



FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF
STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS
BY THE STATES PARTIES

(In compliance with Paragraph 169 of the *Operational Guidelines*)

Old town of Galle and Its Fortification

1. Executive Summary of the report

Galle fort and its fortifications, listed as a world Heritage property in 1988 and as per the Antiquities Ordinance, the rampars of the fort and some of the buildings inside were listed as Protected monuments in 1971. There are about 350 houses which are individually owned and institutional buildings, such as offices and religious buildings. There are two schools, one Buddhist temple, two churches and a mosque. The grid pattern road network represents the unique European architecture and the houses with front open verandas and central court yards represent Sri Lankan traditional architecture, creates the special Dual Heritage that enhances the outstanding universal value of the property.

There are different government agencies work on different issues related to the property, such as Department of Archaeology, Urban Development Authority, Galle Municipal Council, Coast Conservation Department etc. To coordinate the inter departmental activities, Galle Heritage Foundation was established on the approval of the parliament in 1994.

There are different issues, specially regarding the development needs of the residents and other investors, that needs professional involvement. The planning sub committee consisted with the representation of all stakeholder parties, inspect and advice the developers and recommends the proposals for the final approval by the Municipal Council. As per the World Heritage Guidelines the management plan for the property is a requirement and it has been prepared and sent to the approval of the World Heritage Centre. When it is approved the activities within the property could be managed properly after the legal enactments.

A special buffer zone for the world heritage property was not identified at the inscription as there was already a buffer zone declared under the provisions of Antiquities Ordinance. It was decided that the same buffer zone is adequate to

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protect the outstanding universal value of the property, although there were proposals to extend it to cover the maritime archaeological remains. The proposal was studied in detail and understood that the maritime archaeological remains are protected under the legal provisions of the Antiquities ordinance, while those are not described as the attributes of the World Heritage Property.

The highest attention was paid to the development proposal for the harbour proposed by the Sri Lanka Ports Authority. It was proposed to develop the existing harbour as a commercial harbour but the proposal was rejected and the developer agreed to scale down the project to a tourism harbour which enhances the World Property. Meanwhile an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) was carried out on the first proposal and it was clear that the development doesn't damage the maritime archaeological remains and ensure the protection. A Heritage Impact Assessment was done in 2015 and after reviewing the comments the Sri Lanka Ports Authority was given a conditional approval to commence the port development works. But as per a policy decision taken by the Sri Lanka Ports Authority the commencement has been temporarily deferred considering the other similar projects that are in progress.