World Heritage List 2017
Historic Centre of Sheki with the Khan’s Palace (Azerbaijan)

Dear Sir,

ICOMOS is currently assessing the nomination of “Historic Centre of Sheki with the Khan’s Palace” as World Heritage Site, and an ICOMOS evaluation mission visited the property to consider matters related to protection, management and conservation, as well as issues related to integrity and authenticity.

In order to help with our overall evaluation process, we would be grateful to receive information to augment what has already been submitted in the nomination dossier.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points and kindly provide additional information:

Outstanding Universal Value and Comparative analysis
The following questions concern the arguments which have been presented to support the proposal that the Historic Centre of Sheki with Khan’s Palace stands out among comparable properties and bears Outstanding Universal Value.

Could the State Party explain in which way the urban form of Sheki reflects its role in regional trade, as a silk production centre and as a capital of the Caucasian khanates and how it differs from other cities which could also reflect these three aspects?

Could the State Party provide further details in which way the urban and architectural fabric reflects a unique response to the local climatic conditions and the long tradition in silkworm breeding?

Conservation and Management
Could the State Party kindly describe in how far the establishment of a national reserve and the described expansion of the staff structure has proceeded?

Has a Management Unit under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism been established for the property as foreseen under “Management Structure” in the Management Plan and how it is equipped in terms of personnel and financial resources at this stage?

Could the State Party describe in more detail how future infrastructure and tourism developments will be controlled, both in terms of project location and design/scale?
We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation process.

We would be grateful if you could provide ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre with the above information by Monday 14 November 2016 at the latest, and we thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Yours faithfully

Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICCMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to  Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan
UNESCO World Heritage Centre
AZ.075.16
Paris, 14 November 2016

Mrs. Gwenaëlle Bourdin,
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Dear Mrs. Bourdin,

First of all, I would like to thank you for your letter Ref. GB/AS/1549 dated 13 October 2016 regarding the additional information on nomination file “Historic Centre of Sheki with the Khan’s Palace” presented by the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In this regard, I am pleased to transmit herewith the information prepared by the experts of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

I hope that these answers will clarify certain elements and will effectively contribute to the evaluation process of relevant nomination.

Please accept, Mrs. Bourdin, the assurances of my highest consideration and esteem.

Sincerely yours,

Anar Karimov
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate

Attachment: 14 pages
**Outstanding Universal Value and Comparative analysis**

1. Which way the urban form in Sheki reflect its role in regional trade, as a silk production center and a capital of Caucasian khanates and how it differs from other cities could also reflect these three aspects?

Azerbaijani silk gained international appreciation since V-VII centuries and till the end of XIX century it was the main export product from South Caucasus to a world goods market.

Shamaki, Ganja, Ordubad played an important role in silk manufacturing in Azerbaijan during XI-XVIII centuries. Located directly on Great Silk Way, annually 100 thousand puds raw silk was exported from Shamaki to Russia, Iran, Ottoman Empire, Italy, France, India and other countries through Baku.

Another important caravan route passed through Shamaki, Aresh and Ganja to Tbilisi. Sheki was located a little away and silk cocoon trade was carried out through a small later-medieval town of Aresh. Decline of transit trade in XVII century resulted in decay of the town of Aresh and then merchants themselves began to go to Sheki and export cocoons to different countries. Strong Sheki khanate subordinating the neighbor territories, and having developed agriculture, craftsmanship and cocoon production drew more and more merchants. The city was adapted for trade deals. There began to construct caravansarays, small shops, bazaars and residential population began to join in merchanty. Cocoon production was limited to cocoon rising and sale of raw silk that did not require special constructions for this purpose.

At the end of XVIII century East-India Company, monopolizing Iranian silk market lost its interest in Azerbaijani silk that naturally caused strengthening of economical position of Russia in this region.

Trade relations of Sheki khanate with Russia, the main purchaser of silk, were carried out mainly by land through Kizlyar and Derbent.

