

# **Old town of Galle and its Fortifications (Sri Lanka)**

## **State of Conservation Report**



**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
GALLE HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

**MINISTRY OF BUDDHASASANA, ELIGIOUS AND  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

**THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA  
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# CONTENTS

## Page No.

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 1. Executive Summary of the Report                          | 03 - 04 |
| 2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee | 05 - 11 |

# Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications (Sri Lanka) (C451)

Decision 44COM 7B.3

State of Conservation Report

## 01 Executive Summary

The WHP of Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications inscribed onto the World Heritage List in 1988 as the 451<sup>st</sup> 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.

The **Operational Guidelines** (OG) for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention has been prepared by the World Heritage Committee with the aim of facilitating the implementation of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage by setting forth the procedure for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger, the protection and conservation of World Heritage properties, the granting of International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund and the mobilization of national and international support in favor of the Convention. According to the section 108 of the OG-2013 *“Each nominated property should have an appropriate management plan or other documented management system which must specify how the Outstanding Universal Value of a property should be preserved, preferably through participatory means.”* It further states that *“the purpose of a management system is to ensure the effective protection of the nominated property for present and future generations.”*

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 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.

A Management Plan is a basic requirement for all World Heritage properties as per the Operational

Guidelines, a draft management plan have been submitted to the reactive monitoring mission was carried out from 4 to 20 February 2010. The WHC in its decisions has noted the submission of the Galle Management Plan (2010) by the State Party, and urges the State Party to continue his efforts and develop more detailed Conservation Plans as the submitted Management plan is very general. In keeping with these decisions of the WHC, then the Department of Archaeology and the Galle Heritage Foundation has taken steps to prepare a Management Plan with the aim of developing 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.

So The Integrated Management Plan was launched in January 2015. Initial steps were taken to carry out the management of the World Heritage Property of Galle Fort in keeping with the objectives of this plan so that the architectural, social, scientific and user values of the site would be maintained or enhanced.

The Tourism Management Plan was launched in August 2016. The key objectives of the TMP were :

- (a) Promoting positive visitor experiences,
- (b) Partnering with the Industry and reducing negative site impacts;
- (c) Engaging with stakeholders and providing benefits to local communities;

## Decision 44 COM 7B.37

### Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications (Sri Lanka) (C451)

#### Responses to the Decisions of the World Heritage Committee

##### Decision of the World Heritage Committee

*3. Notes that the major project for developing Galle Port is currently postponed, and requests the State Party to inform the World Heritage Centre immediately in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, should the project be reactivated, and to provide all the necessary documents requested by the previous decisions of the Committee, for review by the Advisory Bodies;*

##### Response

Proposed Galle Port Development Project t Action regarding this proposed project has been suspended. The Sri Lanka Ports Authority is represented in the Board of Management of the Galle Heritage Foundation. They have given an assurance to provide all necessary information and documents to the World Heritage Committee if a decision is taken to reactivate this project.

##### Decision of the World Heritage Committee

*5. Also requests the State Party, in the light of the importance of the IMP to deal with planning and development controls, and conservation in the property, to provide the following details:*

- 1. Confirmation of progress with the implementation of the 2016-18 IMP Action Plan,*
- 2. Confirmation that coordination between GHF and other conservation and development authorities has been strengthened, as recommended by the 2010 Reactive Monitoring mission,*
- 3. Confirmation of the number and type of applications for developments within the property that were submitted, approved and denied over the last two years, along with the criteria used for these assessments,*
- 4. Conservation work that undertaken or ongoing,*
- 5. Progress with the drafting of a Conservation Plan,*
- 6. Progress with the development of a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (rSOUV);*

##### Response

01.Key objects of IMP Action plan were Identification of World Heritage Property (WHP) and its values, Updating overall legislation related to the World Heritage Property, Updating overall Legislations related to the World Heritage Property, Preparation of a Planning and Policy related to the World Heritage Property, Operational Task Management of the World Heritage Property, Create Community Awareness within the World Heritage Property,

Management of the Visitors of the World Heritage Property, Promoting Information and Research of the World Heritage Property and Ensuring Sustainability of Management. In keeping with the IMP Action plan 40% of approaches and steps have been taken. In the last few years in the whole country due to the Easter Sunday bomb attack, the covid-19 pandemic and the economic crisis, implementing process go slow down and have to review this IMP Action Plan.

02. The Integrated Management Plan was launched in January 2015. Initial steps were taken to carry out the management of the World Heritage Property of Galle Fort in keeping with the objectives of this plan so that the architectural, social, scientific and user values of the site would be maintained or enhanced.

The Galle Heritage Foundation continues to be the pivotal organization in managing the site. The GHF Board of Management is the main decision making body. It comprises of 26 members, 14 of whom are ex-officio members, including the Mayor of the City of Galle, the Director-General of Archaeology, the District Secretary, the Divisional Secretary, representatives of the community of Galle Fort. etc. The BOM meets once in two months when the progress of the IMP is discussed.

