
Historic City of Ahmadabad (India) No 1551

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Historic City of Ahmadabad

Location

Ahmedabad District

Gujarat State

India

Brief description

The walled city of Ahmadabad was founded by Sultan Ahmad Shah in 1411 AD on the eastern bank of the Sabarmati River. It continued to flourish as the capital of the State of Gujarat for six centuries, up to the present. Muslim, Jain and Hindu inhabitants of Ahmadabad coexist and share common traditions of commercial enterprise and philanthropy, regardless of their different religious beliefs. The nominated property consists of the remains of the city walls and gates, 28 historic buildings of a national significance and the footprint of traditional urban fabric of gated residential streets called *puras*, and traditional houses known as *pol*s.

Category of property

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

In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (July 2015), Annex 3, it is also an *historic town which is still inhabited*.

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List

31 March 2011

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre

1 February 2016

Background

This is a new nomination.

Consultations

ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committee on Historic Towns and Villages and several independent experts.

Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 27 September to 1 October 2016.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 19 October 2016 requesting further information about a wide range of issues, including: the comparative analysis; rationale for the delineation of the buffer zone; mapping inconsistencies between the nomination dossier and the management plan; future plans to extend the property boundary to incorporate additional buildings/sites; how the buildings in the nominated area demonstrate particular social structures, cultural groups and activities; the self-sustaining character of the *pol*; the history of the form of housing clusters; role and status of the markets, educational institutions, and libraries; current status of the Mughal gardens; associations with Gandhi; role of water structures in the historic functions of the city; development pressures; documentation of the *pol*s; status of legal protection of identified historic buildings; and status of tourism planning.

Additional information was received from the State Party addressing these questions on 15 November 2016, and has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party in December 2016 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report: photographic documentation of the central area of the nominated property; full documentation of the historic buildings of the nominated property; the potential to extend the western boundary of the nominated property, and the western boundaries of the buffer zone; mechanisms for ensuring that the integrity and authenticity of historic structures can be ensured during interventions; the possibility of developing a conservation plan for the wooden buildings in the nominated property; the legal status of the management plan; and information about the Local Area Plan and associated maps.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 16 February 2017 in response to the Interim Report; and has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

10 March 2017

2 The property

Description

The Historic City of Ahmadabad is located on the eastern bank of the Sabarmati River, close to the ancient trade route connecting Delhi to Khambhat, and on the route to the port of Surat on the Arabian Sea.

The nominated property covers 535.7 hectares. The length of the east-west axis is about 2km and the length of the

north-south axis is about 2.5 km. The city walls are 10.97 km in length and include 12 original gates, two closed gates from the Sultanate period, and two gates added in the nineteenth century.

The Historic City of Ahmadabad consists of 6 municipal wards, divided into 13 sub-wards and includes 27 historic buildings protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), one historic building protected by the State Department of Archaeology (SDA), and 2,696 important buildings protected by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC).

Sultanate architecture from the fifteenth century is characterised by the fusion of Islamic elements and local Jain and Hindu building traditions, which are manifested in the Bhadra Fort, the city walls and gates, the Jama Masjid, the mausoleums of the royal family, and other mosques and minarets. Ahmadabad is also an important city of Mughal architecture from the late 16th and early 17th centuries, with particular contributions of buildings and gardens by Shah Jahan during his residence in Ahmadabad as the Mughal Suba. These were early prototypes for his constructions in Agra when he became emperor.

The historic city of Ahmadabad also includes important Jain and Hindu temples from the Maratha and British periods, such as the Ajitnath Jain Temple and the Swaminarayana Temple.

The population of the nominated property is 370,000. It is an historic city with multicultural communities belonging to the Hindu, Jain and Islamic faiths. The urban fabric and architectural characteristics of the walled city have distinctive characteristics that reflect the lifestyles of its communities and the historical development of the city.

The urban fabric consists of densely populated neighbourhoods (*pur*s) around main streets (*pol*s) and controlled by inner entrances to the *pol* (*khadki*). A *pol* includes between 50-100 closely-packed houses that share side walls and produce an homogenous urban fabric.

Traditional houses (*pol houses*) are built using composite construction techniques with timber and brick-lime. They contain courtyards, water storage systems and richly embellished façades with intricate decorations, including carvings of religious symbolism which gave rise to characteristic domestic architecture in western India.

The urban public spaces of the *pol* are characterised by vibrant street life, public buildings, religious buildings, community wells, bird feeders (*chabutaro*) and richly decorated wooden residential facades.

The State Party provided additional information clarifying that the *pol* environment is considered to be 'self-sustaining' because the endogenous settlement pattern has remained largely unchanged, keeping an intrinsic character that has persisted since its origins. The *pol* has retained traditional plot sizes and house heights,

maintaining the profile of the settlement, including climate and natural lighting conditions.