In the first half of XIX century Tsarist government, especially Russian bourgeoisie, were closely interested in using raw material resources.

It was related to the fact that, silkworms in Western European countries caught a disease and Russian silk industry felt the acute need of raw silk. Transcaucasia almost was not
affected by this disease. Therefore Tsarist government took set of measures for further development of sericulture in Russian Empire as well as in Azerbaijan. For this purpose many Tsarist officers were sent to Azerbaijan for to study usage expandability of raw material resources which was important for Russian industry. They gave precedence to the expansion of raw silk manufacturing in Azerbaijan as a center of sericulture in Caucasus and to strengthening its exportation.

Sheki became a center of sericulture for the following reasons:

- In 1806, the first notable earthquake took place in Shamakhi that showed seismic hazard of the territory for investing money in industry. The following earthquakes in 1859 and 1902 razed the city to the ground.

- Though Ganja was famous as a center of sericulture in XVII century, in research materials of XVIII-XIX centuries, sericulture was not mentioned among main branches of handicraft industry.

- Karabakh was located in high mountains and apart from shipping route.

- Sericulture in Ordubad was lagged behind other territories of Azerbaijan in its development, because of low productivity of local cocoon grains and high taxation charged to local silkworm breeders under the rule of Iranian Shahs. That was why the most favorable place for location of sericulture center was Sheki.

Even before, these khanates – Shirvan (Shamakhi), Ganja (Ganja), Karabakh (Shusha) and Nakhchivan (Ordubad) cultivated cocoons and sold only raw silk, which did not require heavy constructions, such as factories. All processes were carried out in private plots or in small buildings such as warehouses or shelters. Moreover, growing period of cocoons took place on summer months.

Favorable climatic conditions of Sheki, traditional engagement of local population in cocoon growing, geographical location of the city that was not far from other silk manufacturing centers (Shemakhi, Basgal, Karabakh) and from highways through Derbent and Kizlyar, then to Astrakhan, were the main reasons why Russian manufacturers chose this city.
In 1827 Russian Society for expansion and strengthening of sericulture was established in Sheki. Sheki was selected center of action of the society, where a range of buildings – bureaus, offices for workers and students, shops, reeling-houses and factories for themselves were built. Already in 30 years of 19th century there were manufacture type institutions in Sheki, called davel (workshops for opening of cocoons). Besides that, there was also handicraft silk industry. The biggest caravansarays of the city were constructed just during that period. Labour power and silkworm breeders from Ganja, Iran came to the city forming new districts (Ganja, Gileyli, etc.) in new uninhabited territories along south coast of Gurjana River, in more silent valley relief.

But planning structure of the city did not change. More trade shops, bazaars, warehouses were mainly centralized in an highway. Small structures were pulled down there and large caravansarays, bureaus, where the first floor were used for trade and commercial deals, were built. Till 1829, this production was presented mainly in silk reeling workshops that it was in handicraft, small commodity production level. Raw silk manufacturing did not require fundamental structures, which affected planning structure of the city. Local manufacturers used their garden plot for this purpose, but new citizens bought plot of land because of limitation of city territory surrounded by natural landscape, and pulled down structures of raw brick and built new workshops or factories of burnt brick. As raw silk manufacturing has a character of seasonal production, which was carried out on spring and summer months, shelters called davel were built in the territories of yards by local people and small machines for winding of silk thread onto the reels were placed there. Cocoons were dipped in boiling water where silk threads unreeled from open cocoons. There were such davels in private territory within the city. Growing of silkworm was carried out in the yards and garrets of local citizens’ houses. More fundamental buildings, called factories and artels were constructed for getting twisted silk threads and for the production of textile material.

The first capitalist institution – Khanabad silk reeling manufacture was opened in Sheki city in 1829. There were 30 machines where 12 Italian families worked on an equal basis with 72 citizens of Sheki.

