

Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

No 946 rev

1. BASIC DATA

<i>State Party:</i>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<i>Name of property:</i>	The Old City of Mostar
<i>Location:</i>	Herzegovina-Neretva Canton
<i>Date received:</i>	15 July 1998, with additional information on 14 January 2002; revised nomination submitted 27 January 2005
<i>Category of property:</i>	

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*. In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* this is an area of an inhabited historic town (2005).

Brief description:

The historic town of Mostar, spanning a deep river valley, developed in the 15th and 16th century as an Ottoman frontier town and during the short Austro-Hungarian period in the 19th and 20th centuries. Mostar has been characterised by its old Turkish houses and the Old Bridge, designed by the renowned architect, Sinan. In the 1990s, however, most of the historic town as well as the Old Bridge were destroyed. In the past few years the Old Bridge has been rebuilt and many of the buildings in the Old Town restored or rebuilt.

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The area nominated for inscription spans the Neretva River, with the bridge at its centre.

Of special significance is the Radoboija stream, which enters the Neretva on its right bank. This provided a source of water for the growing settlement, and from it spring a number of small canals used for irrigation and for driving the wheels of water-mills.

The centre of the settlement was the bazaar, which extended on both banks of the river, the two parts being articulated by the bridge. From them began the network of streets forming the *mahalas*. This system was altered to a considerable extent during the Austro-Hungarian period, when the new quarters were laid out on European planning principles and other bridges were built across the river.

The nominated area and its buffer zone contains many important historic buildings. Of the thirteen original mosques dating from the 16th and 17th centuries, seven have been destroyed during the 20th century for ideological reasons or by bombardment. One of the two 19th century Orthodox churches has also disappeared, and the early 20th century synagogue, after undergoing severe damage in World War II, has been converted for use as a theatre.

Several Ottoman-period inns also survive, along with other buildings from this period of Mostar's history such as fountains and schools.

The administrative buildings are all from the Austro-Hungarian period and exhibit Neo-Classical and Secessionist features.

There are a number of houses surviving from the late Ottoman period (18th and early 19th centuries) which demonstrate the component features of this form of domestic architecture – hall, upper storey for residential use, paved courtyard, verandah on one or two storeys. The later 19th century residential houses are all in Neo-Classical style.

Some early trading and craft buildings are also still existent, notably some low shops in wood or stone, stone store-houses, and a group of former tanneries round an open courtyard. Once again, the 19th century commercial buildings are predominantly Neo-Classical in style.

A number of elements of the early fortifications are visible. The Hercegusa Tower dates from the medieval period, whilst the Ottoman defences are represented by the Halebinovka and Tara Towers, the watch-towers over the ends of the Old Bridge, and a stretch of the ramparts.

History

There has been human settlement on the Neretva between the Hum Hill and the Velez mountain since prehistory, as witnessed by discoveries of fortified enceintes and cemeteries. Evidence of Roman occupation comes from beneath the present town.

Little is known of Mostar in the medieval period, though the Christian basilicas of late antiquity continued in use. The name of Mostar is first mentioned in a document of 1474, taking its name from the bridge-keepers (*mostari*) this refers to the existence of a wooden bridge from the market town on the left bank of the river which was used by soldiers, traders, and other travelers. At this time it was the seat of a *kadiluk* (district with a regional judge). Because it was on the trade route between the Adriatic and the mineral-rich regions of central Bosnia, the settlement spread to the right bank of the river. It became the leading town in the Sanjak of Herzegovina and, with the arrival of the Ottoman Turks from the east, the centre of Turkish rule.

The town was fortified between 1520 and 1566 and the bridge was rebuilt in stone. The second half of the 16th century and the early decades of the 17th century were the most important period in the development of Mostar. Religious and public buildings were constructed, such as mosques, a *madrasah* (Islamic school), and a *hammam*

(public bath); these were concentrated on the left bank of the river, in a religious complex (*kullia*). At the same time many private and commercial buildings, organized in distinct quarters, known as *mahalas* (residential) and the bazaar, were erected.

Bosnia-Herzegovina was first occupied (1878) and then annexed (1908) by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and it was in this period that a number of administrative, military, cultural, and Christian religious buildings were established. These were mainly on the right bank of the river, where a new quarter was developed according to a strict 'Rondo' plan. This provides a strong contrast with the left bank where there was a more organic growth on the steeper slopes, with winding narrow streets and public open spaces for trading (*pazar*), recreation (*mejdani*), and prayer (*musallah*). The town was also connected at this time by rail and new roads to Sarajevo and the Adriatic.

