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Evaluations of nominations to be processed on an emergency basis

ICOMOS report for the World Heritage Committee
18th extraordinary session, Paris (France), 24 January 2023

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ICOMOS International Secretariat
11, rue du Séminaire de Conflans
94220 Charenton-le-Pont
France
Tel: 33 (0)1 41 94 17 59

Evaluations of nominations to be processed on an emergency basis

I Cultural properties

A Arab States

Nominations to be processed on an emergency basis

Lebanon [C 1702]

Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli 1

Yemen [C 1700]

Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate 12

B Europe – North America

Nomination to be processed on an emergency basis

Ukraine [C 1703]

The historic center of the port city of Odesa 25

I Cultural properties

A Arab States

Nominations to be processed on an emergency basis

B Europe – North America

Nomination to be processed on an emergency basis

Rachid Karami International Fair (Lebanon) No 1702

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli

Location

Tripoli

North Lebanon

Brief description

Erected in Tripoli, the second largest city in Lebanon and the capital of the Northern Governorate, the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli was designed by Oscar Niemeyer between 1962-1967. It occupies an elliptical area not far from the coast to the west of the Mamluk historic core of the city and to the south-southeast of El-Mina Ottoman historic district. The main featuring building of the fairground is a huge bent, oblong and covered exhibition space, complemented by a series of smaller "sculptural" structures, which accommodate educational, recreational, and cultural functions. The buildings are connected by water ponds, passages and green areas and are completed by housing and administrative zones and service infrastructures.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*.

Included in the Tentative List

11 July 2019 as "La foire internationale Rachid Karameh de Tripoli-Liban"

Background

The nomination was submitted to the World Heritage Centre by the State Party on 8 April 2022 to be evaluated under emergency evaluation procedure as set out in paragraphs 161 and 162 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. It was transmitted to ICOMOS on the same date.

The nomination was submitted by the State Party as an emergency nomination because of the alarming conservation conditions, the lack of financial resources at the national level due to the country's unprecedented economic and financial crisis, and the latent risks of unsympathetic development proposals for the revitalisation of the International Fair. Coherently, the State Party also nominates the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli to be simultaneously inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 18 to 22 July 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 31 May 2022 requesting further information about the history of the project, the attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription, and clarification on the reasons for submitting a nomination under the emergency procedure.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 14 July 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

9 September 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

The Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli is located to the west of the Mamluk historic core of the city and to the south-southeast of El-Mina Ottoman historic district, and it occupies an oval-shaped area not far from the coast, at the time a yet undeveloped land. It was designed by Oscar Niemeyer between 1962 and 1967 and built between 1967 and 1975.

The International Fair was commissioned and built in Tripoli, and not in Beirut, as a statement of post-independence modernisation, social liberalisation, and a pivotal programmatic action to reduce regional inequalities and promote multipolar development.

To implement these ambitions, the Lebanese government sought to hire an internationally renowned architect and the choice fell on Oscar Niemeyer. The Brazilian architect arrived in Lebanon in July 1962 and spent two months in the country where he drafted a proposal for the overall plan of the International Fair.

The initial idea of the architect was to integrate the plan of the International Fair into a larger urban development plan for the area between the fairground and the coast, to act as a third modern urban pole. The layout of the International Fair complex was to act as the matrix of a new radial neighbourhood of social housing, interspersed

with vegetation. An international highway toward Northern Syria was supposed to cross the oval-shaped area of the fairground to ensure good accessibility and strategic positioning.

The main concept of the fairground layout was already laid down in this initial draft plan: a large-scale, curved and rectangular canopy to house national exhibition spaces and smaller structures dedicated to complementary functions, and interconnected by ponds and gardens.

Upon ICOMOS' request, the State Party further detailed the historical development of the nominated property and provided scanned copies of historic drawings.

The Lebanese authorities discarded the idea of the larger urban plan and the design for the fairground project implementation was modified. The international highway was built tangentially to the fairground area, which lost its egg shape and became an ellipse, and the orientation of the curved covered canopy was mirrored along its longer axis, thus showing the concavity toward the old Mamluk city instead of the coast. Furthermore, the authorities asked Niemeyer to fence the fairground area for security reasons. Despite initial objections, Niemeyer proposed a few sketches for a fence in concrete panels and vertical openings, to preserve partly the sense of openness that he sought for the area of the International Fair.

Niemeyer chose a bare reinforced concrete as the construction material for all the buildings and the fence itself, as it offered exceptional structural capacity and wide aesthetic potential, which he experimented already in Brasilia.

Visitors could access the complex from the south, through a large ramp conducting to a portico, which is reflected in an adjacent water pond and from which it is possible to enjoy an open view over the International Fair complex.

The structuring element of the fairground is the Grand Canopy, an immense bent, covered and cantilevered structure of 70 metres wide and 640 metres long. Two rows of columns carry the inverted beams that support the roof. The covered structure was designed to gather all national pavilions, giving unity to the fairground, which would otherwise result in a fragmentary layout.

The Guest House is situated near the entrance. Originally conceived as a luxury hotel, it is a squared inward-looking, one-storey building with an inner open-air atrium, inspired by the traditional *hosh*.

Most structures of the International Fair are located east of the Grand Canopy, connected by passages, and organised around reflecting pools.

Inspired by the Palácio do Itamaraty in Brasilia, the Lebanese Pavilion is a squared porched building with pointed arches, echoing elements of the Lebanese traditional architecture.

The Experimental Theatre is housed under a dome that measures sixty metres in diameter: it was conceived as a flexible stage with a rotating circular scene. The concrete shell was finished in 1975 but the equipment was never installed.

A Space Museum and a helipad are located on the opposite side of the Experimental Theatre. The exhibition spaces were planned underground, whilst the helipad is conceived as a circular sculptural element rising from the basement.

A conic pavilion with a star-shaped plan, named Miniature "Manège", stands near the secondary entrance (opened in the 1990s) probably intended for children as there were a playground and a labyrinth nearby which are now lost.

The water tower with its roof restaurant is a landmark of the fairground and forms a counterpoint to the grandiose arch of the Open-Air Theatre. It consists of an ascending ceremonial ramp, the Grand Arch, marking the entrance of the theatre, a trapezoidal parterre descending toward the floating island of the scene, which is covered by an acoustic concrete shell.

Niemeyer also conceived a housing section, which included a Housing Museum, an Individual Residence Prototype, experimenting with the free plan, and a Collective Housing Prototype, which consists of a series of duplexes with double-height terraced gardens.

Service and administrative buildings were situated on the west, facing the convex side of the Grand Canopy.

Niemeyer was responsible for the architectural design, whilst the executive and tendering documents were prepared by Lebanese engineering firms with experience in large-scale projects in Lebanon or in the Arab world. The construction works were in an advanced state of implementation, with most of the concrete structures completed and some buildings already finished with furniture and equipment, when they were suddenly interrupted in 1975 due to the outbreak of the war. The site became a military camp, and the structures were damaged by firefights and looted.

After the end of the war, the International Fair was the object of two major recovery interventions, in 1993 and 1997. The latter implied the installation of glass façades and the construction of cement walls on the southern wing of the canopy, betraying the transparency and openness sought by Niemeyer for this structure.

The most invasive intervention occurred in the Collective Housing Prototype, which was converted into a hotel in 2000 and from which the duplexes and the loggias, which were featuring elements of the prototype, were removed.

A project proposal for the creation of a theme park on the fairground was rejected by civil society and was hence abandoned. A further proposal in 2006 was to turn the International Fair into a permanent fair for Chinese

product imports but conflicts in Lebanon and then in Syria stopped the project.

Attempts to revive the nominated property continued and, in 2016, a project of adaptive reuse was implemented at the Guest House to be used as a furniture cluster.

In 2019, the Lebanese government initiated a project for the creation of a “Knowledge and Innovation Centre” (KIC) at the western end of the fairground, including Niemeyer’s International Fair administration and service buildings. An international competition was launched, and the winning project selected by the jury was a scheme proposing an underground intervention. However, due to the economic crisis, this project has been suspended.

The nominated property covers 72ha of the elliptical area set aside for the fairground. No buffer zone, as per paragraphs 103 to 105 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, has been proposed.

State of Conservation

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription have greatly suffered from damages caused by firefights, their use by military forces, looting, lack of maintenance, and neglect and they are for the most part in bad to critical conditions and urgently need emergency stabilisation measures. The nomination dossier provides a synthetic yet complete overview of the state of conservation of the nominated property and of each building and structure that was part of Niemeyer’s design. Only the Guest House, rehabilitated in 2016, the southern part of the Grand Canopy, restored to function between 1993 and 1997, and the front part of the open spaces and landscaping are judged in satisfactory conditions.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the attributes of the nominated property are advanced and severe structural deterioration of the concrete, subject to carbonatation, corrosion of steel reinforcements, causing structural instability and localised collapses. Despite the sensitisation campaigns and the mobilisation of the civil society and the heritage community to preserve the complex, interventions to recover and use it have been minimal and the International Fair has turned into an inaccessible and unused island within the city. Furthermore, over the years, large-scale projects to introduce new, incompatible uses were proposed and fortunately stopped by protests or unfavourable economic or geopolitical instability. The lack of an overall vision for the future of the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli and a comprehensive urban policy to guide the reuse and rehabilitation of the International Fair and its surroundings in a coherent manner is a critical issue, due to the fact that separate land use plans for Tripoli and El-Mina are

proposing differing regulations for the International Fair area.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli is an outstanding example of urban planning and architecture of the 20th century.
- The vibrant Niemeyer’s Brazilian modernist architecture, integrated with elements inspired by the local traditional architecture, was meant to convey the aspirations of the newly independent peoples to participate in the global process of modernisation in the Arab Region.
- The masterful use of reinforced concrete to create sculptural elements, the scale of the undertaking, the innovative typology of the design of the International Fair, based on a large-scale structure organising the whole fairground and providing order to the exhibition pavilions, counterpointed by smaller structures for socio-cultural functions serving social-reformative and educational aims, make the nominated property one of the most representative architectural works of the 20th century in the Arab States.

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information, the key attributes of the nominated property include the fairground layout, with the curved large-scale Grand Canopy, as a space-generating element; the sequence of smaller sculptural structures, shaped by the masterful use of reinforced concrete, connected by reflecting pools, passageways as well as ascending and descending vast ramps, offering sweeping views over the complex and a dynamic experience of the space, the tropical flavour of the green area. Specific attributes reflecting the infusion of Niemeyer’s “Brazilian modernism” with Lebanese architectural tradition include the entrance portico, the former Guest House with its introverted space and the use of natural local limestone, the square shape, the screening perimeter porch, and the pointed arches of the Lebanese Pavilion. The double loggias in the duplex and the organisation of its ground floor of the Collective Housing Prototype were featuring attributes of this building but have been lost.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed along three strands: the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli is an outstanding example of the 20th-century Modern Movement in architecture in the Arab world; it is an inspiring example of “Brazilian modernism” adapted to the Arab region and it is an outstanding example of a new typology for large-scale exhibition complexes. The analysis has first examined World Heritage properties and sites in the Tentative Lists within the Arab States region belonging to the 20th-century heritage theme, concluding

that these sites significantly differ from the nominated property in terms of values and attributes, even though some of them take part in the same historic and cultural period. It has then examined the participation in the modernisation process of the Arab Near East by other international protagonists of the Modern Movement and the resulting outcomes were that none of the works could compete with the nominated property. The nominated property has been then compared with other works designed or realised by Oscar Niemeyer either in Brazil or in Algeria and finally with World Heritage properties linked to the exhibition theme. The comparison concludes by stating that the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli is a unique example of a large-scale innovative modernist exhibition complex typology that relies on a simple layout and powerful large-scale structure to organise the space and the functions to achieve simplicity and harmony.