The characteristics of the *pol* reflect the collective agreement of the community on environmental conditions and functionality. As gated enclosures, the *pol* provided water for the community and also provided for spiritual needs such as places for worship and water for birds and animals. The strong community bond is manifested by the elders who manage its daily affairs from their position on the upper floor of the *pol* gate.

The houses are often distributed in an hierarchal order within a *pol*. Thus, the houses of important families are located close to the gates. Although not a strict rule, it is often observed and gives the *pol* its hierarchical character. Important families are usually the patrons of public facilities and spiritual deeds, such as the building of temples and bird feeders in their *pol*.

Similar building materials, construction systems and the forms of the houses gave the *pol* an homogenous character. The social structure is also characterized by homogeneity in a general sense.

History and development

The historic city of Ahmadabad was founded in 1411 AD by Sultan Ahmad Shah on the eastern bank of the Sabarmati River in the proximity of two earlier settlements: "Asha Bihil no Tekro" to the south-east of Ahmadabad, within its walls; and "Karnavaati" to the south of the city, outside its walls.

The city was built close to the ancient trade route between Delhi and Khambhat, which was extended to Surat when it was developed in the Mughal period as a main port on the Indian Ocean.

Ahmad Shah established the Bhadra Fort by the river, and it was expanded and completed in 1486-87 during the time of Mahmud Begada, the names of four of its noble men being given to the gates of Daryapur, Kalupur, Sarangpur and Jamalpur. The eastern gates of the fort opened onto *Maidan-e-Shahi* square. On the other side of the square the *Jama Masjid* main mosque was built, and a later mausoleum of the royal family was built within its own enclosure.

The *pur* neighbourhoods of the city were built in phases around the *Maidan-e-Shahi* and the *Jama Masjid* as an Islamic city. The urban pattern of courtyard houses built closely next to each other produced a compact urban fabric, reflecting strong community ties. This pattern was accepted by the Jain community as it accorded with their values and way of life.

According to Amin Razi, the 15th century Persian geographer, Ahmadabad had three hundred and sixty *pur*s (neighbourhoods), each a self-contained town in itself with a thriving population.

The walls of the city are nearly 10 km in length, and according to the historic text *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* dating to

1759 AD, had 12 gates, 139 towers, 9 corners and more than 6,000 battlements. Two gates were added in the 19th century.

The city went through the following phases during its history:

- From 1411 to 1511: Foundation, growth and rising wealth of the Sultanate period;
- From 1512 to 1572: Decline during the Gujarat dynasty;
- From 1572 to 1707: Renewed greatness under the Mughal emperors;
- From 1707 to 1817: Disorder and loss under Mughals and Marathas;
- From 1818 to 1878: Steady progress under British rule;
- From 1878 to 1947 and onwards: Evolution of the city as a progressive city and important on national level.

Ahmadabad was hit by earthquakes three times in its history (in 1819, 1821 and 2001), all of which caused major damage to the historic monuments of the city. Floods also hit the city and caused destruction.

3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis

The nomination dossier draws comparisons on three levels; national, regional and international.

With regards to city planning, comparisons within India are made with prominent capitals established by Muslim rulers in India prior to, and at the same time as, Ahmadabad. These include imperial cities and provisional capitals, many of which did not survive, are archaeological sites or have lost most of their historic buildings from the period of Sultanate rule. The comparison emphasizes the significance of Ahmadabad on the grounds of 15th century planning of an Indo-Islamic city in the Indian sub-continent that is still a living city. Mughal city planning for Shahjahanabad was on an imperial scale, and its influence by Ahmadabad is established. Ahmadabad is significant for its continuity, flourishing even after the decline of the founding sultanate, unlike Shahjahanabad, which suffered after the decline of the Mughal Empire.

With regards to architecture, Ahmadabad is compared with Mandu, Gulbarga, and Bidar which are included in India's Tentative List; and the World Heritage properties of Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park (2004, (iii), (iv), (v), (vi)); and Fatehpur Sikri (1986, (ii), (iii), (iv)).

According to the State Party, the comparison with Mandu, Gulbarga, and Bidar establishes the significance of Ahmadabad as the only city apart from Mandu in which a large number of original historic buildings with different typologies survive today. The comparison with Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park

demonstrates the architectural significance of Ahmadabad's 15th century mosques, which were replicated and further refined by Champaner (which, unlike Ahmadabad, was abandoned in 1536).

Ahmadabad is compared with other cities in Gujarat, such as Junagarh, Surat and Vadodara, on the basis of their urban fabric and the system of neighbourhood planning. The comparison shows that Ahmadabad is distinctive because of the scale and refinement of its features as the capital of Gujarat for the last six centuries, and an important trade centre.