Between 1992 and 1995 the town was badly damaged during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and much of the urban centre was left in ruins and the Old Bridge destroyed. Since 1998 there have been major restoration projects carried out in the centre of the Old Town, most notably the rebuilding of the Old Bridge.

Management regime

Legal provision:

Historic Mostar is protected by the 1985 Law on the Protection and Use of the Cultural, Historical, and Natural Heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the 1996 Interim Statutes of the Town of Mostar, and the 1998 Law on Waters. In 1998 the Mostar Municipal Council promulgated a series of decisions relating to the rehabilitation and conservation of buildings in the protected zone of the town and the prohibition of any non-authorized interventions. Furthermore, on the July 7th 2004, the Historic Urban Area of Mostar was designated as a National Monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This designation conveys the highest degree of legal protection.

Management structure:

Ownership of properties within the nominated area is varied – government bodies, religious communities, and private individuals and institutions.

At national level, overall supervision is exercised by the Centre for the Heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina, based in Sarajevo. Direct responsibility at regional level is the responsibility of the Institute for the Protection of the Cultural, Historical, and Natural Heritage, located in Mostar. This body collaborates with the Mostar-based Institute for Urbanism and Spatial Planning and the Municipality of Stari Grad, and also works closely with the Old Mostar Foundation and the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art, and Culture in Istanbul (Turkey). It also collaborates closely with the Aga Khan Foundation and with the World Monuments Fund, which support a team of six young professional staff working on the implementation of the conservation plan and on the surveillance of specific restoration projects on behalf of the Mostar Institute.

All applications for authorization of projects coming within the provisions of the municipal decisions must be submitted to the Municipality of Stari Grad. These are then evaluated by the Institute for the Protection of the Cultural, Historical, and Natural Heritage, which submits recommendations to the Municipality, which in turn is responsible for *final* decision-making (working through its Programme Coordination Unit in respect of the reconstruction of the Old Bridge).

In order to strengthen the coordination of activities in the Old City, on December 29, 2004 the City Council of Mostar established an Agency in charge of the preservation and development of the Old City, which starts work on April 1, 2005. This body replaces the former 1999 Project Co-ordination Unit, PCU.

A UNESCO Rehabilitation Plan was prepared in 1997 and the Aga Khan Foundation has also produced a master plan, as well as undertaking detailed studies for the rehabilitation of some important monuments and districts on either side of the river.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the World Monuments Fund provided management for the detailed preparation of the neighbourhood improvement plan, the master plan for the Old Town, and the Strategic Plan for the Central Urban Area of Mostar.

The Old Town Council municipality adopted these plans, as a "Master Plan" on the May 10th 2001. (After abolishing municipalities on March 15, 2004, their authority passed to the city administration).

At the time of the original nomination there was no comprehensive management plan in force for the historic centre of Mostar.

The revised nomination was accompanied by a management plan dated January 2005 which has been prepared for the historic town area. This Plan contains Chapters on: Governing, Finance, Planning and Implementation.

The International Experts Committee nominated by UNESCO had the role of reviewing important technical material concerning project investments.

Resources:

The State Party has submitted details of the World Bank Pilot Culture Heritage Project for Mostar Old Bridge and Town and other documents relating to the future conservation and management of the Old Town. However, the long-term management at the local level still needs to be established and the required resources indicated. The task of developing and implementing a sustainable financial system has been given to the newly established Agency.

Justification by the State Party (summary)

Mostar is the result of interaction between natural phenomena and human creativity over a long historical period. The universal qualities of the cultural landscapes of south-eastern Europe represent a universal phenomenon

that is the common property of all humankind. The cultural and historical value of Old Mostar resides in the urban agglomeration that was created in the 16th century during the height of the Ottoman Empire around the Old Bridge, the technological wonder of its age, in which complete harmony was achieved between the built structures and the natural environment of the Neretva River.

The Old Town has been embellished for centuries with the visual artistic expressions of succeeding generations, particularly towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century under the influence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and central European architecture.

The sustainable development of the area has been endangered by human destruction and devastation by war. This ensemble has attracted the continuous interest of both the local and the international public from the outset, as witnessed by many historical documents, up to the present day, when that interest has been renewed. Enduring interest has been shown in exploring the origins of the different styles and the way in which they have been expressed, in spatial harmony, and their preservation.

