

Old Town of Galle and Its Fortifications (Sri Lanka)

(C451)

State of Conservation Report



DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

MINISTRY OF HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

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Chapter One

Executive Summary of the Report

The World Heritage Property (WHP) of Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications inscribed on to the World Heritage List in 1988 as the 451st site as a place founded in the 16th century by the Portuguese, Galle reached the height of its development in the 18th century, before the arrival of the British, and as the best example of a fortified city built by Europeans in South and South-East Asia, showing the interaction between European architectural styles and South Asian traditions. It is situated in Galle City, which is the Capital City of Southern Province, situated on the Southwestern tip of Sri Lanka, 119 km from Colombo, Sri Lanka. The GPS Centre point is at the Light House 6. 02450 N and 80. 21950 E, North-west corner at the Star Bastion 6. 02981 N, 80. 21378 N and South-east corner at the Black Fort 6. 02878 N, 80.22014 E.



The World Heritage Property of Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications was inscribed on the World Heritage List under criteria iv. Consideration has however been given to the fact that the criteria, as formulated in 1979, have evolved as a basis for giving more attention to “fortifications and living place” in management of the present day World Heritage Property.

During the evaluation of the site by the advisory body of UNESCO the following quotation has been made with regard to the criteria iv.

“The World Heritage Site of Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications provide an outstanding example of an urban ensemble, which illustrates the interaction of European architecture and South Asian traditions from the 16th to the 19th Centuries. Among the characteristics, which make this, an urban group of exceptional value is the original sewer system from the 17th Century, flushed with seawater controlled by a pumping station formerly activated by a windmill on the Triton bastion. However, the most salient fact is the use of European models adapted by local manpower to the geological, climatic, historic and cultural conditions of Sri Lanka. In the structure of the ramparts, coral is frequently used along with granite. In the ground layout all the measures of length, width and height conform to the regional metrology. The wide streets, planted with grass and shaded by suriyas, are lined with houses, each with its own garden and an open veranda supported by columns –another sign of the acculturation of an architecture which is European only in its basic design.”

When considering the Authorities Responsible for the Site, the State Party is represented by the Department of Archaeology as provided by the Antiquities Ordinance of 1940 and its subsequent amendments which operates under the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Cultural Affairs.

The Management of the site is vested on the Galle Heritage Foundation as provided by the Galle Heritage Foundation Act of 1994.

The Development Activities of the site is controlled by the Urban Development Authority as provided by the Urban Development Authority Act of 1978 implemented through the Galle Municipal Council.

World Heritage Site of Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications is probably one of the most complex World Heritage Sites in the world, comprised of a living city together with fortifications of archeological importance with different management requirements. During its inscription as a WHP in 1988 submission of a management plan was not required hence no management plan was in place. The living city together with its street grid, streetscape, street houses, grand public and administrative buildings and the monumental ramparts and bastions contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property. However, the threat to each attribute is different in form and degree.

Ever since its inscription on the World Heritage List in 1988 there had been several controversial issues with regard to the development activities within the site and the buffer zone of which the authenticity and integrity was in danger. In lieu of these effects a Reactive Monitoring Mission was sent to the site and the examination was carried out from 27 April to 7 May 2008 with regard to the development of the Galle Cricket Stadium and the Galle Harbor.

In 2015, Integrated Management System (IMS) was prepared by the State Party and submitted to the WHC which has been accepted. The aim of the IMF is to develop a framework for the integration of each attribute of the site within a single management system, while taking into account each of their specific management requirements. This is in operation and several steps have already been taken to implement it.

Galle is a lived-in landscape for many thousands of local people. Yet, beyond its national significance, Galle also represents an extraordinary phase in human history, displays outstanding creative and technical accomplishments and is one of the world's most important living space with remembrance of cultural heritage of dual patronage.

As Galle becomes increasingly popular with both domestic and international tourists, must meet the important challenge of conserving the site while making it even more accessible and meaningful to visitors. Managing Galle's heritage sustainably requires managing tourism.

In mid-2016, the World Heritage Committee in its Draft Decision: 40 COM 7B.47 5. e) stated to *“Develop a tourism strategy to promote and protect the cultural values of the property and ensure sustainable benefits for the local community, especially from the Port project”* together with providing a clear time table for the implementation of the Management System that was submitted by the Government of Sri Lanka in January 2015.

In 2016 Tourism Management plan was prepared by the State Party with the collaboration of other stakeholders. This Tourism Management Plan (TMP) will facilitate management and coordination of the rapidly growing tourism industry at Galle by improving visitors' experiences, minimising impacts, and creating partnerships with the tourism industry, providing benefits to local people and engaging with all stakeholders.

The main challenges identified in the WHP in Galle are –

- Minimizing negative impacts of development and tourism associated with the WHP of Galle
- Actively involve and collaborate with community in the conservation of their social and cultural values and the management of tourism at Galle
- Encourage sustainable development that does not impact on the heritage values
- Encourage local communities to participate in heritage conservation
- Increase economic benefits for local people

To overcome these challenges there were five strategies that recognized in the Tourism Management Plan, in order to conserve and enhance the values of local communities and provide economic and other benefits for local people:

1. Managing Galle as a lived in landscape;
2. Promoting economic benefits;
3. Supporting local crafts;
4. Providing social benefits; and
5. Encouraging community involvement.