Ahmadabad is compared with Arab-Islamic cities of North Africa including the Kasbah of Algiers, Algeria (1992, (ii), (v)); Medina of Marrakesh, Morocco (1985, (i), (ii), (iv), (v)); Medina of Fez, Morocco (1981, (ii), (v)), and other fortified cities around the world on the World Heritage List, including the Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat, Bangladesh (1985, (iv)), Harar Jugol, the Fortified Historic Town, Ethiopia (2006, (ii), (iii), (iv), (v)), Old Town of Lijiang, China (1997, (ii), (iv), (v)), Historic Centre of Prague, Czech Republic (2012, (ii), (iv), (vi)), Historic Cairo, Egypt (1979, (i), (v), (vi)), Historic Centre of Santa Ana de los Rios de Cuenca, Ecuador (1999, (ii), (iv), (v)), Historic Centre of Bukhara, Uzbekistan (1993, (ii), (iv), (vi)), Hoi An Ancient Town, Vietnam (1999, (ii), (v)), Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca, Malaysia (2008, (ii), (iii), (iv)), and Old City of Sanaa, Yemen (1986, (iv), (v), (vi)).

The State Party's conclusion of this comparison is that Ahmadabad is an outstanding harmonious assimilation and coexistence of two cultures and religions, Central Asian Islam and Ancient Indian Hindu-Jain; and is distinctive because of its large-scale use of wood in an urban context, and the *pol* - an inward-facing unit of neighborhood planning and the building block for the city's growth.

At the request of ICOMOS, the State Party extended its comparative analysis to include comparison of the *pol*s of Ahmadabad with the *havelis* of Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi, with respect to architecture, business trading, settlement patterns and evolution of culture. The State Party concluded that the *havelis* is a much bigger and more elaborate a group of stone buildings, with influence from Rajasthan and north-western Moghul India, while the *pol* of Ahmadabad is a smaller group of composite brick and timber buildings.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. However, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis does not provide sufficient evidence to justify the consideration of the nominated property according to criterion (vi).

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value

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

- The walled city of Ahmadabad is rich with Sultanate period historic buildings, distinctive of Gujarat and a prototype for later architectural developments; and is significant for the fusion of the architectural traditions of two highly distinctive cultures and religions: Islamic architectural traditions brought by the rulers and founders of the city, and the Hindu-Jain tradition of construction and crafts of the local community.
- The urban structure of the historic city of Ahmadabad is distinctive due to its *puris* (neighbourhoods), *polis* (residential streets), and *khadki* (inner entrances to *polis*), which are closely connected to the dynamics of the communities and their organisational networks.
- The timber historic residential architecture, with its elaborately decorated wooden facades, reflects symbols and myths connected with their inhabitants. The wooden houses of the historic city of Ahmadabad are a significant contribution to arts, crafts and design in the Indian sub-continent.
- The historic city of Ahmadabad is a unique example of multicultural coexistence as followers of Hinduism, Islam, Jainism and Christianity are present in the city.
- Ahmadabad's noble families patronised modern masters of art and architecture, which enriched the city's culture.

ICOMOS considers that much of this justification is appropriate, particularly with regard to the city's architecture, urban planning and wooden houses. However, ICOMOS does not consider that the arguments referring to the multicultural coexistence has been established through the comparative analysis, and notes that many historic cities manifest this characteristic.

Furthermore, ICOMOS notes that references to masterpieces of modern art and architecture, the results of patronage by notable inhabitants of Ahmadabad, are located outside the boundary of the nominated property and have limited tangible connections with the nominated historic city.

ICOMOS therefore considers that some aspects of the justification provided by the State Party could have the potential to justify the consideration of this property for inscription in the World Heritage List; but that some re-scoping of the proposed justification of Outstanding Universal Value is needed in order to emphasise the distinctive architecture, urban planning and wooden residential buildings of the historic city (and omitting the weaker components as noted above).

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The State Party identifies the integrity of the property through description of the urban morphology, house forms,

nationally significant monuments, historic buildings and architectural expressions.

ICOMOS agrees with these arguments, but notes some issues that compromise the integrity of the property. For example, high rise concrete blocks have been constructed east and north of Bhadra Fort, raising questions about the effectiveness of the protection of historic sites listed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Furthermore, ICOMOS notes that the rationale for excluding associated districts and building ensembles situated outside the nominated property is not clear. In response to questions raised about this by ICOMOS, the State Party explained that the focus of the nomination was the walled city and that relevant historic buildings that are located outside the city walls do not qualify to be included in the property even if they are excellent examples of Islamic architecture.

In addition, pressures for change and development of the urban fabric of such a vibrant living commercial city, and arising from the need for improved infrastructure services and transport are acknowledged by the State Party. However, these pressures are not clearly articulated, nor are the tools and mechanisms to avoid their impact on the integrity of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the important historical connection of the historic city with the Sabarmati River is weak, raising questions about the adequacy of the boundaries of the nominated property, particularly the western boundary, and the need to extend this boundary to the river. Furthermore, the rationale for the delineation of the boundaries of the buffer zone are not clear, particularly at the western boundary in connection to the river and the two bridges of Nehru and Ellis.