ICOMOS observes that the comparative analysis would have benefitted from being deepened and expanded in relation to the work undertaken by architects of the Modern Movement in emerging independent states in the Mashreq region; to Niemeyer's body of work globally, by examining the University of Brasília, the Ibirapuera Park in São Paulo; and by taking into account also the quasi-contemporary examples of Damascus international Fair (Syria, 1954), and Baghdad International Fair (Iraq, 1964).

The comparative analysis could have expanded as well on the architectural and urban planning outcomes that resulted from the socio-cultural ferments and modernisation aspirations that pervaded the Arab region and that led to experimentation in architecture with the introduction and adaptation of the principles and language and the involvement of renowned architects of the Modern Movement.

Despite the above-mentioned weaknesses, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis has proved the relevance of the nominated property for the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii) and (iv).

Criterion (i): *represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the International Fair complex represents a major creation expressing the principles and ideals of the Modern Movement as interpreted by Niemeyer's "Brazilian modernism" but successfully integrated into the Arab Near East context. The scale and monumentality of the International Fair complex combined with a project of a modern urban core for Tripoli conveys the ambitions for a new development strategy for the country, the search

for modernity, and a new identity of the newly independent peoples in the Arab States.

ICOMOS observes that the initial design of the International Fair, which Niemeyer conceived as the matrix for the expansion of Tripoli toward the sea, was not accepted by the Lebanese authorities and was not implemented.

Hence the urban breath of the original design of the whole International Fair complex, which was an original conception that intended to give a prominent role to the International Fair in orienting the future development of modern Tripoli, could not be achieved.

For the nominated property, Niemeyer used an architectural repertoire which he developed elsewhere with more successful formal outcomes. In this case, technical drawings were developed by Lebanese architects and engineers; even if they were checked by Niemeyer and his office, the architect could not directly supervise the work but only visited the site in 1966-1967.

Therefore, ICOMOS considers that the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli, from its conception to its realisation, also in comparison with other works by Niemeyer, does not meet criterion (i).

Criterion (ii): *exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property expresses the modernisation movement that developed in the Arab Near East after the 1950s. The effective integration of Niemeyer's Brazilian modernist principles into the Lebanese context also reflects an important interchange in the developments of architecture. The close collaboration between Niemeyer and the Lebanese engineers who prepared the technical and executive documentation and supervised the execution demonstrates a remarkable exchange of technics across continents. A whole generation of Lebanese architects were inspired by Niemeyer's oeuvre, which is reflected in their works across Lebanon and the region; engineers and contractors acquired a precious experience with the design and execution of challenging reinforced concrete structures.

ICOMOS requested additional information to the State Party with regard to the exchanges between Niemeyer and Lebanese engineers and architects. This information has shed some further light on this collaboration between Niemeyer and the local team of architects and engineers. ICOMOS considers that it is undeniable that Niemeyer's oeuvre influenced Lebanese professionals and their work, and, despite the weaknesses of the comparative analysis, criterion (ii) has been demonstrated.

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli represents an outstanding innovative concept of large-scale modernist exhibition complex that unifies the usually fragmented layout of the fairground. Based on one single main structure hosting all pavilions, the nominated property achieves simplicity and discipline in its composition. This new architectural concept powerfully reflects the aspiration of the newly independent Lebanese people to participate in the global modernisation process through an architectural language more suitable to the Arab Near East context.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified as the concept proposed for the layout of the fairground was innovative in bringing together under one large covered space all countries' exhibition pavilions and complementing it with sculptural elements hosting cultural, educational, and recreational functions. The design of the International Fair tangibly reflects the people's aspirations of emerging new independent states in the Arab Near East to find their way into modernity through societal and economic development and principles of equality, solidarity, and spiritual uplifting.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iv), but that criterion (i) has not been demonstrated.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli relies on the overall layout of the fairground, the elliptical area set aside for its construction, the recognisability of Niemeyer's design of the spatial organisation of major and smaller structures of the International Fair, the rhythm and monumental dynamicity offered to the composition by the height differences of passages and large ramps, of the architectural forms generated by the skilful use of bare reinforced concrete and of its texture.

According to the nomination dossier, the nominated property includes within its boundaries the entirety of the fairground area with all Niemeyer's designed buildings and structures and the attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription.

The State Party clearly explains that most of the structures have suffered damages and looting during the 1975-1990 war, neglect, and lack of maintenance, leading to a critical state of their conservation. Some interventions that occurred after the war made possible the reuse of some parts of the International Fair but have also negatively impacted the integrity of the design, such as

the delimitation of spaces with concrete walls under the canopy. The refurbishment of the Collective Housing Prototype, which has drastically altered the fabric to the extent that the design is no longer legible, has been particularly severe.

ICOMOS notes that the original architectural and urban design by Niemeyer has suffered alterations since its inception. The urban plan that was envisaged for the residential area toward the coast was abandoned, the initial orientation toward the sea of the Grand Canopy was modified, the final elliptical shape of the fairground differs from the initial design, the highway that was supposed to be integrated into the fairground was built tangent to it. Further changes and degradations have occurred, as clearly explained in the nomination dossier.

However, despite the many losses, alterations, and degradations, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property and its main attributes retain their fundamental integrity, although extremely vulnerable, and that a conservation programme can assist to recover it further.

Authenticity

According to the nomination dossier, attributes supporting the authenticity of the property under the proposed justification for inscription include its location, which made the International Fair the focal point of the new urban development of Tripoli; the form and design of the layout and of the individual structures, which have been executed according to Niemeyer's design, with little loss of their authenticity despite the decay and some changes that can be removed, with the exception of the substantial transformation of the Collective Housing Prototype. Reinforced concrete has been harnessed skilfully to achieve architectural form through sophisticated structures and shells and this is still clearly perceivable despite the suffered degradations. In terms of its use, the nomination dossier notes that the International Fair was never used for its intended purpose and today, restoring the complex to host only that function does not appear feasible. Therefore, new compatible uses will have to be identified, ensuring that the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property is sustained, and the spirit of its original design respected.

ICOMOS considers that, despite the changes and degradations suffered, the authenticity of the nominated property has been demonstrated. However, due to the abandonment of the plan initially proposed for urban development that accompanied the design of the fairground, the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli cannot be considered an example of an urban project, as the subsequent development around the International Fair was not based on an overall design linked to the International Fair. Due to the current advanced decay of the structures forming the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli, its authenticity is extremely vulnerable.

Boundaries

The nomination dossier states that the entirety of the 72ha-elliptical area of the fairground comprises the nominated property. However, it also explains that the Law N°274-10/03/2022 adopted in March 2022 by the Lebanese Parliament establishes a “core zone” – a 500x800-metre rectangle encompassing all buildings, structures, and arrangements designed by Niemeyer – and the extant part of the ellipse acts as a “buffer zone”.

ICOMOS notes that these definitions may be confusing as the wording is similar to those used in the World Heritage context. However, ICOMOS considers that, for the purpose of providing an additional layer of protection to the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli, no buffer zone according to the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* has been proposed. ICOMOS observes that consideration should be given to defining a buffer zone encircling the nominated oval-shaped area.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli can be considered an outstanding example of a specialised architectural complex reflecting the embrace of modernity by emerging independent nations in the Arab world in the important, although short-lived “Renaissance” period. The choice of Niemeyer for this project reflects Lebanon’s intention to take part in the larger modernisation process occurring globally through economic and social reforms inspired by principles of equity and attentive to educational and social needs. The urban dimension of Niemeyer’s initial project proposal was not retained by the Lebanese authorities and the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli remained isolated from the neighbourhood that grew around it. Despite weaknesses in the comparative analysis, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property justifies consideration for the World Heritage List under criteria (ii) and (iv). The Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli can be seen as a prominent example of cultural exchange both in terms of the collaboration, despite the distance, between Niemeyer and the Lebanese professionals who implemented his architectural design, but more importantly for Niemeyer’s long-lasting influence to which Lebanese professionals were exposed to, thanks to this large-scale project. The innovative concept of the International Fair, bringing together under one single canopy the exhibition pavilions of all states and complementing this unitary design with cultural and recreational functions housed in buildings connected by paths, squares and ponds is an outstanding example of a fair complex reflecting the ambitions of independent Lebanon and a renaissance period that invested the whole Arab Region and emerging independent nations. The integrity and authenticity of the attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription are extremely vulnerable due to the advanced decay and structural failure of several structures, as well as abandonment, the inconsistent planning provisions, and the lack of an overall vision for the future reuse and rehabilitation of the nominated property. The boundaries of the nominated

property, covering the whole oval-shaped fairground, can be considered adequate; on the other hand, a reflection on the need for a buffer zone for the nominated property is needed.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

The documentation concerning the nominated property consists mainly of the archival material that has been produced during the project and its implementation. No systematic geometric and technical survey and documentation of the as-built structures has been prepared so far, nor is a detailed condition assessment available.

It would be of utmost importance that a programme for carrying out such surveys and assessments of the buildings be elaborated, funded, and implemented as a basis for conservation and further research.

Archives conserving documents of the nominated property are found in different places: at the Arab Centre for Architecture, at the Fair Administration Archive, at Rice University in Houston (Texas, USA), where an archival fund on Niemeyer in Tripoli is preserved, in the Oscar Niemeyer Foundation, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), in the private archives of the contractors and engineers who worked on the project and of collectors.

It would be an important contribution to the knowledge and the conservation of the International Fair complex if a digitation project could be funded and digital documentation preserved at the various publicly accessible archives, to promote research and ensure that original project documentation is not lost due to disasters or accidents.

Conservation measures

Since the 1990s, measures to recover the nominated property have been lacking or uneven and occasional, addressing unsystematically individual structures or portions of them. Some interventions (e.g., on the Collective Housing Prototype) have also had serious negative impacts on the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Recently, the adaptive reuse of the Guest House has provided new use to this structure whilst safeguarding the design concept. To progressively bring back to function the complex, Lebanese authorities decided to create a “Knowledge and Innovation Centre (KIC)” in an area (7,5ha) west of the Grand Canopy incorporating Niemeyer’s administration and service buildings. In 2019 an international competition was launched to choose the best project solution. The competition brief underlined the need for the urban and architectural concept proposal to ensure the conservation of the International Fair complex building as well as the design concept in order not to compromise the possibility for the complex to be successfully nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List. An international jury selected a project that proposed underground architectural solutions and considered the layout of the International Fair complex.

