting economic and cultural development in its territory, and the city was the main beneficiary of the new construction that ensued.

In the centuries that followed the death of Abdullah Khan in 1598 there was a succession of short-lived dynasties and from the late 17th century the resulting weakness led to continual raids and pillage by neighbouring rulers. It was not until 1753 that Bukhara became the capital of a new Mangut dynasty that was to survive until 1920. During this period the city was a major trade entrepot for the whole of central Asia (although it was incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1868). In 1848 it had no fewer than 38 caravanserais, six trading arcades, 16 public baths, and 45 bazaars. Bukhara was also the largest centre for Muslim theology in the Near East, with over two hundred mosques and more than a hundred medressehs.

### Description

The townscape of the ancient centre of Bukhara represents every stage of the city's varied history over more than a thousand years. Whilst the major monuments are from the Sheibanid period, from the early 16th century onwards, there are some important survivors from earlier periods. These include the famous Ismail Samanai tomb, the best surviving example of 10th century architecture in the whole Muslim world. From the 11th century Karakhanid period comes the outstanding Poi-Kalyan minaret, a masterpiece of decoration in brick, along with most of the Magoki Attori mosque and the Chashma Ayub shrine.

The surviving Timurid contribution to Bukhara is not large, but it includes the Ulugbek medresseh. With the advent of the Sheibanids came some of the most celebrated buildings of Bukhara - the Poi-Kalyan group, the Lyabi-Khauz ensemble, the Kosh Medresseh, and the Gaukushon medresseh in the Hodja-Kalon ensemble. Later buildings from this phase of Bukhara's history include monumental medressehs at important crossroads - Taki Sarafon (Dome of the Moneychangers), Taki-Tilpak-Furushan (Dome of the Headguard Sellers), Tim-Bazzazan, and Tim-Abdullah-Khan. Despite the anarchy of the earlier 17th century, fine buildings were added to the city, including a new great mosque, Magoki Kurns (1637), and the imposing Abdullaziz-Khan medresseh (1652).

However, the real importance of Bukhara lies not in its individual buildings but rather in its overall townscape, demonstrating the high and consistent level of urban planning and architecture that began with the Sheibanid dynasty.

### **Management and Protection**

#### Legal status

The historic centre of Bukhara, which has been protected since as early as 1920, is an official State Historic-Architectural Museum-Reserve, created in May 1983.

The later 1950s saw a reaction against the excesses in architecture and planning that had typified the USSR in preceding decades. During the 1960s new legislation and administrative structures were put in place in the Uzbek SSSR. Since that time considerable progress has been made in recording and protecting individual buildings and whole areas of Bukhara.

### Management

Protection and promotion of historical and cultural monuments in Uzbekistan is under the control of the Central Scientific-Production Board of Cultural Monuments, which forms part of the Uzbek Republic's Ministry of Culture. In Bukhara responsibility is delegated to the State Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve, whose role is to identify and register historical and cultural monuments, control all protection, re-use, and restoration activities, carry out archaeological investigations, and control and protect buildings of historical significance and monumental art (exterior and interior).

## **Conservation and Authenticity**

### Conservation history

In the period 1920-1991 major conservation and restoration projects were carried out on more than forty important buildings and ensembles in Bukhara. These include the Samanid mausoleum, the Gaukushon, Miri Arab, Nodir Divan Begi, Ulugbek and several other medressehs, the Kalyan mosque and minaret, the Magoki-Attori mosque, and the Sarafon, Zargaron, and Tilpak-Furushan tok.

It is frankly acknowledged by the Uzbek authorities that "The present state of the architectural monuments in the historic centre of Bukhara ... ranges from distressing to quite satisfactory". Considerable damage resulted to smaller buildings such as private houses and the smaller mosques from the earthquakes of 1984 and 1986. The State Historical-Architectural Museum Reserve has drawn up, in collaboration with the Uzbek Scientific-Research Designing-Prospecting Institute and the Central Architectural Planning Board of the City of Bukhara, a comprehensive programme for the restoration and, where appropriate, adaptive re-use of the city's historical monuments for 1990-2000. This includes work on some 260 private houses as well as the more imposing public buildings.