ICOMOS also requested photographic documentation of the central area of the nominated property, particularly around the Bhadra Fort and Jama Mosque from different directions; and a photographic survey of the boundaries of the nominated property and its buffer zone in order to establish and support its integrity in relation to development pressures inside and outside the proposed boundaries. The State Party submitted additional information in response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, including photographic records of the nominated property and its buffer zone.

The State Party clarified that the delineation of the western boundary of the buffer zone and its relation to the river was carefully considered. The River Front Development Project was initiated some years before the property was nominated to India's Tentative List in April 2010. This project has redefined the edge of the river and created green landscaped areas on both banks of the river and complexes of public facilities on the western bank. The State Party decided therefore to align the buffer zone boundary with the eastern redefined bank of the river, and considers that it will adequately protect the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated

property. The State Party argues that in the past there was little direct connection between the historic city and the river, and that the river bed offered panoramic horizons for the historic city as the river remained dry for much of the year. This was dictated by the site morphology, as the western edge of the historic city slopes gradually towards the south-western corner, close to Sardar Patel Bridge. The fort was connected with the river by Ellis Bridge through Ganeshbari Gate at the south-western corner of the fort, where water was lifted from the river to the fort by water wheels. Thus, while the western side of the fort along the river consists of green areas, there are new buildings constructed along a section of this side. The State Party assures that sufficient safeguarding will be observed to prevent that no visual impact will affect the integrity of the fort, and claims that these are public facilities, which will help decongest the nominated property.

ICOMOS notes from the photographic survey submitted by the State Party that it appears that high-rise modern buildings are presently separating the nominated property and the river and that a number of modern high-rise buildings are also constructed close to some ASI-listed buildings.

ICOMOS notes that further detailed and systematic photographic survey is required for the whole western edge of both the nominated property and the buffer zone, including detailed information and documentation of the River Front Development Project and all the modern buildings that are on the western side of the property and the buffer zone.

Whilst ICOMOS appreciates that the River Front Development Project was initiated before submitting the property for the Tentative List, it notes that the modern structures that are built between the historic city and the river fall within the ASI protection zone. ICOMOS therefore questions the effectiveness of the protection zone for the purposes of potential World Heritage listing and requests a careful assessment of the visual impact of the modern constructions on the integrity of the property, as well as traffic and parking issues, of the western section of the nominated property.

For these reasons, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the nominated property have not been met at this stage.

Authenticity

The State Party illustrates the authenticity of the property with regards to form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions, techniques and management systems, location and setting, language and other forms of intangible heritage.

Whilst this information is relevant, ICOMOS notes that the features of the traditional houses of Ahmadabad are not clearly and consistently identified in the nomination documents; nor are the tangible remains of the educational

institutions and libraries (for which the historic city of Ahmadabad was known) clearly identified. The State Party subsequently clarified that no tangible remains exist from these libraries and educational institutions; nor are there any tangible attributes within the nominated property associated with Gandhi's ashram and the nationalist movement (which are mentioned in the nomination dossier).

In response to requests for additional information by ICOMOS, the State Party provided further explanations of the features of traditional houses with regards to their typology, design and construction. The State Party submitted a sample of its work on the documentation for the buildings of the property and explained that the full documentation will be carried out by architectural students, and is expected to be completed in three years.

ICOMOS notes that the sample documentation submitted by the State Party is useful for studying the typology of the recorded buildings; however, they are not sufficient for conservation and management purposes as they do not record the fabric of the historic houses. For example, the recording template assumes that all vertical planes are perfectly vertical and straight, all horizontal planes perfectly horizontal and straight, all forms, sizes and spacing of decorative elements are equal and exact, and so on. The sample record is also missing sections on the condition and state of conservation of the houses, which will be necessary for conservation and management purposes.

Without this detailed documentation of the timber houses and other buildings, ICOMOS considers that the basis of the authenticity of the nominated property is not demonstrated at this stage.

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

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

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

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

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the historic architecture of Ahmadabad from the Sultanate period manifests a unique fusion of Islamic culture by the rulers and founders of the city, and local traditions and crafts. The architecture and monumental arts in timber and stone established a regional architectural expression unparalleled in India.

The town planning of the walled city of Ahmadabad is based on the foundations laid down in the 15th century on the basis of Islamic tenets, with the Bhadra Citadel, the main mosque and main square marking the centre of the city, with the residential areas around them. The

organisation of the closely-packed houses, inward-facing neighbourhoods and narrow streets were also adopted by Hindu communities in the city.

The State Party also considers that this criterion is justified by the landscape design of twelve gardens mentioned by chronicles from the Sultanate period and the remains of the Mughal gardens established by Shah Jahan, which were the prototype of the gardens he later built in Agra.