The approval of the Law N°274-10/03/2022 on the Reorganization of Rachid Karami International Fair in March 2022 set the framework for the protection and the conservation of the nominated property; a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is under preparation and scheduled for completion by the end of 2022. The structural analysis of the Open-Air Theatre and Grand Arch has been conducted in 2022.

The observations of the technical evaluation mission revealed that no active conservation measure is being implemented. The only action related to conservation is the preparation of the CMP. ICOMOS considers that finalising the CMP is very important to ensure that conservation priorities are set out before any intervention to the International Fair complex. However, an emergency stabilisation programme should be developed and implemented with the utmost urgency, to save the most critically endangered structures.

ICOMOS considers that CMP should achieve a detailed condition assessment of all buildings, structures, and arrangements of the nominated property and should set out policy and guidance to orient in a consistent manner the conservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of the buildings respecting the key attributes of the nominated property and the way in which each attribute contribute to conveying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

Monitoring

Monitoring is not addressed in the nomination dossier.

ICOMOS considers that a monitoring programme must be developed following the implementation of a joint ICOMOS/WHC reactive monitoring mission and the development of a programme of corrective measures to achieve a Desired state of conservation for the nominated property if the World Heritage Committee decides to inscribe the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli on the World Heritage List and simultaneously on the List of World Heritage in Danger as proposed by the State Party.

ICOMOS considers that a comprehensive geometric, architectural and structural survey of all Niemeyer's structures are urgent as a robust updated basis for any conservation programme and emergency stabilisation. Urgent stabilisation measures are also needed to avoid further collapse and loss of authentic fabric at several structures. The completion of the CMP should be pursued with maximum urgency; this plan should include a detailed condition assessment of all buildings and should set out guidelines to orient in a consistent manner the conservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the various buildings and structures that respect the attributes conveying the proposed justification for inscription. Careful documentation of the green areas and of the paths is also recommended. ICOMOS also considers that, before an overall vision for the future of the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli based on its proposed Outstanding Universal Value is set out, any project addressing only parts of the nominated property should be avoided. In this regard, the halt of the KIC project due

to the country's economic crisis offer the opportunity to appraise the potential impacts of this proposal on the attributes and values of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that a monitoring system is developed based on the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, the Desired state of conservation and corrective measures for the property, and is conceived for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli is a public establishment under the authority of the Ministry of Economy; it was created by the Decree-law 4027 issued on 4 May 1960; the land on which it was built was completely expropriated in 1961 and became a public property. The Law N° 274-10/03/2022 adopted in March 2022 on the Reorganization of Rachid Karami International Fair sets up protection mechanisms for the nominated property. All buildings and elements designed by Oscar Niemeyer are enclosed in a rectangular "core zone". In this area, new constructions are forbidden and any rehabilitation, conservation, or work in the interior of the building is subject to the approval of the Ministry of Culture. In the buffer zone new constructions are not forbidden but any intervention must be approved by the Ministry of Culture.

Two different and uncoordinated master plans – one for Tripoli and one for El-Mina – apply to the fairground, which is split into two parts. Furthermore, according to the nomination dossier these are mere land-use plans. Regulations and land use for the area of the International Fair and its surroundings differ from one plan to another. The El-Mina plan forbids fragmentation and new constructions and demands a recovery inspired by the quality of the spaces and buildings of the International Fair. On the other hand, the Tripoli plan allows for new construction on the fairground, if a planovolumetric plan is prepared and approved by the High Council of Urban Planning. The new Law N°274-10/03/2022 sets out the juridical basis for the revision of these two plans to make them coherent with the provisions of the law.

Whilst ICOMOS notes that the current legislation covering the nominated property envisages protection mechanisms targeting the attributes of the nominated property, ICOMOS considers that it would be extremely important that the fairground and the buildings comprised within be declared as cultural heritage according to the legislation on this sector applicable in the country.

ICOMOS further notes that the revision of the master plans of El-Mina and Tripoli is equally important to ensure that the setting of the nominated property is planned in a way that does not negatively affect the nominated property. In this regard, incorporating Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms into the planning process would be essential

to guarantee that planning provisions are consistent with the protection of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Equally, an assessment of the possible impacts of the Knowledge and Innovation Centre (KIC) project on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value would also be helpful, given that, for the time being it cannot be implemented due to the current crisis. In this way, any potential negative impact could be addressed before implementation.

Management system

The Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli is managed by a Board of Directors that is appointed by the Lebanese government.

The Law N°274-10/03/2022 regulates all activities at the International Fair and lays down the mission, the legal status of the International Fair, the mandate of the Board of Directors and its Chairman. Further regulations are envisaged to fully implement the provisions of the law.

A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is under elaboration, launched by the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut and funded by the Getty Foundation. The CMP intends to set out a framework for a general conservation and development policy of the nominated property before undertaking any intervention.

ICOMOS notes that the legal framework to ensure the management of the nominated property according to the requirements of the World Heritage Convention and the Operational Guidelines for the *Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* is very recent; at the time the mission was carried out, there was no entity in charge of the conservation and the management of the International Fair. Its administration mainly maintains the property and ensures that safe access is provided for occasional visitors and facilitates occasional events that take place in some of the buildings.

ICOMOS observes that the lack of financial resources, the current severe financial and economic crisis in the country, the protracted marginality of the International Fair complex, and its critical conservation conditions are all circumstances that make the nominated property highly vulnerable. The State Party has initiated a path toward the comprehensive recovery of the International Fair however the scope of the undertaking is vast, and it needs urgent support to secure the conservation of the buildings of the International Fair.

ICOMOS also considers that a management committee should be established that extends beyond the representatives of the administration and its decision-making body of the International Fair, and include the Directorate General of Antiquities, representatives of the El-Mina and Tripoli municipalities, representatives of the civil society dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage as well as academics and experts in heritage conservation. Proactive strategies to attract funding would also be needed.

ICOMOS further considers that the CMP should address visitor management as well as strategies to include the inhabitants of the cities in the endeavour to safeguard the nominated property in order to ensure that the recovery process is participatory and can also lead to an increased awareness of the importance of the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS observes that the nominated property is covered only by the provisions of the Law N°274-10/03/2022 on the Reorganization of Rachid Karami International Fair, but it is not designated as cultural heritage under the national law of the sector. ICOMOS considers that such designation would significantly strengthen the protection status of the nominated property. ICOMOS further considers that there is a need for harmonising the planning provisions of Tripoli and El-Mina and elaborating detailed land-use plans and guidelines to ensure that the nominated property and its immediate setting are planned coherently with the aim of protecting its proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli would benefit from the elaboration of one vision for the entire area before partial initiatives, such as the KIC, are brought forward. Since the project is on hold, an assessment of whether it may have potential negative impacts on the nominated property would allow identifying options and mitigation measures to prevent that attributes supporting the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are threatened. Regarding management, ICOMOS notes that the current administration of the nominated property provides basic maintenance but there is not yet an entity responsible for the conservation of the structures of the International Fair. A Board of Directors has been established by the Law N°274-10/03/2022; however, a management committee should be established, and it should also include representatives from heritage protection institutions, professional organisations, academic institutions and civil society. The CMP that is being developed should, in ICOMOS's view, also address visitor management as well as strategies to raise awareness about the importance of the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli among citizens.

6 Threats affecting the nominated property

The State Party has set out the following threats as a reason for requesting an emergency inscription:

- Most of Niemeyer's buildings and structures are in a state of critical conservation conditions and need emergency stabilisation measures.
- Lebanon is facing an unprecedented financial and economic crisis that prevents the Lebanese government to make the necessary public investments to implement a conservation programme of the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli.

- The protracted marginalisation of the International Fair combined with the above-mentioned crisis make the nominated property particularly vulnerable to potential inappropriate developments, despite the efforts deployed by civil society over the years to preserve the nominated property and the recent approval of the Law on the Reorganization of Rachid Karami International Fair.
- The support of the international community is urgently needed to define criteria for the sustainable and compatible revitalisation of the International Fair and limits to acceptable change; international awareness of the outstanding importance of the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli could also help to attract investments.

Based on the analysis of the nomination dossier, the outcomes of the technical evaluation mission, and the additional information provided by the State Party on this matter, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property faces serious and specific dangers as set out in article 11, paragraph 4 of the World Heritage Convention, as well as ascertained and potential dangers as set out in paragraph 179 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of World Heritage Convention*.

7 Conclusion

In response to the requirements of emergency nomination as set out in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, paragraphs 161 and 162, ICOMOS has considered whether:

- The property is in danger, as a result of having suffered damage or facing serious and specific dangers from natural events or human activities, which would constitute an emergency situation;
- An immediate decision by the Committee is necessary to ensure its safeguarding;
- The property may unquestionably justify Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that all the above-mentioned conditions apply to the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iv) but not criterion (i). The nominated property suffers from advanced structural deterioration affecting most of the buildings, with consequent corrosion of steel reinforcements, concrete deterioration (carbonation, spalling, and blisters). Reinforced concrete has been key for the conception and realisation of the main featuring element of the International Fair, the Grand Canopy, as well as the sculptural structures and the overall spatial arrangement of the fairground. Hence, integrity and authenticity of the nominated property are extremely vulnerable; key attributes conveying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are threatened

and in urgent need for emergency stabilisation measures. Furthermore, the lack of a coherent urban policy to guide the development of the International Fair and its surroundings – as Tripoli and El-Mina master plans have different land use and regulations for this area, further threaten the nominated property.

ICOMOS also notes that the whole budget for the rehabilitation of the International Fair significantly exceeds the current capacity for public expenditure in the actual financial situation of the country.

ICOMOS recommends that the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli, Lebanon, should be inscribed on the World Heritage List and, at the same time, on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This recommendation should be seen as a way to ensure that the attributes are not impacted by structural deterioration, lack of maintenance, lack of vision for its future based on its proposed Outstanding Universal Value, lack of coherent policy for its reuse and rehabilitation in accordance with its cultural significance, and that appropriate planning regulations are developed, that resources are mobilised to address the conservation challenges, and that the protection, conservation, management, and monitoring regimes for the property are completed and implemented.

ICOMOS considers that inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger should be the opportunity to gain the attention and support of the international community for the protection and conservation of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the dangers facing the property constitute an emergency situation for which a decision by the Committee is necessary for its safeguarding, and that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property has been demonstrated under criteria (ii) and (iv).