Protection, maintenance, regulation, and revitalization of the historic centre are a long-term process. Earlier minimal studies have only been known through preliminary reports, scattered references in the literature, or lectures at meetings. For all these reasons and because principles relating to the importance of preserving the material remains of the past, including the architectural heritage, and in particular because of the false impression that this part of the town has become outdated and is in the process of disappearing from the historical landscape, UNESCO and the international community must accept the justification for this nomination, the more so since the preserved remains of the earliest town are themselves urban in character. They became incorporated over time into the urban fabric of the entire town of Mostar as an integral part of European culture. The historic core, with the surrounding areas, has become a symbol of civilized living. This almost automatically justifies the existence of the town as one of the earliest sources for the identity and history of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole.

Destruction of the town deprived cosmopolitan travelers of opportunities for resting both their bodies and their souls and for understanding their own past. The living townscape of Mostar constitutes a vast class-room for the young and the enquiring in appreciating their own destiny.

[Note: The State Party previously did not make any proposals in the nomination dossier concerning the criteria under which it considers this property should be inscribed on the World Heritage List. In the revised dossier criterion iv, v and vi have been proposed].

3. ICOMOS EVALUATION

Actions by ICOMOS

The nomination of Mostar was first proposed in 1999, but its inscription has been delayed. An ICOMOS mission visited the site in October 2000, and ICOMOS at that time decided to support inscription as a special case, intended as

a 'positive contribution to the protection and management of this outstanding multicultural heritage site'. Nevertheless, the nomination was deferred subject to further verification of the management plan and its implementation, in the Bureau 2000, and again in the Committee 2003. Another ICOMOS expert visited Mostar in March 2003. Since this date there have been no specific ICOMOS missions. However ICOMOS has received progress reports from visits by its members.

ICOMOS has formulated its current evaluation from a large number of different sources including the revised nomination file and a large number of relevant, detailed written and oral reports.

Conservation

Conservation history:

The first steps in the conservation history of Mostar date from 1872, when the Ottoman Grand Vizier issued a decree "prohibiting the export of antiquities and the destruction of old buildings".

The Old Town suffered grievous damage during World War II. Legal instruments enacted between 1945 and 1965 provided the basis for the conservation of historic buildings and their scientific study, and several relevant institutions were established in Mostar. A number of major restoration projects were undertaken during this period, including the restoration of Koski Mehmed Pasha's *madrasah* and the Old Bridge. The works continued in the 1970s and 1980s with the restoration and reconstruction of further buildings. In 1986, the restoration of the historic town was given an Aga Khan Award in Architecture.

The hostilities that broke out in the early 1990s saw systematic destruction of much of the Old Town by bombardment and fire in 1992-95, with resulting structural destabilization and deterioration from natural forces as a result of neglect. Among the structures that were wholly or partially destroyed were the Old Bridge, with its towers, the old warehouses and shops close to the bridge, all the domed mosques, many other Islamic buildings, and a number of the Austro-Hungarian administrative buildings. Some of the repair work carried out after this destruction, particularly by certain religious institutions and foreign humanitarian foundations, is frankly described by the State Party in the nomination dossier as being in contravention of recognized conservation principles. In addition, many new buildings are reported to have been erected that were not compatible with the requirements of an historic town centre.

State of conservation:

Since 2003, several reconstruction projects have been carried out in the historic centre of Mostar. The Old Bridge has been rebuilt under the auspices of UNESCO and the World Bank, and was opened to the public in the summer of 2004, after four years of work. Other restoration projects have been carried out with the support of the Aga Khan Trust, which has dealt particularly with mosques and some other buildings in the historic centre. Furthermore, Mostar has received financial and technical support from several sources, including the European Union, and a number of

projects are under way regarding the infrastructure and the urban fabric as a whole.

A detailed inventory of the state of conservation is an integral part of renewed nomination dossier (appendix 3.d). In summary: 79% of buildings are already in good condition.

Management:

A newly (December 29, 2004) established Agency in charge of the preservation and development of the Old City will from April 1, 2005 replace the Project Coordination Unit, PCU. The role of the Agency will be to continue the tasks not yet completed by the PCU.