ICOMOS considers that the significance of the historic architecture and town planning of Ahmadabad is established and could justify criterion (ii) if the issues of integrity and authenticity can be resolved. However, ICOMOS does not consider that the arguments about landscape design are supported by tangible evidence of components within the boundaries of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has some potential to justify this criterion, but that it has not yet been sufficiently demonstrated.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds of Ahmadabad's distinctive urban fabric, with well-defined community-based settlements and main residential streets known as *pol*s, consisting of densely-built traditional houses. Several such settlements form a bigger unit which is known as a *pur*. A *pol* is gated and includes dead-end narrow alleys and characteristic features such as bird feeders, known as *Chabutaro*, and public wells. The facades of the *pol*'s houses are embellished with wooden decoration characteristic of Ahmadabad.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion is potentially appropriate for the nominated property, but that this requires further detailed documentation and information on the urban fabric of Ahmadabad as a living historic city in terms of commercial areas of shops and crafts, the different religious communities, water management and other traditional characteristics, and a clear articulation of the way the city functions.

In response to requests by ICOMOS, the State Party provided additional information clarifying that Jain merchants were located mainly in the areas north and south of the Queen's tomb. They also lived in certain *pol*s in neighbourhoods such as Kalupur, Khadia, Raipur, and partially in Dariypur and Jamalpur wards. Hindu Temples are located in these areas.

The State Party has also provided additional information explaining that communities of certain crafts were located along main streets, or inner main streets, according to the

nature of their crafts, type of production, and clientele. Often the ground floors of merchants' and craftsmen's houses were occupied by production and sales activities, while the upper floors were dedicated to living.

The three markets Manek Chowk, Khas Bazar and the main Bazar are located in the city centre. These are as old as the city itself, and grew in size with the passing of time. They remain very important to the city, as its historic market, even with the immense growth of the city.

ICOMOS notes the value of this information in understanding the nature of the urban fabric of the city and the way it functions. However, detailed and comprehensive information and documentation are needed to support the conservation, management and monitoring of the attributes for this criterion, as discussed above.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion could be justified once there is comprehensive documentation and information needed to explicitly articulate relevant attributes, and to support their conservation, management and monitoring.

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 Ahmadabad was known in the 15th and 16th centuries for its important libraries and educational establishments. The strong community ties of the *pol*s and the variety of trades and crafts that flourished in Ahmadabad from the time of its foundation, and the enterprising spirit of its inhabitants, regardless of their religion, are another aspect of its intangible culture. Furthermore, according to the State Party, Ahmadabad is associated with the independence movement led by Gandhi, who established his Ashram on the River Sabarmati, the first Ashram to be built in the 20th century.

ICOMOS considers that the evidence presented for these arguments is insufficient. Many of these aspects described by the State Party are not tangibly associated with the nominated property; and others are located outside the nominated property. ICOMOS also notes that the comparative analysis does not support the arguments presented for this criterion.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

ICOMOS does not consider that the criteria have been demonstrated at this stage; but that there is some potential to justify criteria (ii) and (v), based on comprehensive additional documentation and resolution of the issues raised in relation to the authenticity and integrity of the nominated property.

4 Factors affecting the property

According to the State Party, development pressures, are increasing, and commercial development and traffic congestion are causing the original inhabitants to move out of the area. Increasingly, the traditional houses are rented for commercial purposes or to newcomers who do not have the same bonds with the historic fabric. This is causing changes to the community structures and the rapid deterioration of the historic houses, sometimes resulting in the wilful demolition of historic architectural or decorative elements.

Environmental pressures include moisture penetration through cracks or rising damp, termite infestation of wooden elements, and the impacts of industrial pollution. All these agents of deterioration are magnified by the lack of maintenance.

The State Party identifies natural disaster risks as earthquakes, torrential rain and fire. The property falls in earthquake risk zone 3. In 2001, an earthquake with its epicentre 300 km from the property caused damage.

ICOMOS notes that the State Party has conducted a disaster risk assessment study and that the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority, together with the Institute of Disaster Management, have prepared disaster response plans and conducted training for responsible authorities in the state, including Ahmadabad.

Ahmadabad is served by an international airport, main roads and railways. According to the State Party, in the year 2013/14 the city received approximately 4.5 million tourists, which is 16% of all tourists who visited Gujarat.

ICOMOS notes that no tourism management plan is included in the nomination dossier or the management plan for the property. The State Party provided additional information on the survey report by the State Tourism Corporation of Gujarat and clarified that it has initiated a separate program focusing on the historic city of Ahmadabad, with the aim of enlarging its programmes with heritage-oriented activities.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are development pressures and demographic changes; and that environmental pressures and natural disasters (earthquakes, torrential rain and fire) are also notable pressures. Because of the existing and likely future levels of tourism, ICOMOS recommends that a tourism management plan be prepared. The western edge of the property and the western edge of the buffer zone may be threatened by development pressures, which could be understood once clear documentation and information are submitted on this issue by the State Party.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The nominated property includes the city walls and all the area inside the walls, which covers 535.7 hectares. The city walls are 10.97 km in length.