03. This is carried out through the Planning Committee for Galle Fort. This Committee comprises of the following institutions :

- (1) The Urban Development Authority
- (2) The Galle Heritage Foundation
- (3) The Department of Archaeology
- (4) The Galle Municipal Council

Any prospective developer has to submit his plan to this Committee. The plan has to be prepared by a chartered architect. The plan is then processed and a site inspection is carried out by the above authorities collectively. If there are any features in the plan which would negatively impact on the World Heritage property, the developer is asked to amend the plan accordingly, after which a final decision is taken.

Number of plans passed and rejected :

Year	No. of application	Approved	Rejected	Pending	Uses		
					Residential	Commercial	Mixed
2020	15	13	0	2	8	5	2
2021	17	13	1	3	8	8	1
Up to now 2022	11	10	0	1	2	3	6

#### 4. Conservation work that undertake or ongoing

(a) A major conservation of the Galle Fort was carried out under the Strategic Cities Development Programme which was funded by the World Bank. The value of the work done under this programme was SLR 600 million. The work on this project was started in 2018 and concluded by the end of 2021.

Under this programme, a granite paved walking path was constructed covering the entire length of the rampart wall, general repairs were carried out to the ramparts, several closed up dungeons were opened and converted to museum galleries, a monument lighting scheme installed and the turfed areas landscaped. This has considerably enhanced the quality of visitor experience.

#### **Positive Developments which have taken place recently :**

- (1) The GHF prepared conservation plans for 5 prominent state owned heritage buildings within Galle Fort. Conservation work on three of these buildings has begun and one completed.
- (2) The privately owned Commercial Bank building originally built in the 19th century has been fully conserved.
- (3) Two old buildings in the old Dutch Cemetery on Pedlar Street, owned by the Galle Municipal Council have been conserved and put to commercial use. The old tombs in these premises are open to public viewing.
- 4) The Old Building of Post Office Renovated by UDA for adaptive reuse.

05. Drafting of the Conservation plan has been delayed due to the pandemic situation and many other reasons. This task is supposed to be done as soon as possible.

06. State party has already prepared and sent a RSOUV o the World Heritage Centre for comments. They have sent their comments to ICOMAS and hope to communicate with

ICOMAS regarding that and will take action to send to the World Heritage Centre.

Decision of the World Heritage Committee

1. *Further requests the State Party to clarify how the GHF's resources allow it to implement the IMP and the STMP, and notably to provide details on:*
  1. *The GHF's organizational structure and how many posts remain unfilled,*
  2. *The GHF's annual budget and how this has increased since 2015 in relation to baselines and taking inflation into account,*
  3. *The development of a long-term funding strategy, as previously requested*