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli, Lebanon, be inscribed on an emergency basis on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (ii) and (iv)** and at the same time on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

ICOMOS recommends that a joint ICOMOS/WHC reactive monitoring mission be invited to the property to establish a Desired state of conservation and a programme of corrective measures to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli has been erected in Tripoli, the second largest city in Lebanon and the capital of the Northern Governorate, and was

designed by Oscar Niemeyer between 1962-1967 and built until 1975. The main building of the International Fair consists of a huge oblong covered exhibition space, the Grand Canopy, under which the exhibition pavilions of several countries could be freely installed. The entrance to the International Fair complex begins at the southern end of the Grand Canopy: a vast ramp leads to a raised portico from where the visitors can discover the entire composition. A series of educational, recreational and cultural facilities were immersed within a "Brazilian Tropical Garden" and connected by water pools and pedestrian passages. In the northern part, a ceremonial ramp leads to the outdoor amphitheatre, surmounted by a monumental arch forming a symbolic gateway to modernity and a landmark of the city of Tripoli.

The use of traditional elements of local architecture was intended to express the aspirations of the newly independent Arab peoples to take part in the universal process of modernisation. For its scale, its daring structural solutions, its architectural expression, its vast modernist public spaces and gardens, its links to post-independence identity buildings, and despite the deterioration of most of its structures and the endangered integrity of several of its components due to the ageing of the concrete, the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli is one of the most representative works of modern architecture of the 20th century in the Arab States.

Criterion (ii): The Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli expresses in an exceptional way the successful integration of Brazilian modernist concepts into the context of the Arab Near East in Tripoli and is a vivid example of cultural exchange in the field of architecture. The collaboration between Oscar Niemeyer, the architect of the complex, and the Lebanese engineers and contractors has given them valuable experience in sophisticated large-scale reinforced concrete structures and concrete shells, while a new generation of Lebanese architects was inspired by Niemeyer's "Brazilian modernism", which is reflected in several of their works, whether in Lebanon or in the Arab Near East.

Criterion (iv): Oscar Niemeyer's monumental International Fair project in Tripoli is an outstanding example of world fairs that emerged in the newly independent Arab countries to express national pride and take part in the universal process of modernisation. It constitutes an outstanding architectural example of a large-scale modernist exhibition complex, which defines an architectural typology characterised by simplicity and discipline where a single main large structure hosts the pavilions; a set of smaller structures serve social-reformative and educational purposes.

Integrity

The Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli covers an elliptical area corresponding to the limits of the fairground as it was built and contains all buildings designed by Niemeyer. Almost all buildings and structures were preserved according to Niemeyer's original design but lie

in a state of abandonment, while outdoor and landscaped areas are maintained. Despite the loss of interior finishes, fixtures, glazing, doors and equipment due to the war, the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value have retained sufficient integrity. Some interventions on the Grand Canopy dictated by modern uses are reversible; the transformation of Niemeyer's Collective Housing Prototype has seriously affected its architectural quality and erased the traces of the original design, but attempts have been made to restore the structure to its original conditions. However, the integrity of the property is extremely vulnerable, with the main threat coming from the precarious state of conservation of most buildings, which face serious stability problems due to the severe steel corrosion and the ageing of concrete.

Authenticity

The layout and almost all buildings of the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli have been preserved according to Niemeyer's design. In most of the buildings of the complex, the structure defines their form and volume and is proudly exhibited to the audience. The main original structures of the International Fair complex, most of which are made of authentic materials, credibly reflect their period of construction and the quality of their execution. Despite the loss of interior finishes, fixtures and equipment, the transformation of the collective housing prototype into a hotel, and the interventions to the southern part of the Grand Canopy, the surviving attributes credibly convey the Outstanding Universal Value through the overall layout, the design of the structures, their sculptural conception, and the construction materials. The reflective pools and the hard landscape elements around the buildings are preserved according to Niemeyer's design, the tropical gardens are still present and retain their "Brazilian spirit". The International Fair complex in Tripoli still bears witness to an era of modernisation and social liberalisation in Lebanon and the Arab Near East.

Protection and management requirements

The Law N°274-10/03/2022 on the Reorganization of Rachid Karami International Fair is the main legal instrument that covers the property and includes basic protection mechanisms. The law sets out differentiated protection mechanisms for the rectangular area (800x500 metres) encompassing all Niemeyer designed structures and the extant part of the oval. Most of the buildings on the fairground need immediate stabilisation measures, maintenance, and structural repairs to preserve their integrity; the Conservation Management Plan that is being developed for the entire property should be finalised urgently to guarantee the conservation of its cultural and historical values in any future development processes.

The long-term conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property will benefit from the recognition of its cultural value under the national legislation for heritage protection, beyond the 2022 special law. An inclusive management structure involving heritage protection authorities, professionals and academic organisations

and civil society representatives can guarantee a shared vision for the future of the property and its long-term protection. The systematic application of a Heritage Impact Assessment approach and related mechanisms provides the framework for ensuring compatible conservation, rehabilitation and reuse of the Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli.

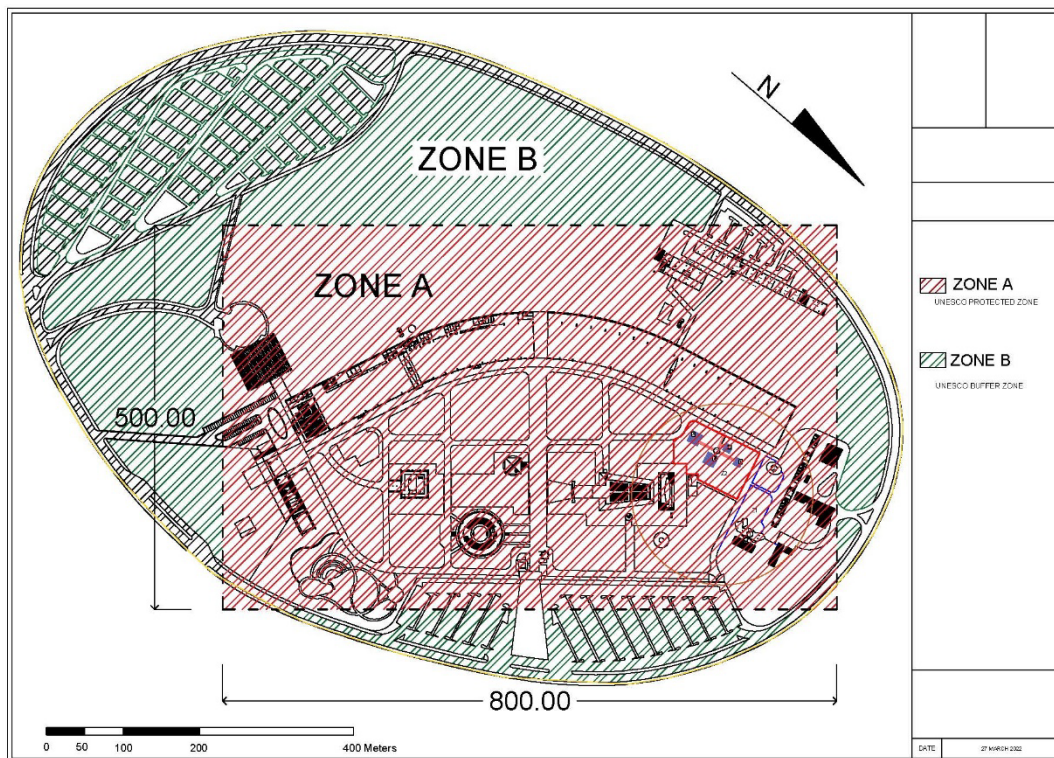
Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give urgent consideration to the following:

- a) Providing the exact coordinates of the boundaries of the property,
- b) Considering, with the assistance of the joint ICOMOS/WHC reactive monitoring mission, the establishment of a buffer zone as per paragraphs 103 to 105 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* to ensure an added layer of protection to the property,
- c) Developing detailed land-use and zoning guidelines for the planning of the immediate setting of the Rachid Karimi International Fair-Tripoli and of the portion of the oval within the property outside the nationally relevant “core zone”,
- d) Setting up a management structure for the property that also includes among its members representatives of the cultural heritage protection institutions, professionals and academic organisations and the civil society,
- e) Carrying out a geometric and architectural survey and a detailed condition assessment of Niemeyer’s structures as a knowledge basis for emergency stabilisation measures, conservation and structural rehabilitation interventions,
- f) Considering a digital project of the documentation preserved at the various publicly accessible archives, to promote research and ensure that the original project documentation is not lost due to disasters or accidents,
- g) Informing the World Heritage Centre of the intention to undertake or authorise any major projects which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in line with paragraph 172 of *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*,
- h) Developing and implementing a Heritage Impact Assessment for any project proposals that may have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property (including the “Knowledge and Innovation Centre” (KIC) project) and for the

revision of the master plans of El-Mina and Tripoli,

- i) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session;



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property

Ancient Kingdom of Saba (Yemen) No 1700

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate

Location

Governorate of Ma'rib
Yemen

Brief description

The Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate is a testimony to the ancient Sabaeen culture, which developed amidst the hostile environment of the Arabian Peninsula, and to its creative production in the period from the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam to the region. This serial property is composed of seven archaeological sites that demonstrate the architectural, aesthetic and technological achievements of the Sabaeans, bearing witness to a highly complex society with a strong, well-organised and centralised administration, as evidenced by numerous historical inscriptions in the old South Arabian language. With its two key cities – Sirwah and Ma'rib – the Kingdom of Saba dominated the region of South Arabia politically and culturally from about the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE. Its prosperity was a product of the incense trade, and the technological knowledge in hydrology helped the Sabaeen cities to flourish at the edge of the desert thanks to the development of irrigation agriculture. The construction of the Ma'rib dam irrigation system enabled cultivation of a vast territory spreading north and south of the capital city of Ma'rib, sustaining life in the Ma'rib Oasis where the administrative, cultural and economic centre of the kingdom was located.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of seven *sites*.

Included in the Tentative List

8 July 2002 as "Archaeological site of Marib"

Background

The nomination was submitted to the World Heritage Centre by the State Party on 11 February 2022 to be evaluated under the emergency procedure as set out in paragraphs 161 and 162 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. A letter from the State Party regarding security conditions and related threats to the nominated property was also submitted on that date.

The nomination was submitted by the State Party as an emergency nomination due to persisting threats of damage related to the ongoing war in Yemen, developmental pressures and environmental factors threatening the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property.

This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

ICOMOS, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre, considered the feasibility of a technical evaluation mission to the nominated property. However, given the safety and security conditions, the mission could not take place.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 28 February 2022 requesting further information about the nature of emergency and the management of the nominated property.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 March 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

13 April 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description

The nominated property, located in the Marib Governorate in central Yemen, east of the present-day capital of Sana'a, testifies to the creative production of the ancient Kingdom of Saba, which played a dominant role in the incense trade as well as having political and cultural influence on the Arabian Peninsula from about the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE, before it succumbed to the Himyar people. It represents a period of the South Arabian history from the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam to the region in 630 CE, when the ancient Yemeni kingdoms developed and thrived amidst the harsh semi-arid environment, on the back of the Incense Route passing along the edge of the Şayhad Desert that traded frankincense and myrrh (as well as other high value commodities) to the Greek and later the Romans in the Mediterranean.