### Authenticity

Bukhara has miraculously preserved a great deal of its urban layout, dating from the Sheibanid period, which means that its urban fabric is still largely intact. Modern buildings have been erected in the historic centre over the past half-century that have destroyed the appearance of some quarters, but in others the medieval townscape has survived.

## Evaluation

### Qualities

Despite the insensitivity of much of the new construction from 1920 until the 1950s and more recent earthquake damage, Bukhara retains much of its historic ambience. The proportion of old structures, particularly the public and religious buildings, nonetheless remains high, and the historic centre is unquestionably of outstanding significance as an exceptional example of a largely medieval Muslim city of central Asia.

### Comparative analysis

The inevitable comparison that must be made is with the historic city of Samarkand. In fact, there are significant differences between the two cities. Samarkand's history followed a different political trajectory from that of Bukhara, and as a result it lacks the relative completeness of the latter in terms of its layout and urban fabric.

Unlike Isfahan, with which it has a good deal in common as an example of organic urban growth, Bukhara has not suffered from problems arising from post-war reconstruction.

### Additional comments

In November 1991 a distinguished ICOMOS member with a lifetime's experience in the conservation of Islamic buildings undertook a mission to Bukhara to evaluate the authenticity of the historic centre and the adequacy of the management plan and the buffer zone. The following comments derive from his report:

Authenticity and continuing care The principal doubt which must be entertained is in the adequacy of preventive measures or first-aid in conservation... The lack of a policy of continual inspection and preventive maintenance is a notable omission in the management plans;;; The architects concerned with historic buildings display considerable knowledge and commendable concern. Their current work is painstaking and the integrity of restorations extends to reducing street levels... Assistance is needed in the more sophisticated techniques of care for earth structures, consolidation of decomposed terracotta, wood conservation, insulation and damp-proofing, and defence against salts carried by rising damp.

Boundaries, buffer zones, and town-planning proposals The boundaries and buffer zones as shown on the submitted plan are appropriate and adequate. However, their effectiveness must be questioned [see next paragraph].

Protection and legal arrangements A caveat must be entered in respect of the activities of the State and City authorities. It is not clear that there is an adequate mechanism for the prevention of offences by the authorities themselves. A separate division, invested with legal powers or powers devolving from the head of state indepen-

dently of all other departments, would be necessary to achieve such protection.

The significance of the architectural heritage Bukhara represents ... a millennium of continuity in a major Islamic city... There is no single epoch of overwhelming importance and it is vital, therefore, that the cultural history of the city is not seen simply as a collection of individual monuments but as a reservoir of knowledge of all periods of its history. Careful archaeological thinking is, consequently, of prime value. This aspect of the matter has not yet been thoroughly appreciated in the city.

The attitude of the city authorities An overtly cooperative and responsible approach seems to be borne out by the actions of those responsible ... Their declared intention of implementing the management plan ... to the year 2000 commits the new republic to a responsible and purposeful approach to the care and conservation of their monuments. The plan should be modified to extend to the general fabric and the below-ground evidence.

The competent authorities should be encouraged to modify the plan for the city of Bukhara to take account of the need for below-ground investigation, safeguards against inappropriate activities on the part of state and city authorities, and better provision for specific threats, as set out in the report of the ICOMOS expert mission.