While the city walls are a very clearly identified and delineated element, the proposed property boundary leaves out some small areas and elements that seem worthy of inclusion:

- At the western boundary of the property, the strip of land between the western city walls and the bank of the Sabarmati River is outside the property boundary. This has historically been an integral part of city life and the connection between the city and the river.
- The boundaries of the property on the southern, eastern and northern sides match the city walls exactly, which leaves the foundations of the walls outside of the property.

ICOMOS recommends that the western boundary of the property be extended to re-establish the historic connection of the Historic City of Ahmedabad to the river. The western boundaries of the buffer zone should be extended to include the width of the river and the two bridges in order to secure the integrity of the property and its protection from visual impact of development pressures of the modern city of Ahmadabad. This recommendation was communicated to the State Party in the ICOMOS Interim Report (December 2016).

As noted above, the State Party responded to the questions and proposals in the ICOMOS Interim Report, and provided photographic records of the western edge of the nominated property and its buffer zone. The State Party re-stated that the boundary of the buffer zone remains the same as the eastern bank of the river, and that the city was not directly connected to the river historically.

ICOMOS notes that further information is required on the new constructions and development projects on the western section of the property for an informed delineation of the western boundary of the property and its buffer zone as explained above (under Integrity).

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone require further investigation and possible adjustments.

Ownership

Public open spaces and public facilities are owned by the Ahmadabad Municipal Corporation. Other institutions are owned by community trusts, temple trusts for Hindu and Jain structures, and by *Waqf* for Islamic structures. Listed historic buildings are owned by the ASI (central

government) or the State Department of Archaeology (State government). The majority of properties within the nominated property are privately owned.

Protection

The nominated property includes 28 monuments listed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), one monument listed by the State Department of Archaeology (SDA), and 2,696 important buildings protected by the Heritage Department at the Ahmadabad Municipal Corporation (AMC).

Monuments listed by the ASI enjoy legal protection at the national level via the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972, and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, and Amendment & Validation Act, 2010 (AMASR). The monument listed by the SDA is of regional significance and is protected by AMASR.

The buildings and sites listed by the AMC (components of the walled historic city) are protected as a zone with special regulations by the development plan of Ahmadabad Urban Development Authority (AUDA).

ICOMOS notes that all monuments protected by AMASR are fully protected and no interventions are permitted to them except where permitted or conducted by the ASI or SDA. A prohibited zone of 100 metres radius and a regulated zone of a further 200 metres radius are provided by legislation. ICOMOS considers that the effectiveness of the implementation of these protected and regulated zones around the monuments is established.

The buildings listed by the AMC including houses, institutions and public spaces within the walled city of Ahmadabad and the buffer zone are controlled by a process of approval for listed buildings, precincts, sites, heritage zones, and conservation areas for nominated and buffer areas by Ahmadabad Municipal Corporation, with guidelines for conservation, building forms and designs, materials and construction, use and reuse.

ICOMOS notes that the management and conservation of many important buildings, both residential and institutional, are regulated by the AUDA Development Plan (DP 2021). Although the legal protection of the list of valuable buildings and the implementation have been effective since December 2014, the modifications and additions to the development control regulations are not effective yet. The State Party clarified that they will be completed by December 2017. These modifications are essential as they include punishment for illegal developments, demolitions, additions, alterations of the listed valuable buildings and enforcing penalties for such violations.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is for monuments listed by the ASI and SDA, although these may need further enforcement in relation to protected and regulated zones and the buffer zone of the nominated property. However, the legal protection of the remaining valuable buildings and the entire urban fabric of the walled city is incomplete and needs to be put into effect. Because

these buildings and areas are central to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, ICOMOS concludes that the required legal protection is not fully in place at this stage.

Conservation

Many components and aspects of the nominated property have been inventoried, recorded and researched. This process started two decades ago with French contributions to the 'Houses of Ahmadabad Project'. Other efforts were carried out by different institutions and on different levels; national, state and local.

The present state of conservation of monuments listed by the ASI and SDA is under control with clear distribution of roles between the two institutions; while the houses, institutions and public spaces within the walled city of Ahmadabad and the buffer zone are under the supervision of the AMC. Conservation goals address the essential qualities of the urban form with emphasis on facades and their relationship to the street, the overall house form and the architectural period.

ICOMOS notes that despite the richness of available records and research work on the nominated property, there is a need for full documentation of the historic buildings of the nominated property (plans, sections, elevations and technical information for each building), including private houses and less grand valuable buildings (particularly the traditional wooden structures). Full documentation is necessary for effective monitoring, management and conservation of the historic city in order to ensure the effectiveness of the management system.