The Sabaeans appear to have dominated the southern part of the incense trade while the Nabateans controlled the northern part. From around 950 BCE until at least the 3rd century BCE, the Sabaeans taxed goods heading north from their southern neighbours.

The Sabaeans' culture and wealth is evident in the extent of the remains of the city, in the monumental sanctuaries, and in the hydraulic structures, in which the profits gained from the incense trade were invested. The high-end irrigation technology turned the area around the Dhana Valley into farmland, locally known as the Northern Oasis (Abyn) and Southern Oasis (Ysrn), which combined were the largest in ancient Arabia.

The nominated property consists of seven component sites.

Ancient city of Ma'rib (component part 1)

Occupying a tell in the middle of the Ma'rib Oasis, the ancient city of Ma'rib was one of the most important control points on the Incense Trade Route. As the cultural and economic centre of the ancient South Arabia, the city served as the capital of the Sabaean kingdom in the years 950-115 BCE, reaching its peak of prosperity in the 7th century BCE. Surrounded by a city wall dating back to the 2nd millennium BCE, Ma'rib included a city centre with the Salhin Palace, and the lower city which housed several temples, including the Ḥarūnum temple, which served as the first stop for pilgrims heading from the city to the Awām temple through a sacred processional road connecting the two edifices. The Ḥarūnum temple was converted into a mosque in the 4th century CE. The city was only abandoned in the 20th century at which time the 4.3-kilometre city walls were still intact.

Ma'rib now survives as a tell overlooking what was the Northern Oasis and separated from what was the Southern Oasis by the Wadi Dhana. Together the oases once covered some 10,000 hectares. Today urban areas have spread over parts of both oases.

Fragments of city's finely dressed stone walls, pierced with arched windows decorated with basalt, are still standing, including a circular tower, and also the pillars of the Ḥarūnum temple. On top of the tell are the remains of a cluster of traditional Yemeni tower houses. Elsewhere there are scattered ruins of stone buildings and towers, whose function remains unknown due to the absence of archaeological excavations.

Awām temple (component part 2)

The Awām temple lies four kilometres south from the ancient city of Ma'rib in what was the Southern Oasis. Said to be the largest temple in all of South Arabia, it was the centre of religious authority in the Sabaean kingdom. Dedicated to the official deity of the state Almaḡah, the moon god, the Awām temple served as the final destination of a sacred pilgrimage route that started at the Ḥarūnum temple. The temple dates back to probably the

2nd millennium BCE and functioned until the 4th century CE.

Parts of the site have been excavated. What survives is the lower parts of a characteristic oval-shaped enclosure wall. Originally some thirteen metres high, the wall was constructed using a construction technique called *al-mi'sam*, i.e. "by wrist", characteristic for the architecture of South Arabia (consisting in building two walls in ashlar masonry with a thick filling of rubble core). Within the walls are the remains of a colonnade hall with (originally) thirty-two columns, preceded by a peristyle hall with eight square stone pillars (all still standing), a mausoleum and a necropolis (southern and western cemeteries – parts of which have been excavated), as well as residential buildings and workshops.

The Awām temple is notable for its fine stone friezes with ibex head motifs, false windows in the hall of the column lobby, unmatched in other temples in Yemen, and inscriptions of carved stones, metal, or black and pink ink.

An asphalt road cuts across the oasis some hundred kilometres to the north of the temple and urban sprawl is said to be heading towards it.

Bar'ān temple (component part 3)

Also, in the Southern Oasis and northwest of the Awām temple is the Bar'ān temple dedicated to the Moon God. Erected in the 1st millennium BCE, with large limestone and alabaster blocks with some walls still standing up to three metres in height, it functioned as an important pilgrimage destination until about the 6th century CE. The temple consisted of a courtyard with porticoes on all sides and an elevated platform of polished limestone fronted by six monumental stone pillars (five of which are still fully preserved), leading further to the most holy part of the temple. Inscriptions record the gift by a Sabaean leader of silver and bronze statues of the moon, the bases of which survive.

Ancient dam of Ma'rib (component parts 4a, 4b, 4c)

One of the oldest irrigation systems in the Arabian Peninsula, the ancient dam of Ma'rib controlled the torrential waters flowing through Wadi Dhana and channelled them to the Ma'rib Oasis through a system of canals. The dam was constructed around the 7th and 6th century BCE, but some earlier hydraulic system existed here probably already at the end of the 3rd millennium BCE. The dam was in operation for some 2,500 years until the 6th century CE.

The Ma'rib dam irrigation system is said to be one of the oldest models for the emergence of advanced dam engineering. Three elements of the irrigation system are nominated as separate component parts – remains of the northern bank of the Ma'rib dam (component site 4a), remains of the southern bank of the Ma'rib dam (component site 4b), and remains of the dam of Al-Jufaynah (component site 4c) with the associated diversion canals.

The northern and southern banks consisted, each, of a sluice linked to a barrier wall and connected to diversion canals that distributed water to the Ma'rib Oasis. The main drains and diversion canals are only the part of the overall irrigation network still visible.

Further north, twenty-seven kilometres away from the northern bank, remains of the Al-Jufaynah dam are preserved. Composed of two walls constructed using the *al-mi'sam* technique, this dam regulated the waters flowing through Wadi Jufaynah as part of the irrigation system.

Ancient city of Sirwah (component site 5)

Sirwah, the second city of the Kingdom of Saba, was situated forty kilometres away from the Ancient city of Ma'rib, on a rocky hill above the Sirwah Valley, surrounded by mountain ranges. The beginnings of sedimentation and irrigation in the area around Sirwah city date back to the 7th-5th millennium BCE. A settlement is proven within the city walls from the mid-2nd millennium BCE. An important Sabaeen centre serving administrative purposes under the early *Mukarribs* (priest-kings), it was established as a city under a tribal union.

Within its walls, it contained the Awal temple, with a characteristic horseshoe-shaped enclosure wall which survives almost to its full height in the east, and six pillars still survive in the courtyard front of the main gate. There are also remains of the eastern gate of a palace functioning as an administrative building, and some defensive structures. An irrigation system with a dam-regulated watering of the fertile lands of the Sirwah Valley. The city was possibly a military base for the Sabaeen armies, as indicated by the historical inscriptions preserved on Sirwah's walls.

The inscriptions recorded (carved on stone, poured in metal or written in ink) testify to historical events, and give details of the administration and the economy of the Kingdom of Saba, demonstrating its leading position among other kingdoms of the Arabian Peninsula.

In the nomination dossier, the State Party originally proposed very limited boundaries of the component sites, totalling 75.30 ha, and the buffer zones totalling 67.18 ha. The boundaries in general follow the plots of the cultivated land or elements of transport infrastructure where these exist. Otherwise, they are not discernible in the landscape.

In the additional information sent in March 2022, the State Party revised the boundaries. The revised area of the seven component parts now totals 375.29 ha, with their buffer zones totalling 19,291.71 ha. An additional larger buffer zone (buffer zone B) totalling 8,933 ha is proposed to encompass the entire Ma'rib Oasis.

The buffer zones around the component parts include the important immediate and wider setting of each site, as well as some key views. The larger buffer zone B

encompasses the historical Northern (Abyn) and Southern (Ysrn) Oases together with Wadi Dhana that runs between them, and includes component parts 1, 2, 3, 4a-c and their buffer zones. Its northern perimeter is simultaneously the current projected boundary of the modern city of Ma'rib.

History

Historical evidence shows migrations from the area of southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula to the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East in the 3rd millennium BCE. Around 1400-1200 BCE, descendants of these people immigrated back to South Arabia, bringing with them already highly complex culture and religion. Fuelled by the trade of incense, the South Arabian societies of Saba, Ma'in, Qataban and Hadramaut developed in the territory delimited by the Sarat mountain range and the Şayhad Desert. Saba is the earliest reported kingdom. In its early days, it was ruled by the Mukarribs, federal tribal leaders, who held strong political and probably religious power. In the 7th century BCE, the political system in the kingdom changed with the transfer of the administrative control to the dynastic kings. Together with this transfer, religious practice changed, and the Moon God Almaqah became the state deity of the Sabaeans. By the 5th century BCE Saba was ruling a federation of neighbouring States – Ma'in, Qataban, Ausan and Hadramaut – maintaining its hegemony over 600 years and extending its influence to Najran in the north and crossing the Red Sea to Ethiopia.

Ma'rib and Sirwah represented the main political centres of the realm. In the 8th-7th century BCE, Ma'rib became the biggest city of southwest Arabia, by which time the Sabaeans largely controlled the southern incense trade taxing merchandise from their neighbours. Ma'rib was also a centre for sacred pilgrimage, which played an important role in the religious and political system of the kingdom. The prosperity of Saba was sustained as a result of high level of hydraulic know-how that enabled the people to turn the semi-arid territory of the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula into agricultural lands and to develop pastoral economy. The importance of the hydrological technology has been at the centre of South Arabian history to such a degree that the destruction of the ancient Ma'rib dam in the 6th century CE has been associated with the demise of the ancient civilisations of South Arabia.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The nominated property represents an outstanding example of a complex culture that developed in South Arabia from the 1st millennium BCE as a result of the Incense Trade Route passing through the Şayhad desert. The Kingdom of Saba dominated the region politically and culturally from about the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE, spreading its influence to the neighbouring realms and playing a key role in the wider network of cultural exchanges.
- The Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate demonstrates the exceptional creative and technological achievements of the Sabaeans, before the arrival of Islam in the 7th century CE, which bear witness to a strong well-organised and centralised administration. An innovative irrigation system created to sustain agriculture and pastoral economy in the semi-arid environment of the Arabian Peninsula demonstrates the high level of hydrological engineering, which enabled the Kingdom of Saba to flourish among other contemporary kingdoms of South Arabia.
- The historical importance and the outstanding character of the achievements of the Sabaeans survived in legends and literary works, as well as religious and symbolic associations.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are urban areas with buildings and associated structures, such as temples, palaces, fortifications, city walls, settlements, cemeteries, workshops, administrative and defensive buildings, together with their decorative ornamentation and historical wall inscriptions; irrigation systems, with dams, sluices, canals and a network of channels that irrigated the Northern and Southern Oases, adjoining Ma'rib, and the Sirwah valley near Sirwah; and control over parts of the incense trade.

ICOMOS considers that since the governorate of Marib is a present-day administrative unit, which does not reflect the boundaries of the ancient Kingdom of Saba, there is no need to reference it in the name of the nominated property. The integrity of the nominated serial property relies on the full range of the Sabaeen architectural, technological and artistic production as evidence for the society's life, independent of their location within the present-day structures.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed around two key parameters: the monumental expressions of different aspects of society's life in architecture of different type and purpose, and the technologically advanced level of construction. These parameters have been considered within typological, chronological-regional and thematic

frameworks. The component parts have been considered as archaeological heritage, and compared using geo-cultural context of the Arabian Peninsula, Near and Middle East, as well as North Africa within a timeframe from about the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam to the Arabian Peninsula. Within the thematic framework, the nominated property has been compared to properties representing ancient capitals, structures revealing symbolic associations, and sites related to the Incense Trade Route. The comparative analysis has examined properties within the Arabian Peninsula (the location of ancient Arabia), and in the adjacent region of the Mediterranean, as well as in North Africa, inscribed on the World Heritage List, inserted in the Tentative Lists of States Parties as well as other properties.