With the revised nomination dossier, the State Party also submitted a management plan dated January 2005 which has been prepared for the historic town area. This Plan incorporates the 2001 Master Plan.

The City has expressed willingness to place more attention to the proper conservation management of the historic area.

Risk analysis:

At the moment, the most critical risk in Mostar relates to the challenge of reconstruction and the willingness and capacity of the authorities, the various contractors and sponsors involved in the process to respect the heritage value. The Management Plan needs to be used to inform judgments on the management of change.

Authenticity and integrity

On the basis of the test of authenticity, as defined in paragraph 24.b.i of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, there must be considerable reservations about the authenticity of Mostar. Much of the urban fabric was destroyed in 1992-1995, and has been the subject of major reconstruction activity or is still under reconstruction. The Old Bridge has been rebuilt as a copy, using mainly new material, though with the integration of some of the historic material especially on the surface. The proportion of reconstructed buildings is very high, and much new material has also been used.

The revised nomination dossier comments in a different way on the authenticity of materials and workmanship in the case of the various undertakings. Although some buildings are being rebuilt according to available documentation, others may be modernised and modified. There is fear that the typology and morphology of the historic fabric in some instances is being altered as a result. However the new (2005) Operational Guidelines gives a more detailed approach on this field, offering a series of “qualities” for testing authenticity.

In this light, the result of a test of authenticity is rather more positive. Looking as an example at the reconstruction of the Old Bridge, this is based on in-depth and detailed, multi-faceted analyses, relying on high quality documentation, and almost every required condition has been fulfilled. The authenticity of form, use of authentic materials and techniques are fully recognisable. The result

is not a kind of invented or manipulated presentation of an architectural feature which never before existed in that form, rather the reconstructed bridge has a kind of truthfulness, even though in strictly material terms a considerable portion is not of identical or original pieces.

Furthermore, evaluating this reconstruction on a larger scale, namely as a key element of urban and natural landscape there is no doubt of a special kind of “overall” authenticity. It is also crucial to add, that the facsimile reconstruction has been not hidden at all. There are large expositions of remaining original material in a museum which have become an inseparable part of the reconstruction.

It must be stressed that this *reconstruction* of fabric should be seen as being in the background compared with *restoration* of the intangible dimensions of this property, which are certainly the main issue concerning the Outstanding Universal Value of this site.

As for integrity, there are certainly some losses; however the major point is not to introduce more alteration to the landscape/townscape in the form of new, or inappropriately renewed constructions.

From the historic point of view, the old town of Mostar could be seen as an urban archaeological site. In the area of the Old Bridge, there has been systematic archaeological documentation of the historic stratigraphy. This research previously focused only on a limited area. One of the tasks of the Management Plan is to cover a larger area. In a paradoxical manner, the result of war-damage has made it possible to investigate the ancient construction-methods in detail, which have highlighted the outstanding value of the Old Bridge construction.

Comparative evaluation

The old Mostar developed mainly in the Ottoman period, from the 16th century, and it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from the 19th century. Its significance is related partly to the Ottoman period, partly to its integration with European cultures. A special feature has always been the Old Bridge, recently destroyed – and even more recently reconstructed.

The main centres of the Ottomans were in Turkey: Istanbul (inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1985; criteria i, ii, iii and iv), Bursa, and Edirne. It is these centres that best express the specificity of Ottoman architecture. The most renowned architect was Sinan Hoga, whose most outstanding works are in Istanbul and Edirne. He – or one of his closest followers - is also given as the designer of the Old Bridge of Mostar. The Ottoman residential architecture is well represented in the historic town of Safranbolu (World Heritage 1994; criteria ii, iv and v), in the north of Turkey. The Ottoman Empire extended well into south-east Europe, and there are thus several testimonies of their presence in this region, e.g. in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. In Serbia, an old bazaar area in Stari Ras and Sopocani (World Heritage 1979; criteria i and iii) dates from the Ottoman period. In Bosnia, Sarajevo (also nominated in 1999 and not accepted for inscription on the World Heritage List) is comparable to Mostar, being an Ottoman frontier town on major communication and trade

routes and having retained significant traces of its Islamic past, despite the short but influential Austro-Hungarian occupation.