#### **Recommendation**

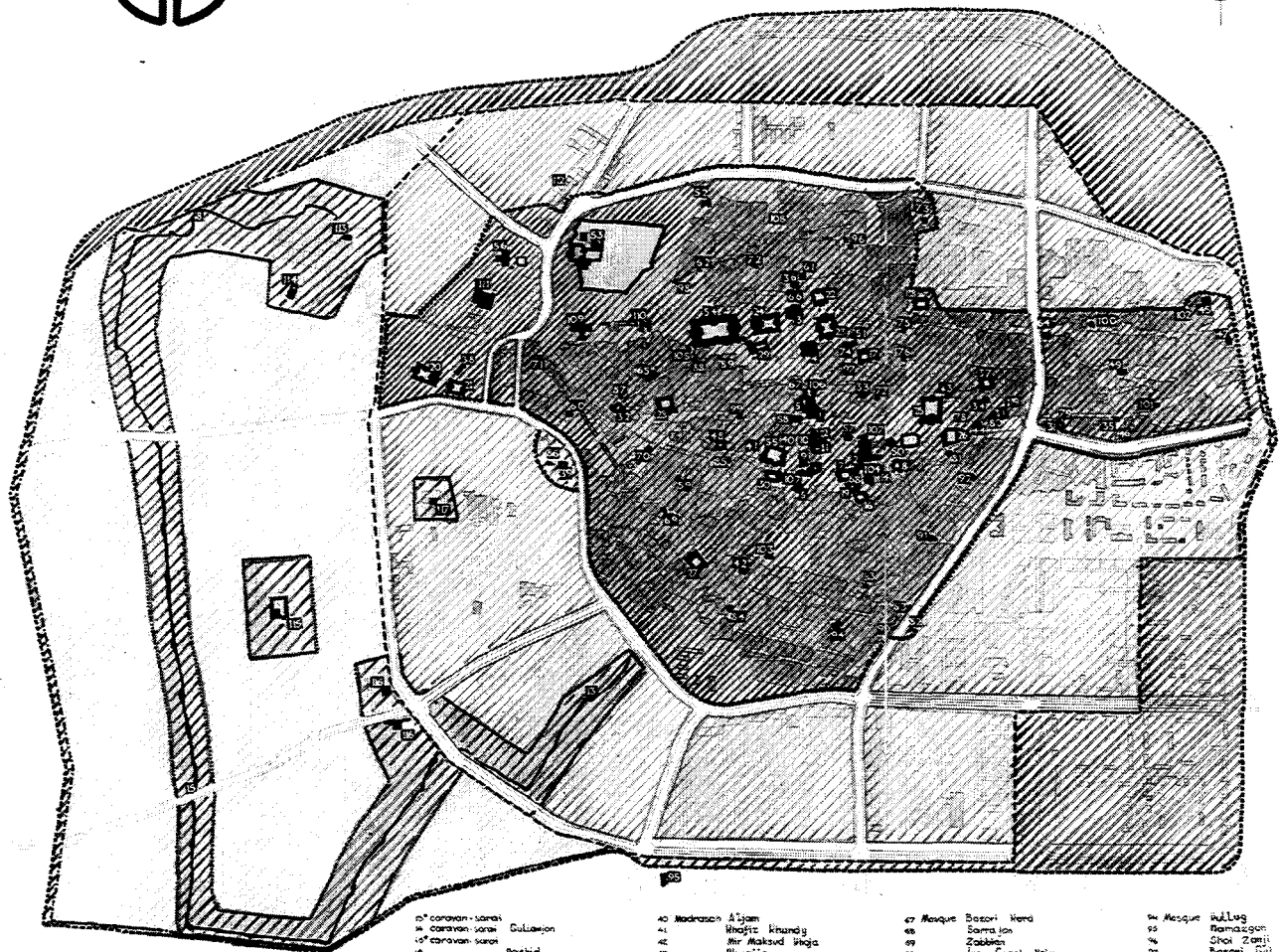
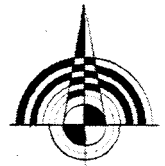
That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria ii and iv:






- Criterion ii The example of Bukhara in terms of its urban layout and buildings had a profound influence on the evolution and planning of towns in a wide region of central Asia.
- Criterion iv Bukhara is the most complete and unspoiled example of a medieval central Asian town which has preserved its urban fabric to the present day.