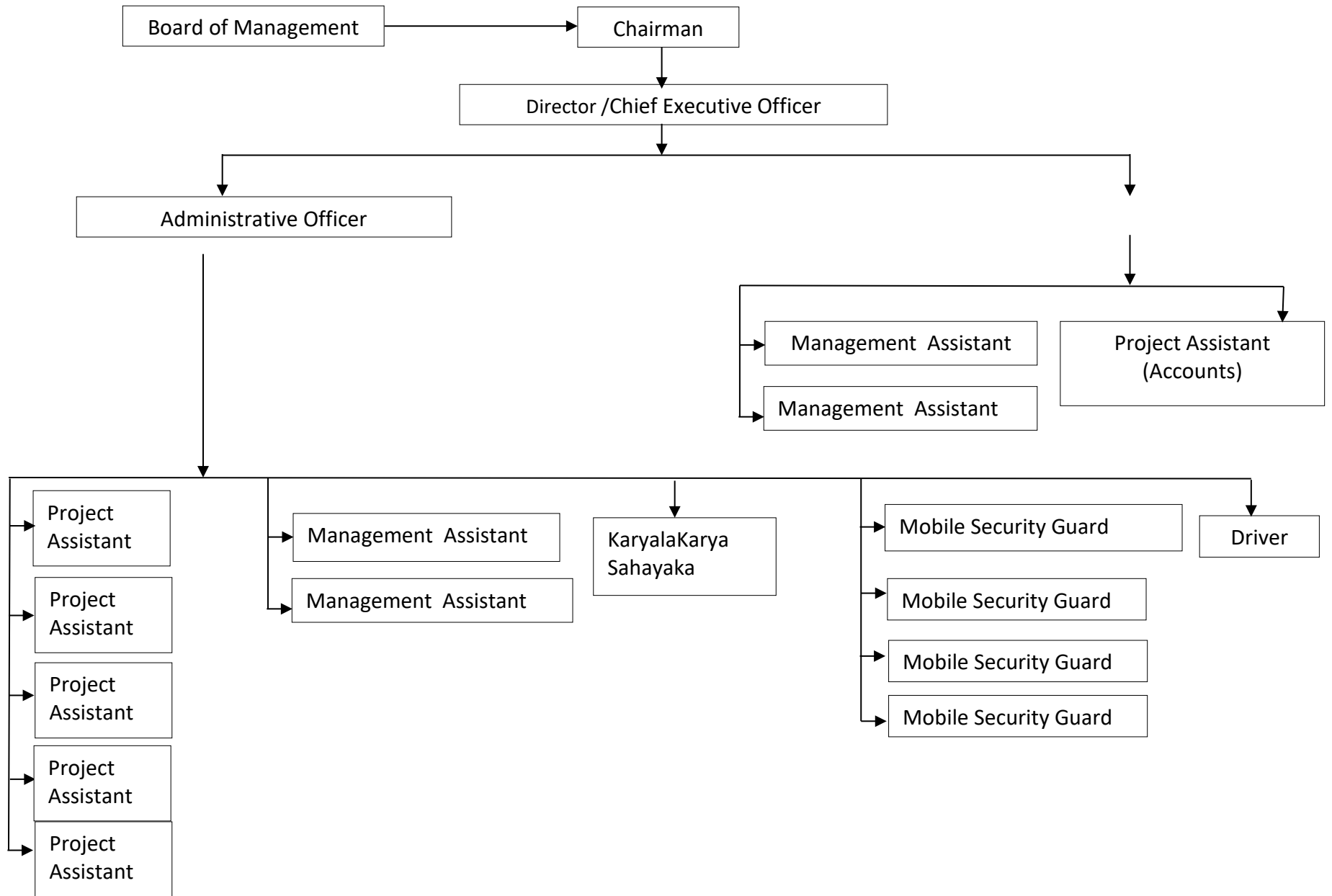
Response

**Strengthening the staff of the GHF**

The following table gives the staff increases which have taken place recently. Further increases are expected next year.-

<b>Staff</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2022 November</b>
Managerial	07	16
Clerical	04	04
Labour	04	08





## Financial Sustainability of the GHF

Funds provided by the Government and self-generated funds, for the last 7 years :

Year	Government Allocation	Self Generated Funds
2015	Rs Million 18	Rs Million 05
2016	Rs Million 20	Rs Million 05
2017	Rs Million 26	Rs Million 05
2018	Rs Million 12	Rs Million 04
2019	Rs Million 24	Rs Million 05
2020	Rs Million 20	Rs Million 04
2021	Rs Million 36	Rs Million 04

It would be noted that there has been a gradual increase of funds provided by the government. Any decrease is due to serious economic problems which the Government has been undergoing. However, this year three galleries, namely, the Moon Bastion Gallery, the Star Bastion Gallery and the Black Fort Gallery have been opened to public viewing and the GHF receives the ticket income. Further, the old Police Residence building on Church Street is being fully conserved and is due to be opened for appropriate commercial use during the first half of 2023. This building once completed will have 7 trade stalls and the GHF will gain a significant revenue from rent.

Other self-generated income :

- a) Income from renting locations for cultural events
- b) Income from granting permission for filming including drone filming within Galle Fort

### Decision of the World Heritage Committee

*7. Invites the State Party to consider the development and implementation of capacity-building activities for staff working at the property*

### Response

Capacity building programs

01. Awareness programs for police officers
02. Conducting lectures to school children
03. Awareness program with stakeholders in Galle fort such as mobile vendors.
04. Supporting to the university students who do researches in Galle fort
05. Capacity development program for tour guides and stakeholders in the tourism sector
06. Conducting workshops with relevant government officers about heritage management

### Decision of the World Heritage Committee

*08 Further notes that many of the recommendations of the STMP require additional reports, notably on traffic management, visitor capacity, and the preparation of a masterplan, and requests furthermore the State Party to provide details on:*

1. How much of the STMP has been implemented,
2. What financial resources are available for its completion,

3. *The appointment of a Tourism Officer at the GHF,*
4. *Progress with additional reports (e.g. traffic management, visitor capacity) and the draft master plan, and/or how and when the State Party intends to undertake or commission these tasks, and/or how the State Party intends to take into account the recommendations of the STMP,*
5. *Any interim arrangements made to improve the traffic situation in the old town;*

### Response

1. 30% of the STMP has been implemented.
2. Presently there are no financial resources available. It has to be find Funds.
3. The Visitor Centre of the GHF has been improved. A senior officer of the Southern Province Tourism Bureau is now permanently attached to this centre. Regular training of tour guides is also conducted through this centre.
4. Due to pandemic situation there is no considerable amount of visitors for Galle Fort. Therefore it is supposed to be prepared the Traffic management and visitor capacity reports and the Master plan in near future.
5. The GHF has been working closely with the Traffic Committee of the Galle Municipal Council to implement a suitable traffic plan for Galle Fort. Already, the entry of heavy and/or high vehicles (above 5 tons in weight/above 3 meters in height) to Galle Fort is prohibited.

### Decision of the World Heritage Committee

*09 Requests moreover the State Party to inform the World Heritage Centre, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines of any project that might negatively impact on the property's OUV before any decision is made than would be difficult to reverse, notably regarding proposals for a new stand at the Cricket Club;*

### Response

There are no such new proposals at the moment.