It is noted that the historic town of Mostar is not the only historic centre in Europe representing Ottoman influence. The exceptional features of this place were the almost perfect interrelation between natural and man made elements, with the Old Bridge represented a masterpiece of highly refined construction by Ottoman constructors. Unfortunately the recent destruction has also removed Mostar's most interesting architectural assets, such as the Old Bridge. Now, after the reconstruction and restoration of the main architectural elements of the site, it remains principally a place of memory, in the same manner as the Historic Centre of Warsaw (World Heritage 1980; criteria ii and vi). The State Party, in the revised nomination dossier, also compares the site with other post-catastrophe reconstructed sites in Italy and Germany. When Warsaw was inscribed, it was considered "a symbol of the exceptionally successful and identical reconstruction of a cultural property, which is associated with events of considerable historical significance. There can be no question of inscribing in the future other cultural properties that have been reconstructed." (World Heritage Bureau, May 1980; CC-80/Conf. 017/4).

However, although the case of Mostar has many similarities with above-mentioned cases, there are also differences. It is not only an 'exceptionally successful' reconstruction based on in-depth and detailed, multidisciplinary scientific researches, but it has also become a symbol of the reconciliation of coexistent local communities. The presence of leading international organisations with their experts and the involvement of local experts and craftsmen has resulted a large-scale international co-operation (which was not the case in Warsaw). The reconstruction of the neighbourhood of the Old Bridge as well as its destruction is associated with events of universal historical significance.

Outstanding universal value

General statement:

The principal interest of Mostar has been in its representation of Ottoman building traditions on a trade route in a frontier region, and the influence that the site has had from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Mediterranean. The Old Bridge has been its major monument. At the moment, however, after the destruction in the 1990s, the site has lost much of its old fabric. It is currently still in the process of reconstruction, however the major part of this effort is already realised, most spectacularly in the case of the Old Bridge. There has also been considerable contribution from the international community to this process, including UNESCO, the World Bank and the European Union, in addition to the support provided by individual countries. The international community has already given a strong support to the reconstruction, and the process is well on the way. The results will be visible in a few years' time.

For various reasons, the inscription of Mostar has been delayed, and now the situation is gradually changing. The

local authorities are taking steps to establish conservation management.

In the period between first nomination of this site and the present, the condition of the historic town of Mostar has been "work in progress". During that time, it was advisable to wait until the situation had been stabilised before deciding on eventual inscription. This point has now been reached and also the issues of site management have been addressed.

Much of the architectural fabric of the site had been severely damaged or destroyed. Some expert-reports indicated that the rebuilding had not always been correct. The revised nomination dossier is nominating a smaller, more concentrated area of the Old City. This extends only to the closest vicinity of the Old Bridge, containing the most conscientiously investigated and reconstructed and/or restored elements of the historic core area.

Evaluation of criteria:

In the revised dossier the State Party has proposed criterion iv, v and vi. Previously, ICOMOS has suggested that the property could be inscribed on the basis of criterion iv. Taking into account the current situation, however, all criteria can be reconsidered. The physical fabric has to a large extent been rebuilt, and what is visible will be substantially a product of the decades around 2000 AD.

4. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopt the following draft decision:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-05/29.COM/8B,
2. Recalling the decisions adopted by the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee at its 23rd session (UNESCO, July 1999), at its 23rd extraordinary session (Marrakech, November 1999), at its 24th session (UNESCO, June 2000) and its decision adopted at its 24th session (Cairns, December 2000) and the decision 27 COM 8C.33 adopted at its 27th session (UNESCO, July 2003),
3. Inscribes the property on the World Heritage List on the basis of ***criteria iv and vi:***