Comparators on the World Heritage List include the Land of Frankincense (Oman, 2000, criteria (ii) and (iv)), Hegra Archaeological Site (Saudi Arabia, 2008, criteria (ii) and (iii)), Petra (Jordan, 1985, criteria (i), (iii), and (iv)), Babylon (Iraq, 2019, criteria (iii) and (vi)), Persepolis (Iran, 1979, criteria (i), (iii) and (vi)), Archaeological Site of Carthage (Tunisia, 1979, criteria (ii), (iii) and (vi)), Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe (Sudan, 2011, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v)), and Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region (Sudan, 2003, criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi)). None of these properties is considered a better representative of the cultures of South Arabia, through their creative productions and symbolic associations, than the nominated property.

Among the sites on the Tentative Lists, the closest comparators include The Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area (Saudi Arabia, Tentative List), The Cultural Heritage of Yeha (Ethiopia, Tentative List), and The Ancient City of Nineveh (Iraq, Tentative List). None of these sites is said to demonstrate the level of technological mastery as the nominated property.

The most important part of the comparative analysis is the section on comparisons with sites in the Arabian Peninsula.

What characterises the nominated property are its monumental urban structures and its highly sophisticated irrigation systems, but also its control of large parts of the incense trade. It needs to be positioned within the complex of cities that made up the Incense Route and those that benefited from it. This is the geo-cultural area within which comparisons are most relevant.

It is acknowledged that cities of the early complex societies along the Incense Route shared many common characteristics such as monumental stone masonry constructions, sophisticated irrigation techniques, and a written language with a common alphabet. Details are provided of the extensive remains of Shabwa, capital of Hadramaut, Timna, capital of Qataban, Baraqish, capital of the Minaean kingdom, and Zafar, capital of the Himyarite kingdom. Although some of these are compared in terms of surviving monuments rather than for their contribution to the incense trade, or for how these

kingdoms relate to each other, all these sites demonstrate exceptional features such as extensive surviving town walls, large temples, urban areas, etc. In ICOMOS's view the comparisons between these cities cannot be carried out just in terms of size but should also consider what they reflect as particular kingdoms during particular eras and how they contributed to and benefited from the incense trade.

It is noted that the Incense Route - Desert Cities in the Negev, (Israel 2005, criteria (iii) and (v)) was not referenced in the analysis, however this property with its four cities reflects the way Nabateans organised the incense trade to the north, and how large communities prospered as a result of the sophisticated water management in the desert environment. The Sabaeen cities can be seen as counterparts to the Nabatean cities of Haluza, Mamshit, Avdat and Shivta as both groups are linked to the chain of cities that made up the overall land routes across the Arabian Peninsula to the Mediterranean.

The weakness of the comparative analysis is the lack of justification for the nominated component sites. No details have been provided on the range of Sabaeen sites in the Ma'rib area or around Sirwah.

What the comparative analysis does demonstrate is that there is no other property on the World Heritage List or on Tentative Lists that reflects the kingdoms and cities that developed in South Arabia around the incense trade.

In terms of how the nominated sites stand out in relation to the many sites that testify to other kingdoms and cities of South Arabia that were also part of the incense trade and prospered from it, comparisons are handicapped to a degree by the paucity of research. Thus, while ICOMOS considers that some of these other sites might well be able to demonstrate exceptionality, the Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate may be seen to stand out in particular for the dominant role that the kingdom played in the Incense Route, for the highly sophisticated and large-scale water management techniques, and for the affluence that is demonstrated by the surviving temples and urban areas.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the monumental architecture and the preserved hydraulic structures of the Sabaeans are an exceptional testimony to the affluence of the Kingdom of Saba, which dominated South Arabia in the period between the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE as a political and

cultural power. They express the high socio-political and economic status of the kingdom, which owed its prosperity to the incense trade and flourished in the harsh environment of the Arabian Peninsula thanks to the high level of hydrological know-how and engineering skills. The preserved wall inscriptions document historical events, religious and other occasions, as well as administrative decisions, thus offering a glimpse into the main domains of life of the kingdom. Religious and symbolic references made to the mythical land of the legendary Queen of Sheba, known locally as Bilqis, testify to the global significance of the archaeological remains of the Sabaeen kingdom, associated with the Queen.

ICOMOS supports this justification apart from references to the Queen of Sheba.

The person of Queen Sheba or Bilqis is not historically attested. She remains a mythical figure. The myth itself does not seem to have originated in the South Arabian context. The tangible associations to Bilqis in the temples of Awām and Bar'ān may therefore be more of a mythical projection, referring to an idealised kingdom as a place of origin of Queen Sheba/Bilqis rather than the Kingdom of Saba in particular.

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate demonstrates outstanding examples of the architectural, aesthetic and technological achievements of the Sabaeen people that bear witness to their sophisticated cultural tradition present in South Arabia from the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam in the year 630 CE. The administrative and religious constructions of monumental size created by the Sabaeans influenced architecture in the region, serving as typological models. The dam of Ma'rib irrigation system which enabled farming in the Ma'rib Oasis represents the pinnacle of hydrological engineering in the region.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is an outstanding example of an ensemble representing the cultural tradition of the Sabaeen kingdom, which controlled much of the Incense Route through the Arabian Peninsula, and played a key role in the wider network of cultural exchanges due to its prominent socio-political and economic status. Located within a semi-arid landscape of valleys, mountains and deserts, and composed of remnants of large urban settlements with their monumental architecture and diverse technological advances, the ensemble bears witness to the ancient South Arabian kingdom that flourished at the edge of the desert thanks to the commodities that they possessed and technological prowess. The irrigation system of ancient Ma'rib reflects technological invention in the field of hydrological engineering on a scale not existing anywhere else in the ancient South Arabia. Backed by

advanced knowledge of irrigation and agricultural sciences, it required a complex regulatory framework to create what is said to be the largest artificial oasis in ancient Arabia. The system sustained the expansion of a society in a semi-arid territory of the Arabian Peninsula at a significant stage in human history, when trade routes linking South Arabia with the Mediterranean and North Africa were established.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv). The serial approach is justified.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the wholeness of archaeological vestiges that reflect different aspects of life of the Sabaeen population, and their intactness.

The nominated component parts represent the range of the creative and technological production of the Sabaeen culture between the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The boundaries of the component sites were drawn to include remains of archaeological vestiges and some neighbouring areas of high archaeological potential, although the full extent of these archaeologically rich areas around Ma'rib and Sirwah has, however, not been presented. But, as no inventory nor map showing the distribution and categories of Sabaeen sites in the Ma'rib area or around Sirwah apart from those in the nominated property has been provided, it is not possible to evaluate whether the boundaries encompass all the sites or areas that include attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

It is further not known where the findings from excavations and archaeological surveys performed on the sites are stored and in what condition they are.

The ancient city of Ma'rib has not yet been archaeologically investigated and clearly has suffered greatly from damage since its abandonment in the 20th century.

The processional road of the sacred pilgrimage that linked the ancient city of Ma'rib and the Awām temple is not included within either the boundaries of the component parts 1 and 2, or their buffer zones, but lies within the buffer zone B. The symbolic and ritual connection between component part 1 and component part 2 is essential for the understanding of the nominated property along the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The proposed individual buffer zones do not protect fully the visual integrity of the landscape of the Ma'rib Oasis. The larger buffer zone B is in this case a better solution, as it protects visual associations between the component parts and includes the wadis and farmland areas that were part of the irrigation and sustainable land-use system. However, the rationale for creating two buffer zones is not clear.

The visual integrity of the individual sites has been partly compromised in the case of the ancient city of Ma'rib (component part 1) and the Awām temple (component part 2), due to the major asphalt roads passing close to the perimeter of these archaeological sites. The integrity of the Ma'rib dam irrigation system (component parts 4a-c) is currently in danger, as a result of the proposed road building in the Master Plan 2018. The proximity of the southern perimeter of the large development projected in the Master Plan to the component parts located within the Ma'rib Oasis would also affect the visual integrity of the nominated property as a whole.

In the absence of a technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS has been unable to evaluate fully the integrity of the property or its potential vulnerabilities.

It is however clear that the physical fabric of the property is generally very poor, with some attributes being gravely damaged as a result of the ongoing military attacks. Combined with the identified threats, integrity of the individual component parts and of the nominated property as a whole can be considered as highly vulnerable.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the evidence from the archaeological sites – the form and design, as well as the materials and substance of the vestiges that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

Most of the sites have been excavated only to a small degree or not excavated at all (an estimated ten percent). Of all the component parts, the Bar'ān temple (component part 3) is the best known archaeologically.

The conditions of authenticity of some component parts are fragile due to historical developments and contemporary threats. The forms have been affected by the military activities related to the ongoing war, with cases of severe damage observed, while some past conservation and restoration works have negatively affected materials and substance of the attributes. Considering additionally the developmental pressures linked to the population growth and urbanisation of the area, authenticity of the individual component parts and of the whole series can be considered as highly vulnerable. The ongoing damage, destruction and removal of elements of the nominated property has a negative impact on the ability of the component parts to convey their meaning. It is of note that the entire component part 4c (dam of Al-Jufaynah) lies currently in the area designated for development in the 2018 Master Plan for Ma'rib. The newly planned transport infrastructure in this area will further affect the authenticity of component parts 4a and 4b (ancient dam of Ma'rib, northern and southern banks).

Despite changes in the landscape of the nominated property associated with the development of the modern city of Ma'rib, and the urban sprawl that led to the destruction of some areas with archaeological potential,

the historical setting of the component parts can be still easily understood. Also of concern is the demolishing of post-Sabaeen vernacular architecture in the ancient cities of Ma'rib and Sirwah, which reflects the traditions that link the pre-Islamic Sabaeen culture with the cultures that developed in the area after the arrival of Islam.

In the absence of a technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS has been unable to evaluate fully the authenticity of the property or its potential vulnerabilities, but considers that authenticity appears to be highly vulnerable.

Boundaries

The revised boundaries of the component sites have been defined based on the extent of archaeological remains and consider in some instances the unexcavated areas where archaeological material is to be expected. The full extent of these archaeologically rich areas has not been provided; neither was an inventory or map showing the distribution of Sabaeen sites in the Ma'rib area or around Sirwah. The buffer zones have been delimited taking into consideration the historical context together with the key vistas to and from the component parts, and the wider archaeological and natural landscape setting, which played an important role in the development of the Sabaeen kingdom. Vulnerability to pressure from development was also taken into account as a factor that influenced the perimeter of the buffer zones. A joint buffer zone has been proposed for component parts 4a, 4b and 4c.