The first silkworm disease that resulted in epidemic appeared in 1845 in European countries. It increased demand for raw silk in weaving factories of Italy and France and they became to purchase it from East or through Russia. In order to meet demand for raw material of Russian silk weaving industry there appeared a need for establishing big silk
reeling factory. In 1860 Moscow manufacturers Alekseev and Voronin brothers established partnership association and began to build the biggest silk reeling factory that functioned from 1863 to 1866. In this factory there were 452 machines and total number of employees was more than 850. But factories were built not only within the territories of the historical city, but outside it.

Urban growth began to develop on the other bank of Deirman River, to the right of historical center because of territory limitation. It was associated with the development of industrial manufacturing, increasing of population and accordingly of the city. Russian government involved an architect in the performance of work in 1864 that carried out more ordered structure of streets in new territories. Factories and artels of that time were constructed in these territories.
Selecting Sheki as a center of silk reflected itself on architectural buildings in historical part of the city.

In the age of industrial development different types of large scaled buildings were constructed in Sheki: construction of Sheki cocoon-reeling factory, warehouse buildings, and tobacco drying and processing workshops was the reason of formation of industrial style of architecture that was new for this region.
Moreover, locating military caserns of Russian Empire armies within the ancient city, necessity of constructions that met requirements not only as a military structure (prisons, church, canteens) but also as ever rising city (schools, hospitals, offices, post-offices, etc.) resulted in typical administrative character of architecture of Sheki in the end of XIX century. Nevertheless, the main basics of compositional acquisition of buildings were traditional architectural forms.

Even after establishment of Soviet government Sheki remained a center of sericulture in Caucasus. There were branches of Sheki big silk factory (combination of factories) in Khankendi (Karabakh) and Ordubad (Nakhchivan AR) where cultivated cocoons and manufactured raw silk.

Construction of the big Silk factory in 1931 and incorporation of different functional workshops in one center weakened productivity of other factories and private workshops. However today, surviving factory buildings, memories of locals, respect for silk and conservation of traditions and handicap related to sericulture is a reflection of the fact that Sheki is a city of Silk.
2. Which way the urban and architectural fabric reflects a unique response to the local climatic conditions and the long traditions in silkworm breeding?

Sheki has sub humid climate with minute amount of rainfall in winter and moderate temperature in summer. It is situated on the southern foot of Greater Caucasus Mountain Range at a height of 616 meters above sea level, on the south-eastern part of valley, where Kish-chay River runs. The city surrounded by broadleaved forests is situated aslope and height difference between its north-eastern and south-western borders within the city is 410 meters.

Mild climate (mild April and May), intensive planting of mulberry trees in the city, broadleaved forests surrounding the city that feed silkworms and relatively short reproduction cycle of cocoons, lasting 40-60 days are the main factors contributing to formation and wide spread of sericulture in Sheki.

Economic factors also played an important role in the development of this sector: silkworm breeding was highly-profitable and contributed to quite fast improvement of financial situation, since it let earn an income in a shorter period in comparison with other branches of agriculture. So, people could be busy with these branches beside sericulture in the same time. The other factor was the existence of commodity market – inhabitants of the city and surrounding settlements sold silk cocoons to merchants, who themselves exported goods to caravan routes in early and Middle Ages. Later on, rapid growth of raw silk manufacturing was not only related to demands of Russian silk industry, but also local inhabitants had rich experience in this branch. Sericulture was one of the main engagements of the local population and had a character of domestic product.

Before the establishment of capitalist silk-reeling factories in Shaki, local silkworm breeders got raw silk by the method of handicraft. That was why there was not division of labor: just the same person did all processes from silkworm breeding to manufacturing silk threads. “Artels” and davela were handicraft-workshops and were situated on the first floors of houses or in small additional buildings. Several people worked in these institutions: owner – master and his assistants – employees. Such institutions were used to function seasonally, a few months in a year, since raw material processing was additional income, but agricultural industry prevailed.