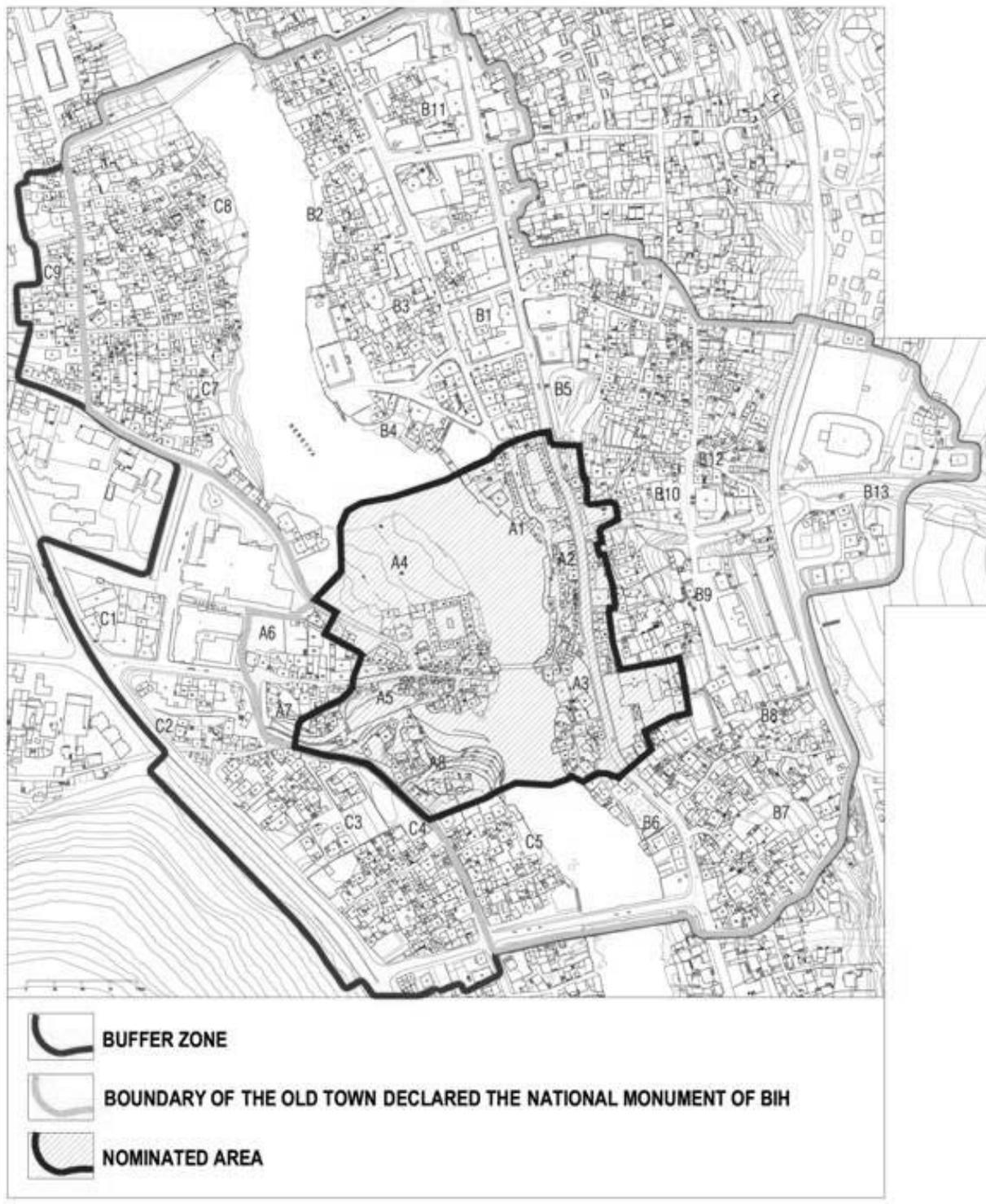
Criterion iv: The Old Bridge area of the Old City of Mostar, with its exceptional multi-cultural (pre-Ottoman, eastern Ottoman, Mediterranean and western European) architectural features, and satisfactory interrelationship with the landscape, is an outstanding example of a multicultural urban settlement. The qualities of the site's construction, after the extremely ravaging war-damages and the subsequent works of renewal, have been confirmed by detailed scientific investigations. These have provided proof of exceptionally high technical refinement, in the skill and quality of the ancient constructions, particularly of the Old Bridge.

Criterion vi: With the “renaissance” of the Old Bridge and its surroundings, the symbolic power and meaning of the City of Mostar - as an exceptional and universal symbol of coexistence of communities from diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds - has been reinforced and strengthened, underlining the unlimited efforts of human solidarity for peace and powerful co-operation in the face of overwhelming catastrophes.

4. Notes the changing of the name so that it reflects more properly the situation of the nominated area and which becomes: “The Old Bridge area of the Old City of Mostar”.

5. Requests the State Party to fully and carefully implement measures laid down in the recently adopted Management Plan, and also to apply these approaches to the wider setting of the Old City in factors such as scientific research, restoration, new uses and, continuous monitoring.

ICOMOS, April 2005



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



View of the Old Bridge from the river (1997)



Aerial view of the Old Bridge (2005)



Nala Tepa



Ramica Street Area