Chapter Two

Responses to the Decisions of the World Heritage Committee

State Party wishes to submit the following responses on the implementation of the recommendations stated in the Decision; 42 COM 7B.17 with respect to the Old Town of Galle and Its Fortifications (Sri Lanka) (C 451)

Item 04. Decision of the World Heritage Committee

“Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, large scale plans, detail plans, and high resolution photo montages of the proposed port development before any work commences at the property, so that the Committee can review the port project and determine its appropriateness;”

Response

According to the feasibility study of Galle Port Development Project, Government of Sri Lanka planned to shift the function of the cruise terminal in Colombo Port and Galle Port to the Cruise Breadth of Galle Port, which is proposed to be built. As such, it is expected that 90% of the cruise passengers will call at Galle Port.

In 2014 this Port Development Project proposal was submitted to UNESCO WHC and approval was received. In order to commence the above project, JICA has granted a loan as financial support, which has been expired in 2015. At the time when JICA grant was expired two projects, Colombo Port Extension project and Hambantota New Port Construction project was in operation. As such Sri Lankan Government did face a huge challenge for financing the development of the Galle Port resulting a postponement of the project.

Galle Port Development plan which has been already communicated to the WHC has been delayed due to number of commercial and financial reasons. The projects have number of merits

on economical and disaster recovery and tourism prospective. Hence Sri Lanka Port Authority reserves the opportunity of implementing the projects in the future with the concurrence of WHC. Since the project is postponed, State Party wishes to state that necessary steps will be taken to submit large scale plans, detailed plans, and high resolution photo montages of the proposed port development project for the review of the Advisory Body once they are available.

Item 06. Decision of the World Heritage Committee

“Further requests the State Party to provide information on the implementation status of the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan and to clarify the financial standing of the Galle heritage foundation, including information on the financial resources available to implement the recommendations of the Tourism Management Plan.”

Response

In keeping with above decision following progress have been made with regard to the Implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan.

Implementation Status of the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan (STMP)

Galle Heritage Foundation (GHF) has commenced implementing the strategies and actions that has been identified in the STMP of 2017 by the WHC.

The activities and projects, mentioned bellow, could be identified as “on going programs” which are implemented with the collaboration of Ruhunu Tourist Bureau of Sothern Provincial Council.

- **Information Center for Tourists who visit Galle** – The information center which was established by GHF in 2016 at the entrance of the Galle Fort was totally redesigned and upgraded in 2018 and 2019 in accordance to a survey carried out to understand the needs of foreign and local visitors to the Galle Fort.

- **Regional Youngsters** were trained as area Ruhunu Tourist Bureau (RTB) guides as well as site interpreters with the contribution of GHF from 2017 to 2019. They are now registered in the list maintained by the Information Center of the GHF and are available to provide service to the visitors of Galle Fort.
- **Information Center** is manned by two officers of the GHF and one officer from the RTB and it is opened to the visitors from 9 to 16.30 on week days. GHF expects to take steps in near future to keep it open in all 07 days of the week.
- **GHF** do not have a specific officer yet who has relevant qualifications related to tourism. It is hoped to recruit a suitably qualified officer who will lead the activities in the Information Centre once the existing carder is revised and approved by the Government Treasury of Sri Lanka.
- **Web site** – Existing web site of GHF (<http://www.galleheritage.gov.lk/en/>) was totally redesigned, developed and launched the year 2019.
- **E-applications for information** – GHF has created two mobile applications related to Galle Fort in 2017 and 2019 to be used in android smart phones. Those can be downloaded through the play store as *idiscover* and *visitgalle*
- **Several Programs** are being conducted by the Information Center to educate School children by way of conducting lectures, exhibitions, workshops, etc.
- **Programs** are also being conducted by the GHF to tie the academic connection with various societies in other heritage cities.
- **Financial Standings of GHF**
 - Government of Sri Lanka is funding the GHF for their recurrent and capital expenditure which has been increased by 17% when compared with 2015.

- Discussions have been conducted with relevant local authorities to identify several income generating sources to strengthen the financial situation of GHF. Mainly it is expected to strengthen the link with important stakeholders in the tourism industry such as travel agencies.
- In order to promote Heritage Tourism, GHF expects to rent out suitable space with aesthetic values for tourism related experiences and events. These are being planned to implement in the year 2020 onwards.
- **Development of Infrastructure Facilities** in Galle Fort is planned to be implemented by the GHF with the close collaboration of the RTB in the year 2020.
- **Rampart wall of Galle Fort** is being conserved under a World Bank Fund. This is expected to be completed by end of the year 2020.
- **Some of the Infrastructure Facilities** such as the construction of two toilets and upgrading of the existing lighting system has been already completed. In the year 2020 GHF hope to construct another toilet block and upgrade the existing block, install information panels and to provide several other visitor facilities to the visitors and people of Galle Fort.
- **GHF** plans to use few unused military remains in the Rampart Walls to provide new experiences to the visitors in near future.

Item 07. Decision of the World Heritage Committee

“Requests furthermore that the State Party provide information on the measures taken to ensure the appropriate quality and number of staff necessary to implement the integrated Management Plan (IMP) and the sustainable Tourism Management Plan:

Response

In keeping with above decision following progress have been made.

Information on the measures taken to ensure the appropriate quality and number of staff necessary to implement the integrated Management Plan (IMP)

- It has been identified that existing staff of the GHF need to upgrade their qualifications and capacity to take up the challenges stipulated in the IMP and the STP.
- Apart from the above a new organizational structure in the view of creating new carder posts in the GHF has been identified and prepared with the view of providing special attention to implement the IMP and STP and to accelerate relevant work identified in the two plans.
- GHF hopes to recruit officers in the fields of Architecture, Archaeology, Tourism, International Relations and etc. in the proposed organizational structure to provide better implementation of the two plans.
- Relevant Ministry is making their efforts to finalize the process of obtaining approval for the new carder posts in the proposed organizational structure of the GHF.