Dwelling houses had to have backyards where necessary conditions were created for cocoon raising.
City configuration is formed on the basis of two highways, along Gujana River and Deyirman chay River. There is a citadel on the elevation spot of eastern part of the range slope. First settlements were built around the citadel. There is Juma mosque on the crossing of two rivers on the eastern part of the city. Bazaars, warehouses and shops were constructed around Juma mosque and along Gurjana River. Application and sizes of constructions built along the river increased and had a fundamental character with the development of sericulture in comparison with previous ones made of raw bricks. Houses with plot of lands were built in a chaotic way according to the principle of mekhelle. Streets were laid in a natural way, along more convenient trackways to the slope from Gurjana River toward North. At the beginning of XIX century new mekhelles were established along the south coast of Gurjana River and on the higher slopes to northward due to the development of sericulture and consequently population increase because of resettlement of people from settlements and other regions. They also have chaotic character with the absence of determined city structure plan and with convenient laid paths and roads. Larger factories were also built among apartment blocks, in the same streets. Caravansarays, bazaars, offices, trade shops, and warehouses were constructed on the highway and adjacent areas that were convenient for trade deals and sale of product. Development of sericulture did not change existing city structure. Primary role of the main street along the river and chaotic road diversion with due regard to the character of relief has been maintained since the period of khanate up to present.

The situation of the buildings in the city is different. Excluding dwelling houses, the most characteristic types of building in XIX century were trade buildings. They maintained traditional architectural forms, local building materials but bigger buildings were built. These buildings were often used as commercial buildings, bureaus and creative workshops, warehouses were placed on the ground floors. Constructing cocoon reeling factories, artels, warehouse buildings, and tobacco drying and processing workshops was a main reason for the establishment of industrial style of architecture that was new for the city.

Dwelling houses of wealthy stratum obtained more European type of housing by changing its planning concept: with two rows of rooms instead of one row rooms and with way-outs to eyvan or eyvans on each sides, with windows of building facades opening on the streets, etc. Nevertheless it does not influence on artistic comprehension of the city, since external concept of houses and constructing materials are maintained in virtue of traditions.
3. Could the State Party describe in how far the establishment of a national reserve and the described expansion of the staff structure has proceeded?

In order to enforce Item 3.3 of the Decree number 1718 dated 19 January 2016 on the Conservation of the Historical Part of the city of Sheki signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry has filed an official request on 19 February 2016 to the Cabinet of Ministers to review the issue of assigning the Status of National Reserve to the Yukhary Bash State Reserve of History and Architecture.

During the past period, this issue of assigning the status of national reserve has been delayed for a while due to the process of reviewing the rules related to the assignment of special status (including the status of national reserve) to various cultural institutions.

Currently, the decision number 382 dated 5 October 2016 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on approval of the Rules on Assigning Special Status to Cultural Institutions and the Additions to be made to the Monthly Wages of Staff of Cultural Institutions with Special Status was adopted.

Based upon the decisions stated above, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan has referred again to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan. By the end of current year, it is envisaged to assign the status of national reserve and increase the number of staff and wages starting from the year of 2017.

4. Has a Management Unit under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism been established for the property as foreseen under “Management Structure” in the Management Plan and how it is equipped in terms of personnel and financial resources at this stage?

For the time being, the Independent Management Committee of the Yukhary Bash State Reserve of History and Architecture is established under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan taking into account also the proposals of the Sheki City Executive Power Authority. Currently, the composition of that Committee is approved at the level of 19 members representing various institutions (attached herewith). The Committee is created on voluntary basis. It means that no financing is envisaged. In case of necessity, the issue of financing can be reviewed in the future.

5. Could the State Party describe in more detail how future infrastructure and tourism developments will be controlled, both in terms of project location and design/scale?

We would like to inform that according to the Decree number 1718 dated 19 January 2016 on the Conservation of the Historical Part of the city of Sheki signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the relevant Action Plan was elaborated to ensure the development and conservation of the historical part of the Sheki city. That document is presented for its approval to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
The said Action Plan envisages several projects to develop the tourism and relevant infrastructure. It also includes the following:

Item 5.10 of the Action Plan indicates the importance to ensure technical support to meet the criteria of the following international cultural tourism routes: Great Silk Way; Cultural Heritage of the Caucasian Albania; the Archaeological Tourism; Alexander Dumas in Caucasus; and, the Wine Route. It is envisaged to install electronic information boards and road signs to raise awareness of tourists about these routes.