ICOMOS, October 1993



# THE CENTRE OF BUKHARA



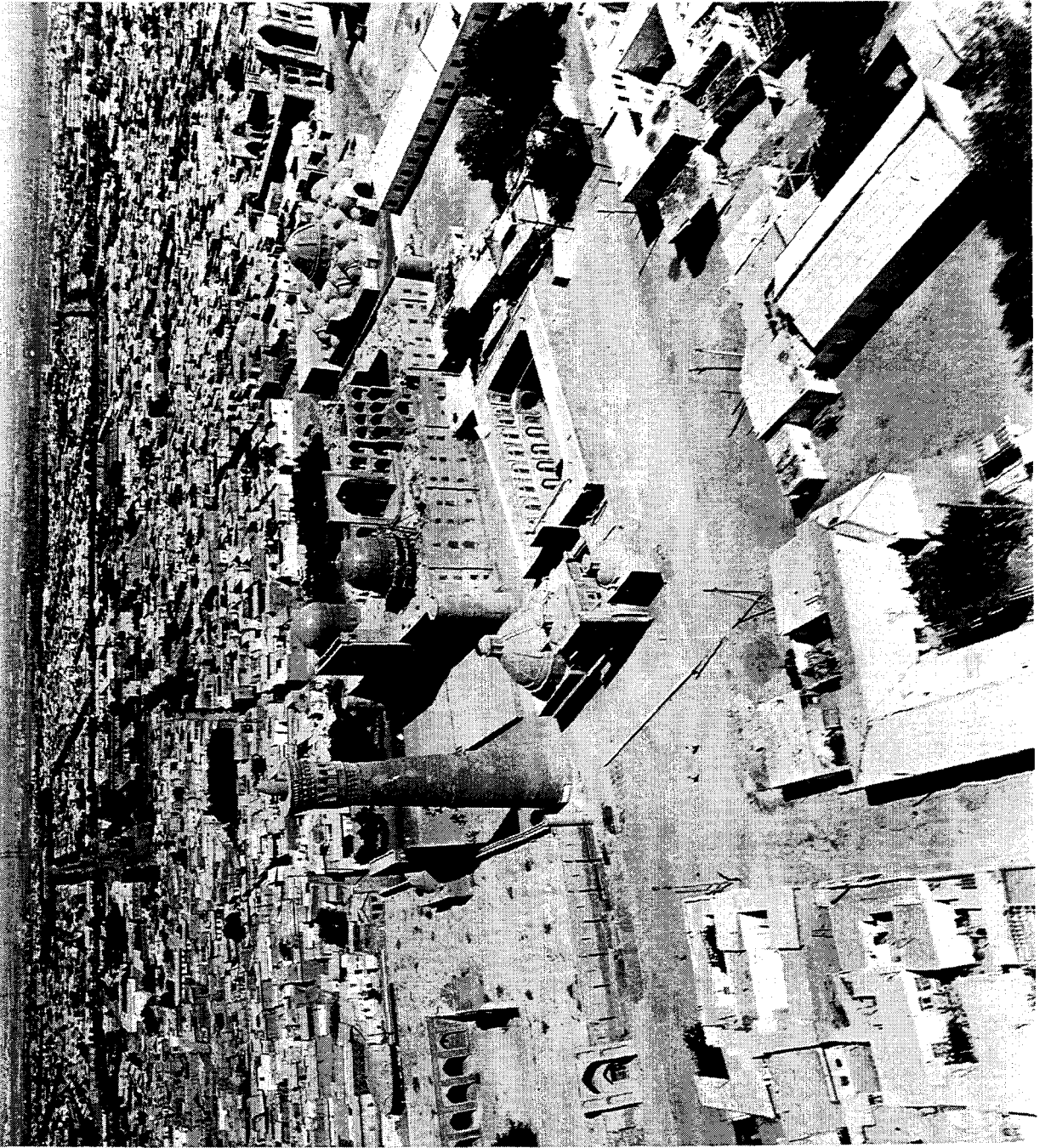
-  state reserve zone
-  protected zone of monument
-  zone of strict regulated town planning
-  zone of regulated town planning
-  zone of protected landscape

**LIST OF MONUMENTS**

1	Trade caravans	16	Madrasah Alijam
2	Trade caravans	17	Madrasah Baxshi
3	Trade caravans	18	Madrasah Baxshi
4	Trade caravans	19	Madrasah Baxshi
5	Trade caravans	20	Madrasah Baxshi
6	Trade caravans	21	Madrasah Baxshi
7	Trade caravans	22	Madrasah Baxshi
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9	Trade caravans	24	Madrasah Baxshi
10	Trade caravans	25	Madrasah Baxshi
11	Trade caravans	26	Madrasah Baxshi
12	Trade caravans	27	Madrasah Baxshi

28	Madrasah Alijam	47	Mosque Baxshi
29	Madrasah Alijam	48	Mosque Baxshi
30	Madrasah Alijam	49	Mosque Baxshi
31	Madrasah Alijam	50	Mosque Baxshi
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81	Madrasah Alijam	100	Mosque Baxshi

Boukhara : plan du centre historique de la ville /  
 Bukhara : map of the Historic Centre of the city



Boukhara : vue aérienne de l'ensemble Poi-Kalian /  
Bukhara : aerial view of the Poi-Kalyan ensemble