As noted above, in response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the State Party submitted additional information, including samples of the detailed documentation for the historic buildings of the property, and explained that the full documentation will be carried out by architectural students and is expected to be completed in three years. However, as discussed above, ICOMOS considers that the sample documentation is not fully sufficient for the purposes of conservation, management, and monitoring.

ICOMOS notes the need for overall planning and management of records across all involved agencies, including government on different levels, communities, academic and individual bodies.

ICOMOS notes that the availability of traditional craftsmen is a great asset to the conservation of the historic houses. There is an urgent need to set up an efficient mechanism that secures integrity and authenticity during interventions made by traditional craftsmen, particularly with regards to private houses and buildings.

In response to the ICOMOS Interim Report, the State Party provided additional information explaining that the Heritage Directorate would be functional within the next three months and the Conservation Plan for the historic city would be completed with details of Local Area Plans by the end of 2017. The Heritage Directorate proposes to

establish a Heritage Resource Building Center as part of the Conservation Plan. ICOMOS particularly considers that a conservation plan for the wooden historic houses of the nominated property is needed.

ICOMOS considers that the effectiveness of conservation measures is reduced by the lack of maintenance. This is a result of numerous factors such as the lack of financial incentives and the lack of tools to control traditional maintenance efforts, particularly for privately-owned historic buildings (as acknowledged by the heritage management plan submitted by the State Party).

ICOMOS considers that the conservation of the nominated property is vulnerable due to numerous factors. The full documentation of all historic buildings within the property needs to be improved and completed; a mechanism to guide and control interventions by traditional craftsmen is needed; and better coordination and consolidation of efforts by different stakeholders could be achieved by supporting the Heritage Department at the AMC as the nodal agency, with particular attention to privately-owned properties and traditionally-maintained houses and public buildings and spaces. ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party develop the Conservation Plan for the historic city and a conservation plan for wooden historic houses as a priority.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

A heritage management plan has been prepared for the AMC to be the nodal agency for the management of the nominated property with the participation, coordination and support from different responsible stakeholders including:

- Community level (Mahajan/Pol Panchayat);
- Ward level (Elected Municipal Councillor);
- City level (Mayor, Commissioner, Heritage Conservation Committee, Town Development Officer, Heritage Cell (now Heritage Department), and City Traffic);
- District Level (Relevant Minister, State Directorate of Archaeology, State Chief Town Planner); and
- Central government level (Relevant ministry, Secretary/ Archaeological Survey of India).

The Heritage Department at the AMC is responsible for ensuring the implementation of heritage management strategy including:

- Monitoring the state of conservation for listed buildings;
- Scrutiny and screening applications for additions and alterations to historic buildings;

- Coordination with heritage conservation committee and heritage property owners;
- Provision of technical guidance to home owners;
- Carrying out stakeholder consultations;
- Raising awareness; and
- Execution of conservation and restoration projects planned by AMC.

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

The State Party has developed a detailed disaster risk assessment study. The nominated property falls in earthquake risk zone 3 and is vulnerable to fire hazards. It is therefore included in disaster response plans, including training for relevant authorities, prepared by the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority and the Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management.

According to the State Party, the expertise of staff at the Heritage Department of the AMC consists of engineers, architects, historians and support staff and is enhanced by collaboration with the ASI, CEPT University, Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage, and other relevant institutions.

ICOMOS considers that the Heritage Department of AMC is in need of staff specializing in the field of conservation of built heritage with training on international best practice in the field.

ICOMOS notes that the heritage management plan is identified in Chapter 10 of the development plan (DP2021), by Ahmadabad Urban Development Authority and is approved by the authorities as the legal document for site management and implemented. However, the modifications and additions for enforcing it effectively are not yet completed. The State Party provided additional information stating that these would be finalized, ratified and implemented together with the Conservation Plan in December 2017.

ICOMOS notes that the modifications and additions to the development control regulations (DCR) are not yet finalised, ratified or implemented.

ICOMOS notes that the Local Area Plan, as a part of the Heritage Conservation Plan for the nominated property, is not identified, and the Heritage Areas are not marked on the relevant maps, and detailed measures for their management are not outlined. The State Party stated that the Local Area Plan is expected to be finalized by December 2017.

Involvement of the local communities

Community and religious groups and trusts are involved in the management process in different localities. However, ICOMOS considers that a concrete plan for capacity building and awareness raising is needed for the local communities given the level of control that is required to safeguard its heritage resources.

The heritage management plan prepared by the State Party aims to improve visitor experience, encourage sustainable tourism, and manage possible negative impacts of tourism developments amongst other objectives. However, ICOMOS notes that these objectives are not based on a visitor management plan.