Item 5.13 of the Action Plan stipulates the elaboration of the tourism development concept in the Sheki city in order to diversify tourism products of that city. Under this concept, it is envisaged to draft proposals on new products of tourism potential such as souvenirs production in line with cultural and historical specifications of the city, the craftsmanship areas, national traditions, cuisine, insertion into various international cultural tourism routes, entertainment etc.

This concept will not contradict with unique character of the city. It will have all actions to preserve the unique nature of the city.

At the same time, we inform that the Ministry is working on the Conservation Master Plan of the Reserve. Thus, the negotiations were conducted with such experienced experts like Jukka Jokilehto and Carlo Cesare. We plan to have a field trip by the end of current year to assess the scope of work.

It should be noted that the Conservation Master Plan, among all others, should ensure the proper management to ensure the development of tourism infrastructure in the territory of the Reserve in general. In its turn, this will ensure the full control over the territory.

The stated works will be done in accordance with the master plan of the reserve. At the same time, we inform that all the work to be done will be agreed with relevant agencies in advance.
THE DECISION OF THE CABINET OF MINISTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

On approval of the Rules on Assigning Special Status to Cultural Institutions and the additions to be made to the Monthly Wages of Staff of Cultural Institutions with Special Status

In order to ensure the implementation of Sub Item 1.1.6 of the Decree number 828 dated 15 February 2013 signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Enforcement of the Law number 506-IVQ dated 21 December 2012 of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Culture, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan takes the following decision:

1. To approve the Rules on Assigning Special Status to Cultural Institutions
2. To approve the additions to be made to the Monthly Wages of Staff of Cultural Institutions with Special Status (attached herewith).
3. Parts 1, 2 and 4 of the decision number 152 dated 9 July 2008 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Defining Additions to the Monthly Wages of the Staff of Cultural Enterprises with National Status and of Nationwide Importance are to be repealed.
4. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall solve all issues stemming out from the present decision.

Artur Rasi-zade
Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan

City of Baku, 5 October 2016
№ 382
ADDITIONS

defined for the Monthly Wages of Staff of Cultural Institutions with Special Status

1. Institutions that have the national status:

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2. Institutions that have the academic status:

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3. Institutions that have the nationwide status:

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Composition of the Independent Management Committee
of the Yukhary Bash State Reserve of History and Architecture

1. Zohrab Pirimov - deputy chief of the State Service for Cultural heritage protection, development and rehabilitation under The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
2. Konul Elkhan Jafarova – head of division for the work with Reserves, Monitoring and Promotion of Historical and Cultural Monuments of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
3. Tarana Alikram Gambarova – senior consultant of division for the work with Reserves, Monitoring and Promotion of Historical and Cultural Monuments of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
4. Telman Najaf Karimli – director of Azerberpa, the Institute for Science, Research and Projects;
5. Leyla Gafar Huseynova – chief architect of the Azerberpa, the Institute for Science, Research and Projects;
6. Nizami Juma Ismaylov – deputy head of the Executive Power Authority of the Sheki city, and acting head of the urban infrastructure department;
7. Taleh Saleh Alkhasov – head of department of architecture and construction of the Executive Power Authority of the Sheki city, chief architect;
8. Elshad Siraj Ibadov – chairman of the Sheki Municipality;
9. Intigam Vagifti Asirov – director of the Sheki City Public Utilities Union;
10. Mahammad Majid Ahmadov – head of the Sheki City Telecommunications Network;
11. Akbar Asgarkhan Hagverdiyev – head of the Sheki City Power Grid;
12. Elnur Mustafa Mammadov – deputy head for Sheki of director the Natural Gas Department of the Zagatala district;
13. Bayram Gadir Mammadov – Chairmen of the Sheki Water Channel JSC;
14. Yusif Shukur Shukurlu – director of the Sheki Regional Scientific Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan;
15. Tarana Ali Abdullayeva – director of the Yukhary Bash State Reserve of History and Architecture;
16. Mustafa Yusif Ahmadov – chairman of the Sheki Branch of the War, Labor and Armed Forces Veterans’ Council and deputy head of the Sheki Elders’ Council;
17. Jahid Abdul Gadirli – chief engineer of the Azerberpa, the Institute for Science, Research and Projects;
18. Nasib Mirsaleh Mukhtarov – archaeologist of the Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan;
“Yuxarı Baş” Dövlət tarix-memarlıq qoruğunun Müştəqil İdareetme Komitəsinin terkibi