An additional much larger buffer zone B, encompassing the entire Ma'rib Oasis as an archaeological and agricultural park has been suggested for the nominated property. It protects the wider landscape setting of the property, which contributes to the understanding of the nominated serial property.

ICOMOS notes that the number of inhabitants within the revised boundaries of the component parts and their buffer zones has not been provided. It is also unclear whether the land included within the nominated property is state- or privately-owned. ICOMOS considers that the legal authority within the boundaries of the nominated property is unclear, given that the perimeter has been changed during the evaluation process. It is further not known what restrictions apply in the buffer zones of each component part and in the buffer zone B; the rationale for establishing two types of buffer zones is unclear.

ICOMOS notes that the processional road of the sacred pilgrimage that linked the ancient city of Ma'rib and the Awām temple is not included within the boundaries of the nominated property, nor is it fully enclosed within the buffer zones of component parts 1 and 2. It lies within the boundary of the buffer zone B. ICOMOS considers that the sacred pilgrimage was a fundamental practice that constituted complex societies in ancient South Arabian states, and the fact that Ma'rib and its temples were the centre of this practice testifies to the dominant role that the Kingdom of Saba exercised among other local realms. This symbolic and ritual connection between component part 1

and component part 2 is thus essential for the understanding of the nominated property along the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS also notes that the visual connections between the component parts located in the Ma'rib Oasis, which were all part of one administrative system of the capital city of Ma'rib, are not fully protected within the individual buffer zones. Only the buffer zone B protects these visual associations; the latter also includes the wadis and farmland areas that were part of the irrigation and sustainable land-use system.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated serial property for the World Heritage List. ICOMOS also considers that the proposed justification for inscription under criteria (iii) and (iv) is appropriate. The serial approach is justified. ICOMOS further considers that in the absence of a technical evaluation mission, the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts could not be fully evaluated.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

There is substantial documentation of work done at the different component sites of the nominated property, which can be used as a baseline documentation of the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. It includes aerial photos and photogrammetric documentation of some of the component parts. A digital archive for the study of pre-Islamic Arabian inscriptions, which includes inscriptions recorded at the nominated property, is in place as well.

Since 2021, Yemeni cultural heritage authorities are working on a national inventory of cultural heritage, which is to include archaeological remains in the Marib Governorate. An inventory of the collections of the Sana'a National Museum and some provincial museums is being prepared within a three-year project (2020-2023) on safeguarding and archiving museum objects. Complementing it is a photogrammetric record of museum collections at risk, with a long-term goal of presenting collections in the form of a virtual museum. Since 2017, the Ancient Yemen Digital Atlas, a WebGIS-based monument information system of Yemeni sites is in place.

ICOMOS notes that it is not known whether there exists an inventory of all the artefacts uncovered at the component sites, and where these are being currently stored; no information has been provided on their conditions either. It is also not well understood at what level of completion are the multiple projects documenting

Yemeni archaeological sites and collections in relation to the nominated property.

State of conservation and conservation measures

The nomination dossier does not provide detailed information on the conservation history of the nominated property.

The Bar'ān temple (component part 3) has been subject to archaeological excavations in the years 1997-2000; the work included some restoration and consolidation of the temple. The Awām temple (component part 2), including its cemetery, has been under investigation since the late 1990s. Archaeological surveys have been performed in the ancient city of Ma'rib (component part 1) and the ancient city of Sirwah (component part 5), and their surroundings. The latter also saw some restoration and consolidation works (in the Awal temple). The northern bank of the Ma'rib dam (component part 4a) has been subject to consolidation works in the years 2002-2006.

Since the mid-1980s, recultivation and development in the Ma'rib Oasis have caused extensive damage to the unexcavated areas rich in archaeological records. Contemporary urban infrastructure is slowly approaching the ancient city of Ma'rib (component part 1) and the temple of Awām (component part 2). A major asphalt road runs along the northern and western boundary of the component part 1, and another one at a distance of approximately one hundred metres north of the component part 2.

Since the beginning of the war in 2014, all archaeological works have been stopped at the component parts, and the sites have gradually fell into disrepair. The heritage authorities struggle to maintain and protect the sites effectively due to lack of financial resources and logistical challenges related to the ongoing conflict. All the component parts of the nominated property suffer from neglect. They are exposed to collateral and targeted damage as a result of the war, looting, ongoing destruction related to illegal construction, developmental threats and environmental factors.

Based on the information provided by the State Party, ICOMOS considers that the component parts are in the general state of neglect, with no conservation measures or conservation plan in place. Regular maintenance is not taking place. Funds for protection and conservation of the component parts have not been available since 2015.

ICOMOS notes that no state of conservation reports have been prepared since 2009. And some of the past conservation and restoration works have been executed in a rather insensitive way, which would need to be addressed in the long term.

In the absence of a technical evaluation mission, it has not been possible to assess fully the state of conservation of the nominated property.

Monitoring

The monitoring of the nominated property has been typically done on a quarterly basis by the Marib branch of the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums. However, due to war, the onsite inspections have become a challenge. Remote monitoring has been implemented instead with the use of satellite imagery to evaluate the changes in the state of conservation of the component parts, and detect undesirable activities near the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the use of satellite imagery is not adequate as a tool to monitor the state of conservation of the property, in line with the identified threats, and direct actions to prevent negative impact thereof.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property is in a state of neglect. There is a lack of regular maintenance, and no relevant conservation measures are in place. No funds are available for protection and conservation of the component parts.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The archaeological vestiges being part of the nominated property are owned by the State and protected by Law on Antiquities N. 21/1994 and its amendments set forth by Law N. 8/1997. Law N. 16/2013 additionally applies to the ancient city of Ma'rib as a historic town. Artistic production is protected by Law N. 6/1994.

A number of other intersectoral laws apply, such as the Law on Tourism N. 22/1994, Law N. 26/1995 on Environment Protection, Law N. 20/1995 on Urban Planning.

With regard to urban planning tools, the Decree on urban plan regulations N. 260/1997 and the 2018 Master Plan of Ma'rib are binding.

ICOMOS considers that it is unclear what protection mechanisms exist within the legislation that applies to the nominated property. No details have been provided on the legal basis of the buffer zones, or how the protection mechanisms within the individual buffer zones differ from restrictions within the buffer zone B, set to protect the wider setting of the nominated property.

Management system

At the national level, the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums is in charge of the protection, conservation, restoration and management of the nominated property. The Organisation also manages issues related to research and presentation of cultural heritage. Its Ma'rib branch is responsible for monitoring and maintenance of the component parts. Additionally, the General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen is responsible for protection and management of the ancient city of Ma'rib as a historic town. Both of these organisations fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of

Information, Culture and Tourism. Budgetary and other financial resources allocated for the protection and management of the nominated property are under regional level administration, overseen by the Governorate of Marib. At the local level, the municipality of Ma'rib carries the responsibility for the development of the area and the implementation of the Master Plan, prepared by the General Administration for Land, Survey and Urban Planning, to address the predicted urban growth in the area and ratified in 2018.

A management plan for the nominated property has not been developed. It is not clear whether there exist management plans for the individual component parts. The management measures for the buffer zones (including buffer zone B) have not been provided either. A document "*Conservation and Management Guidelines*", which include key policies and priority actions requiring attention, has been prepared to guide the future management and protection of the component parts. There are, however, no timeframe for the implementation of the proposed plan of action and no indication on how it would be carried out in practice given the precarious political situation.

Besides the legal-institutional protection, the component parts benefit from traditional protection provided by the local tribes on whose traditional lands the nominated property sites are located. The tribes play an informal role as traditional custodians of the component parts but are also involved formally in their protection, being employed as guards or taking part in the maintenance of the nominated property.

In the additional information sent in March 2022, the State Party ensured that formal agreements exist with local tribesmen based on which the cooperation with the State is taking place currently. The tribal leaders are part of the local authorities.

ICOMOS notes that while traditional tribal system supports the legal-institutional framework to manage the sites, this system is fragile and potential tribal conflicts may occur in the future. ICOMOS considers that since the local tribes are traditional custodians of the component parts, it will be important to include them in the future management and protection of the nominated property as key stakeholders to ensure buy-in from local communities and prevent potential conflicts. ICOMOS further considers that inclusion of local populations in the protection and management of the nominated property needs to be tied with the preservation of post-Sabaeen vernacular architecture in the ancient cities of Ma'rib and Sirwah, as part of the safeguarding of the historic and traditional context of the nominated property.

ICOMOS also considers that the situation of the ancient city of Sirwah component part and its management is unclear, since it is currently occupied by militia.

ICOMOS notes that there are plans to resume excavations in the nominated property once the political

situation becomes more stable. In the meantime, documentation work continues. ICOMOS considers that given the multitude of institutions involved in research and development of the nominated property, it would be important to enhance and coordinate the input of international agencies, to ensure that there is no duplication of work or resources, and to maximise and sustain the initiatives aimed at capacity-strengthening, knowledge production, protection and management of the property.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that in the current political situation, the protective measures and management system for the property are inadequate. The clear disconnection between the goals of urban development of the area and the need to safeguard the archaeological vestiges shows that the protection of the nominated property is ineffective.

6 Emergency threats affecting the nominated property

The State Party has set out the following emergency threats as a reason for requesting an emergency inscription:

- Collateral and deliberate damage of the nominated property related to the ongoing war in Yemen;
- Vandalism and looting observed at the nominated component parts;
- Occupation of the ancient city of Sirwah component part by militia;
- Development pressures related to the population growth in the area of Ma'rib city;
- Environmental factors having negative impact on the archaeological sites.

The World Heritage status is sought by the State Party to strengthen the international protection of the nominated property and seek financial assistance to fund maintenance and protection of the component parts.

The State Party indicated that since the start of the current war the nominated property has been subject to significant threats and risk of damage. Some component parts have been deliberately damaged in targeted attacks, as is the case of the ancient city of Ma'rib and the northern bank of the Ma'rib dam (airstrike in 2015), as well as in the ancient city of Sirwah (bombing in 2018). These attacks have intensified recently, and the State Party believes that there exists a high risk of imminent new ones that may result in further loss of the cultural heritage in the area.

Vandalism and looting add to the seriousness of the situation. The Ma'rib walls have been quarried for building stone while in the Awām temple, inscriptions have been pillaged, smuggled outside the country and illegally sold.

Developmental pressures that threaten the sites are largely related to the enormous population growth in the area since 2014, partly as a result of the displacement of people due to war, but also in relation to the movement of migrants in search of employment in the ever-expanding oil and gas industry. The new residential areas, 'informal' settlements, refugee camps, and the spread of agricultural activities to the areas surrounding the component parts of the nominated property where potential for new archaeological finds is considered high remain a threat. Some attempts at building on unexcavated archaeological areas surrounding the ancient Ma'rib city (component part 1) have been halted back in 2017. Moreover, the archaeological sites are being damaged by being used as quarries for building materials by the local communities, and cracks are left in the walls of the temples by people searching for minerals.

