

Executive Summary

1. State Party

Azerbaijan

2. State, Province or Region

Sheki district, Sheki city

3. Name of property

Historic centre of Sheki with the Khan's Palace

4. Geographical Coordinates to the Nearest Second

No	Latitude	Longitude
1.	41°12'367	47°11'729
2	41°12'233	47°12'063
3	41°12'100	47°11'933
4	41°11'888	47°11'908
5	41°11'777	47°11'673
6	41°12'004	47°11'473
7	41°12'007	47°11'255
8	41°12'073	47°11'012
9	41°11'989	47°10'884
10	41°11'972	47°10'858
11	41°12'046	47°10'786
12	41°12'128	47°10'834
13	41°12'112	47°10'926
14	41°12'261	47°10'921
15	41°12'300	47°11'080
16	41°12'374	47°11'054
17	41°12'409	47°11'093
18	41°12'483	47°10'958
19	41°12'546	47°11'023
20	41°12'443	47°11'320
21	41°12'324	47°11'466
22	41°12'405	47°11'559

5. Textual description of the boundary of the nominated property:

Historical town planning with citadel and Khans Palace, the main shopping street with public buildings, shops and workshops of craftsmen, silk production factories and cooperatives and individual residential houses built since 18th up to the beginning of 20th century are concentrated on the mentioned territory. The territory of 120,5 hectares covers 15 mehelles and runs along the right bank of the Gurjana river through the territory of Manchali and Ganjali mehelles on U. Hacibeyov street and then Molla Veli Vidadi street passing outside the ramparts from the north-east and passes I. Hakam and F. Khoyski streets stops short of the Deyirman river and then descends to the central highway on Salimov street. Further, the boundaries of protection zone descends to the Mehelle Dabbaghkhana along the right

Bank of the Deyirman river and Safaraliyev and Mammadov streets and ascends again to the mouth of the river bed of the Gurjana river.

The territory of the Buffer zone is architectural conservation area approved by the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan in 1968 and is 146 hectares. In order to avoid the negative impact on the historic centre, construction process is regulated on the area of 232 hectares. The town is surrounded by the mountains on three sides and they play an important role in its perception and that is why, landscape (which is 72 km²) regulation was developed.

6. A4 size map of the nominated property, showing boundaries and buffer zones:

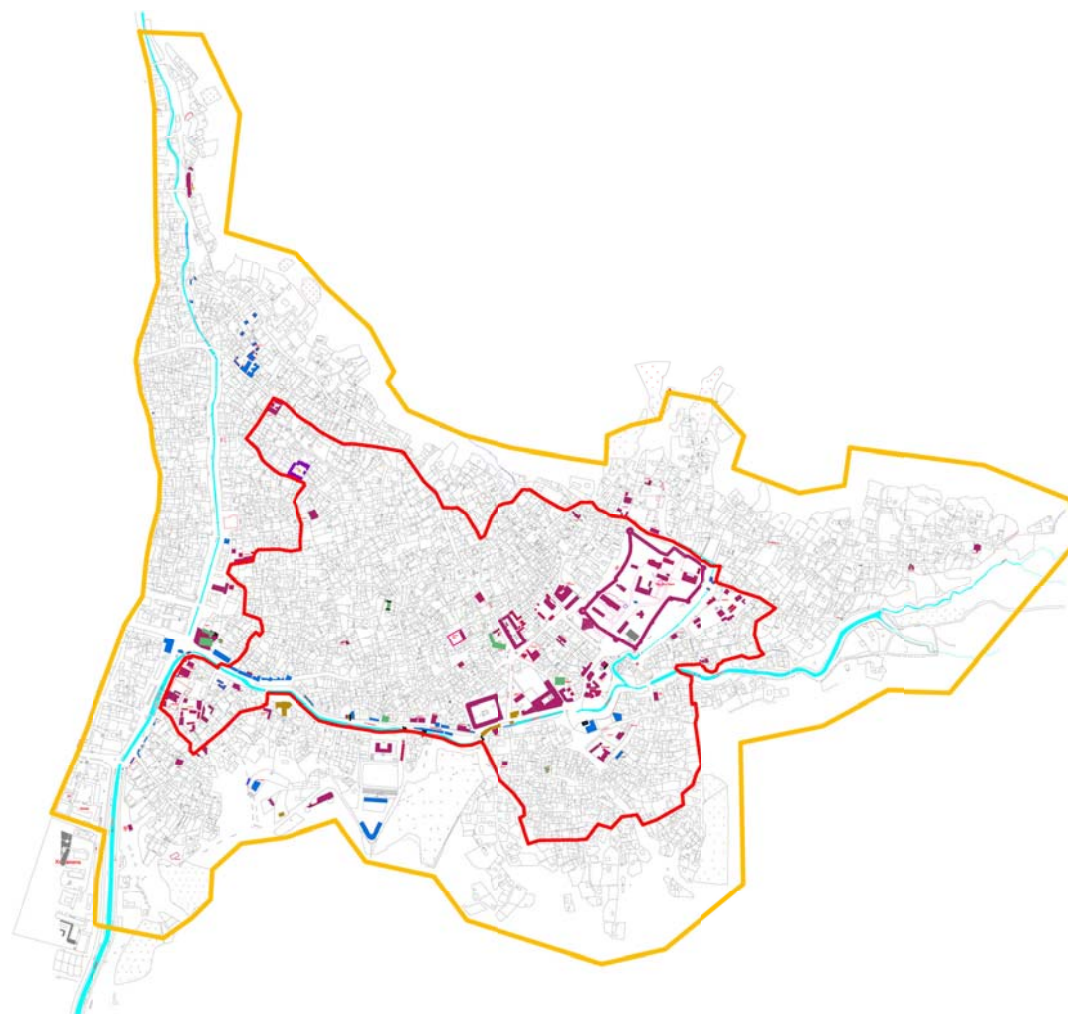


Figure 1-1. Boundaries Nominated Area

7. Criteria under which property is nominated (itemize criteria)

(ii), (iii), (iv), (v)

8. Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

a) Brief synthesis

The historic town of Sheki, located in the northern part of modern Azerbaijan, has ancient origins as part of the Caucasian Albania, dating from the 6th century BCE. The current historic center results from the reconstruction, after a mud flood in 1772, on higher ground in a mountain valley east of the previous site. Due to the natural limitations of the valley, the historic area has retained its overall urban form, but has expanded within the original building lots, following traditional typological patterns. The traditional buildings with their typical high saddle roofs, deep verandas and gardens constitute the consistent and characteristic visual integrity of the historic urban landscape, within the spectacular setting of the protected mountain slopes.

Being in contact with important trade routes, the region of Sheki has been subject to a variety of cultural influences. Christianity was here introduced as early as the 1st century CE, and Islam in the 7th century. During its history it has been under various governments, including the Safavids and Qajars until the 18th century, followed by the Russian rule in the 19th century. These different cultures have also influenced the features of architecture, of which the Khan's Palace is an outstanding example, also reflected in many of the interiors of wealthy merchant houses (e.g. bukharas, fire places).

In 1743, Sheki was established as the first and the most powerful of a series of Khanates in Caucasus, representing a new administrative system in the region. As a trading center, in contact with Asia and Europe, the principal economy of Sheki, from the ancient times, has been based on silkworm breeding, trading of cocoons, and the development of various crafts, which still continue in the region. These activities were favored due its particularly suitable climatic conditions. At the same time, the morphology of the urban fabric and its growth patterns were a direct result of the topography of the site, and the economic developments and related activities.

b) JUSTIFICATION FOR CRITERIA

Criterion (ii):

The present-day Historic Center of Sheki exhibits an important interchange of multiple cultural influences, which have their origin in history over two millennia. The current urban form, which dates back to the new construction after the flood of 1772, continued earlier building traditions responding to the local climatic conditions, and the requirements of the traditional economy and crafts activities. These developed in close contact with the Silk Roads trading system, and particularly under the Safavid and Qajar influences of the Persian Empire, and the later impact of Russian rule. As the major cultural and commercial center in the region, Sheki in turn influenced a wider territory of Caucasus and beyond.

Criterion (iii):

The Historic Centre of Sheki bears exceptional testimony to the feudal system of the Caucasian khanates, which developed from 1743 to 1819, and was also expressed, in the architecture of the Khan's palaces, interiors of wealthy merchant houses, and the fortification. Sheki has long tradition in silkworm breeding, as well as related handicrafts, textiles, carpets, woodwork, copper and brass work. Such activities still continue in the region. It has been particularly important for the export of cocoons to many countries, including Europe, until the early 20th century. Sheki has also been a major center for the production of embroidery, using special techniques especially developed in this region.

Criterion (iv):

The Historic Centre of Sheki is an outstanding example of an architectural ensemble, which has maintained its traditional urban form from its construction in the late 18th century and is naturally limited by its geographical location in the mountain valley. Its focal point is the Khan's Palace within a fortified enclosure. The main axes are associated with public buildings, such as mosques, caravanserais, and hammams, as well as silk factories and shops. The expansion of residential units has taken place within the original building lots, following traditional typological patterns, and characterized by high saddle roofs, deep verandas (eivans), and gardens. Together these constitute an exceptionally well-preserved historic urban landscape, within the spectacular setting of the protected mountain slopes.

Criterion (v):

The Historic Center of Sheki has developed organically in close interaction with the natural conditions and climate of the mountain valley. The region, in fact, provides exceptionally favorable conditions for cultivation of mulberry trees. Consequently, the traditional economy of Sheki has always been based on silkworm breeding and production of cocoons. This activity and related crafts and trades also formed the basis for the urban morphology and building typology. Even though this economic basis still partly exists, its continuation is at risk under the impact of changes in the global trade.

c) STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

The historic centre of Sheki has retained its overall integrity since its first construction due to constraints of the site in the mountain valley. It contains all the elements that justify its OUV. Together with its buffer zone, the settlement forms a coherent ensemble that has also retained its visual integrity intact.

d). STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

The historic centre of Sheki has retained its overall historical authenticity. The buildings of Sheki have been gradually built following traditional typological patterns of growth. Therefore, with few exceptions, most of the recent constructions also respect such traditional continuity. While some of the buildings are in need of repair, restoration and rehabilitation activities have been undertaken respecting the historical and architectural character of the place.

e). REQUIREMENTS FOR PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

The historic centre of Sheki has been indicated in the general urban master plan of the city as a conservation area, which is under the protection and management of the Ministry of Culture.

9. Name and contact information of official local institution/agency

1. Ministry of Culture and Tourism,

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