ICOMOS considers that the approval, adoption and implementation of the Local Area Plan and the regulations associated with the Heritage Conservation Plan is urgently required before the management system can be considered to be effective. Special attention needs to be given to capacity building of the Heritage Department at AMC in the field of management and conservation of built heritage. Furthermore, ICOMOS recommends to extend the management plan and its implementation mechanisms to engage in an informed and proactive way the local communities and religious groups that are responsible for heritage resources. ICOMOS recommends including a visitors' management plan into the management process of the nominated property.

6 Monitoring

The State Party has outlined four key indicators to monitor the state of conservation of the nominated property. These address the homogeneity of the settlement pattern, the state of individual houses, the overall changes in land use, and the cultural homogeneity of *pol* communities.

ICOMOS notes that these monitoring indicators address changes to the state of conservation and the life in *pol*s and traditional houses. However, ICOMOS recommends the identification of other indicators to monitor the state of conservation of those monuments listed by the ASI and SDA and their protected and regulated zones.

ICOMOS notes that indicators are needed to monitor the impact of development pressures and environmental pressures on the state of conservation of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that monitoring indicators should be expanded to address the state of conservation for all components and attributes of the nominated property and the impact of identified pressures.

7 Conclusions

ICOMOS recognises the significance of the Historic City of Ahmadabad as a vibrant living city founded in the 15th century, with a rich heritage of Sultanate architecture, including the Bhadra Fort, city walls and gates, numerous mosques and tombs, and important Jain and Hindu temples of later dates. The urban fabric of Ahmadabad is made up of densely-packed traditional houses in gated traditional streets with characteristic features such as bird feeders, public wells and religious institutions. The communities of

the walled city are coexisting followers of Islam, Jain and Hinduism.

However, ICOMOS notes that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have not been met due to lack of sufficient information on the extent and impact of new buildings and development projects in the western section of the nominated property and its buffer zone, and also due to the lack of appropriate documentation of the buildings of the property.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (ii) and (v) could be justified based on further work and resolution of the problems with authenticity and integrity; but that criterion (vi) has not been demonstrated.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and the buffer zone need to be revised, particularly on the western side of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are development pressures and demographic changes; and that environmental pressures and natural disasters (earthquakes, torrential rain and fire) are also notable pressures. Because of the existing and likely future levels of tourism, ICOMOS recommends that a tourism management plan be prepared.

While the proposed mechanisms for legal protection seem appropriate, the protection of the city's buildings and urban fabric is not yet in place. Although the buildings and monuments listed by the ASI and SDA are provided with legal protection, these may need further enforcement.

Similarly, the proposed management system seems potentially appropriate, but a number of important components are not yet in place. Implementation of the Local Area Plan and the regulations associated with the Heritage Conservation Plan is urgently required before the management system can be considered to be effective. Incorporation of visitor management planning into the management system for the nominated property is also required.

The conservation of the nominated property is vulnerable, and full documentation of all historic buildings within the property is needed, along with better coordination of the efforts of different stakeholders and mechanisms to guide and control interventions by traditional craftsmen. Capacity building for the AMC in the field of management and conservation of built heritage is needed.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of the Historic City of Ahmadabad, India, to the World Heritage List be **deferred** in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to:

- a) Reformulate the justification for Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, according to criteria (ii) and/or (v), clearly articulating the relevant attributes based on comprehensive documentation of the city's urban fabric, spaces and buildings, particularly the characteristics and cultural traditions associated with the *pol* and *pur* found throughout the city,
- b) Conduct comprehensive and accurate documentation of the historic buildings of the property, particularly the privately owned timber houses, according to accepted international standards of documentation of historic buildings for conservation and management purposes, with the aim of meeting the conditions of authenticity,
- c) Reconsider the boundaries of the nominated property and the buffer zone by strengthening the connection between the walled city and the river,
- d) Conduct a detailed assessment of the extent and impact of the new constructions and development projects on the western section of the property and its buffer zone with the aim of meeting the conditions of integrity,
- e) Ensure the effective implementation of the Heritage Management Plan and the finalisation, ratification and implementation of the modification and additions to the development control regulations (DCR),
- f) Complete and implement the Local Area Plan as a part of the Heritage Conservation Plan,
- g) Prepare, approve and implement a conservation plan for the wooden historic houses,
- h) Prepare, approve and implement a visitor management plan for the nominated property to complement the Heritage Management Plan and ensure an informed and sensitive development of tourism for the property;

Any revised nomination should be visited by a mission to the site.

Additional recommendations

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

- a) Enriching the Heritage Department at AMC with capacity building and technical capacity relevant to the challenging size and extent of responsibilities of the documentation, conservation and monitoring of the nominated property and its buffer zone;



Entrance to Bhadra Fort



Jama Masjid – The prayer hall and details of the dome



Swaminarayana Temple



View of *Pol*