1. Zöhrab Pirimov - Azərbaycan Respublikasının Mədəniyyət və Turizm Nazirliyi yanında Mədəni İrşin Qorunması, İnkişafı və Bərpəsi üzrə Dövlət Xidmətinin reisi müavinin;
2. Cəferova Könül Elxan qızı - Azərbaycan Respublikası Mədəniyyət və Turizm Nazirliyi, Qoruqlarla iş, tarix-mədəniyyət abidələrinin monitorinqi və təbliqi sektorunun müdiri;
3. Qəmbarova Terənə Əlikram qızı - Azərbaycan Respublikası Mədəniyyət və Turizm Nazirliyi, Qoruqlarla iş, tarix-mədəniyyət abidələrinin monitorinqi və təbliqi sektorunun baş məsələhəçisi;
5. Hüseynova Leyla Qafar qızı – “Azerparpa” Elmi-Tedqiqat Layihe İnstitutunun baş memarı;
6. İsmayılov Nizami Cuma oğlu – Şəki Şəhər İcra Hakimiyyəti başçısının müavinin, şəhər təşərrüfat şöbəsinin müdiri vezifəsinə içra edən;
7. Alxasov Taleh Saleh oğlu – Şəki Şəhər İcra Hakimiyyəti başçısının memarlıq və tikinti şöbəsinin müdiri, baş memar;
8. İbadov Elşad Sirac oğlu – Şəki Belediyyəsinin sədri;
9. Əşirəv İntiqam Qaqif oğlu – Şəki Kommunal Təşərrüfatı İstehsalat Birliyinin direktoru;
10. Əhmədov Mehəmmed Məcid oğlu – Şəki Telekommunikasiya Qovşağının reisi;
11. Haqverdiyev Əkber Əşərzan oğlu – Şəki Elektrik Şəbəkəsinin reisi;
12. Memmedov Elnur Mustafa oğlu – Zaqatala Regional Qaz İstismar İdarəsinin reisinin Şəki xidməti üzrə müavinin;
13. Memmedov Bayram Qədir oğlu – “Şəki Su-kanal” TSC-nin sədri;
14. Şükürli Yusif Sükür oğlu – Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyasının Şəki Regional Elmi Merkezinin direktoru;
15. Abdullayeva Tərənə Əli qızı - “Yuxarı Baş” Dövlət tarix-memarlıq qoruğunun direktoru;
16. Əhmədov Mustafa Yusif oğlu – Mühərinə, Əmək və Silahlı Qüvvələr Veteranları Şurasının Şəki təşkilatının sədri, Şəki Ağsaqqallar Şurasının sədri müavinin;
17. Qədirli Cahid Abdul oğlu – “Azerparpa” Elmi-Tedqiqat Layihe İnstitutunun baş müənnisi;
18. Muxtarov Nəsib Mirsaleh oğlu - Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyasının Arxeolojiya və Etnoqrafiya İnstitutunun arxeoloq;

Könül Cəferova
Qoruqlarla iş, tarix-mədəniyyət abidələrinin monitorinqi və təbliqi sektorunun müdiri

İcraçı: Tərənə Qəmbarova