With regard to the environmental factors affecting the property, desertification and flooding are having negative impact on the archaeological sites. Damage to the wall of the Bar'an temple (component part 3) due to flash floods has been indicated by the State Party. Sand encroaching on the sites of the Awam temple (component part 2) or the northern bank of the Ma'rib dam (component part 4a) is re-burying archaeological vestiges.

In the additional information sent in March 2022, the State Party elaborated further on the development pressures threatening the component sites located within the Ma'rib Oasis, based on the analysis of recent expansion trends and the planned future development of the area according to the existing Master Plan of Ma'rib (2018).

The Master Plan addresses the predicted urban growth in the area by projecting an expansion of the present-day urban area of the modern city of Ma'rib, mostly to the west and north, and the related construction of a network of roads. The expansion of the modern Ma'rib city urban area will add pressure on the Ma'rib Oasis due to increased traffic on the two national roads that cut across the Oasis in the north-south and east-west directions and the related population sprawl alongside them. It may also result in the increase in pollution and noise, higher vulnerability of sites to vandalism and looting, as well as loss of visual integrity and authenticity of the nominated serial property. This future development also signals potential conflicts between the development of the area and heritage protection. For instance, a sinuous road running along the proposed northern perimeter of the buffer zone B is planned as the southern boundary of the planned expansion. Component part 4c (dam Al-Jufaynah) is situated entirely within the area designated for development, according to the Master Plan. Moreover, the new road constituting the western perimeter of the planned Ma'rib development would in the future continue towards southeast, thus cutting across component part 4a (northern bank), leading to the loss of integrity of the Ma'rib dam irrigation system and the nominated property as a whole.

The State Party also explained that component part 5 (the ancient city of Sirwah) is not subject to the same developmental pressures as the rest of the nominated property. However, the occupation of Sirwah by militia is a reason for the urgent need to protect the site.

ICOMOS considers that the threats indicated by the State Party are of serious nature, and the damage to the nominated property and the dangers it faces constitute an emergency situation.

ICOMOS also notes that the potential decision to inscribe the nominated property on the World Heritage List may increase the risk of damage to the heritage resources, which have been the target of attacks, deliberate destruction and looting since the start of the war, or even before it.

ICOMOS also considers that the ongoing war has numerous secondary impacts, such as major decrease in the financial and human resources that can be dedicated to heritage protection and management, rise in illegal export and sale of heritage resources, and uncontrolled urban expansion in the vicinity of the nominated property, which add to the emergency context of the nomination.

The implementation of the 2018 Master Plan related to the expansion of the transport infrastructure in the immediate proximity to the Ma'rib Oasis component parts signals not only a lack of connectivity between the management and protection of the property and the plans for urban development of the area, but also demonstrates that the current protection measures are not effective. The Master Plan poses an urgent risk of compromising the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property, especially with regard to the impact of the new transport infrastructure on the component parts 4a-c. The proximity of the southern perimeter of the Master Plan development project to the component parts located within the Ma'rib Oasis also risks affecting the visual integrity of the latter.

ICOMOS also considers that environmental pressures need to be managed as continuing factors with long-term effects on the integrity and authenticity of the nominated serial property rather than imminent threats that would require emergency procedure. These pressures require long-term solutions to mitigate the negative impact, also related to climate change. However, ICOMOS recognises that the precarious situation in the country and the lack of financial resources for protection and maintenance of sites have led to the neglect whereby even short-term preventive measures are not in place at the moment.

7 Conclusion

In response to the requirements of an emergency nomination as set out in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, paragraph 161, ICOMOS has considered whether:

- The property is in danger, as a result of having suffered damage or facing serious and specific dangers from natural events or human activities, which would constitute an emergency situation;
- An immediate decision by the World Heritage Committee is necessary to ensure its safeguarding;
- The property may unquestionably justify Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the threats of collateral damage and targeted destruction of the component parts related to the ongoing war in Yemen are a serious danger to the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property, and represent an imminent threat necessitating an immediate decision by the World Heritage Committee. Considering that the nominated component parts had been targeted in the past in military attacks, ICOMOS recognises that the risk of damage to the nominated property may increase following its inscription on the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS further considers that the developmental threats, and in particular risks related to the implementation of the 2018 Master Plan for Ma'rib, represent a danger to the nominated property, and can be said to constitute an emergency situation in terms of risk of damage to the property's integrity and authenticity. They demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the protection and management measures in place, testifying to a disconnection between the goals of urban development of the area and the need to safeguard the archaeological vestiges constituting the nominated property.

ICOMOS also considers that the environmental pressures indicated by the State Party do not currently represent an imminent danger to the property, even if addressing them at the moment has become challenging due to the war and the related shortage of funds.

In view of the lack of a technical evaluation mission, combined with limited details on certain aspects being provided in the nomination dossier, ICOMOS has not been able to fully evaluate integrity, authenticity and management of the nominated property in line with the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, or to appraise the appropriateness and effectiveness of the boundaries. It considers that there are potential vulnerabilities and weaknesses in the case as presented. There is also a gap relating to the selection of component parts in the absence of documentation being provided on the full extent and disposition of Sabaeen sites. All of this means that the evaluation cannot be fine-tuned to the extent that a full evaluation would be. However, on the basis of all the sources of information reviewed during the evaluation process, ICOMOS is in a position to conclude that the

property unquestionably justifies Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS recommends that the Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate, Yemen, should be inscribed on the World Heritage List but at the same time be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

This recommendation should be seen as a way to ensure that the attributes are not impacted by the threats related to the ongoing war in Yemen, or by developmental pressures posing a threat to the nominated property, and that appropriate planning regulations are modified or developed, resources are mobilised to address the conservation challenges, and the protection, conservation, management and monitoring regimes for the property are developed and implemented to address what are seen as potential vulnerabilities and weaknesses of the property in terms of integrity and authenticity, as well as protection and management.

ICOMOS considers that the dangers facing the property can be considered to constitute an emergency situation for which a decision by the World Heritage Committee is necessary for its safeguarding, and that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property has been demonstrated.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate, Yemen, be inscribed on an emergency basis on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iii) and (iv)** and at the same time on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

ICOMOS notes that the authenticity, integrity, protection and management of the property or its potential vulnerabilities could not have been fully evaluated at this stage due to the lack of a technical evaluation mission to the site.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba represents a period of the South Arabian history from the 1st millennium BCE until the arrival of Islam to the region in 630 CE, when the ancient Yemeni kingdoms developed amidst the harsh and arid environment of the Arabian Peninsula and flourished through their involvement with the Incense Trade Route linking South Arabia to the Mediterranean, from about the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE, before it was overpowered by the Himyar people.

Located in the Marib Governorate in central Yemen, seven archaeological sites reflect the affluent Kingdom of Saba, arising from its control of the incense trade in South

Arabia and its architectural, aesthetic and technological achievements that bear witness to a highly complex society with a strong, well-organised and centralised administration, as evidenced by numerous historical wall inscriptions.

The Sabaeans' culture and wealth is clearly evident in the ensemble of two cities, temples and extensive irrigation systems. The walled capital city Ma'rib, was the administrative, cultural and economic centre of the Kingdom of Saba, while the fortified city of Sirwah, some forty kilometres to the west, may have acted as its military capital. The monumental colonnaded sanctuaries in the temples of Ḥarūnum, Awām and Bar'ān were linked by a processional pilgrimage route, which attracted adherents from across the Arabian Peninsula. Technological knowledge in the field of hydrological engineering enabled the Sabaeans to create the Ma'rib dam, which fed an innovative irrigation system of canals that allowed cultivation of a vast territory spreading north and south of Ma'rib, that was considered to be the largest artificial oasis in ancient Arabia.

Criterion (iii): The Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba, with the monumental architecture and the preserved hydraulic structures erected by the Sabaeans, demonstrate high level of technological know-how and engineering skills. They are an exceptional testimony to the affluence of the Kingdom of Saba, which dominated South Arabia in the period between the 8th century BCE to the 3rd century CE as a political and cultural power. They reflect the high socio-political and economic status of the kingdom, which owed its prosperity to control of the incense trade, and its survival in the harsh arid environment of the Arabian Peninsula through the creation of large oases based on a sophisticated irrigation system linked to the Ma'rib dam. The preserved wall inscriptions that document historical events, religious occasions, and administrative decisions offer a glimpse into the main domains of life of the kingdom.

Criterion (iv): The Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba with their monumental architecture and diverse technological advances represent an outstanding example of an ensemble that testifies to the cultural tradition of the Kingdom of Saba that served as a central node in the frankincense trade route through the Arabian Peninsula. Flourishing within the semi-arid landscape of valleys, mountains and deserts of South Arabia thanks to a highly advanced irrigation system, the kingdom played a key influential role among neighbouring realms and in the wider network of cultural exchanges at a time when trade routes linked South Arabia with the Mediterranean and North Africa. The dam of the Ma'rib irrigation system, which enabled farming in what is said to be the largest artificial oasis in ancient Arabia, represents the pinnacle of hydrological engineering in the region.

Integrity

The component parts of the property include the attributes necessary to ensure the representation of the features and

processes, which convey the property's Outstanding Universal Value. The physical fabric of the property can be considered as very poor with some attributes having been gravely damaged. Considering the existing threats related to the war and the developmental pressures, integrity of the individual component parts and of the property as a whole can be considered as highly vulnerable.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the individual component parts and of the whole series can be considered as highly vulnerable due to historical developments and contemporary threats. Despite changes in the landscape of the property associated with the development of the modern city of Ma'rib, and the urban sprawl that led to the destruction of some areas with archaeological potential, the historical oasis setting of the component parts can be still understood. Demolishing of post-Sabaeon vernacular architecture, which reflects the traditions that link the pre-Islamic Sabaeon culture with the cultures that developed in the area after the arrival of Islam, and which constitutes part of the historical context of the property, is of concern.

Management and protection requirements

The archaeological material at all component parts is legally protected at the national level through the Law on Antiquities N. 21/1994 and its amendments set forth by Law N. 8/1997. The ancient city of Ma'rib is protected as a historic town by Law N. 16/2013. The legal authority within the boundaries of the component parts is unclear, as are protection mechanisms that apply to the property. The legal basis for the buffer zones, including buffer zone B, is also not known at this stage.

Protection and management of the property reside at the highest level with the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums; the Ma'rib branch being responsible for the monitoring and maintenance of the component parts. The General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen is in charge of the protection and management of the ancient city of Ma'rib as a historic town. Besides the legal-institutional protection, the component parts benefit from traditional protection provided by the local tribes.

At present, there is no management plan for the property in place. *Conservation and Management Guidelines* have been developed to guide future management and protection of the component parts. But it is unclear how the proposed plan of action will be implemented given the precarious political situation. The management measures for the buffer zones, including buffer zone B, have not been provided.

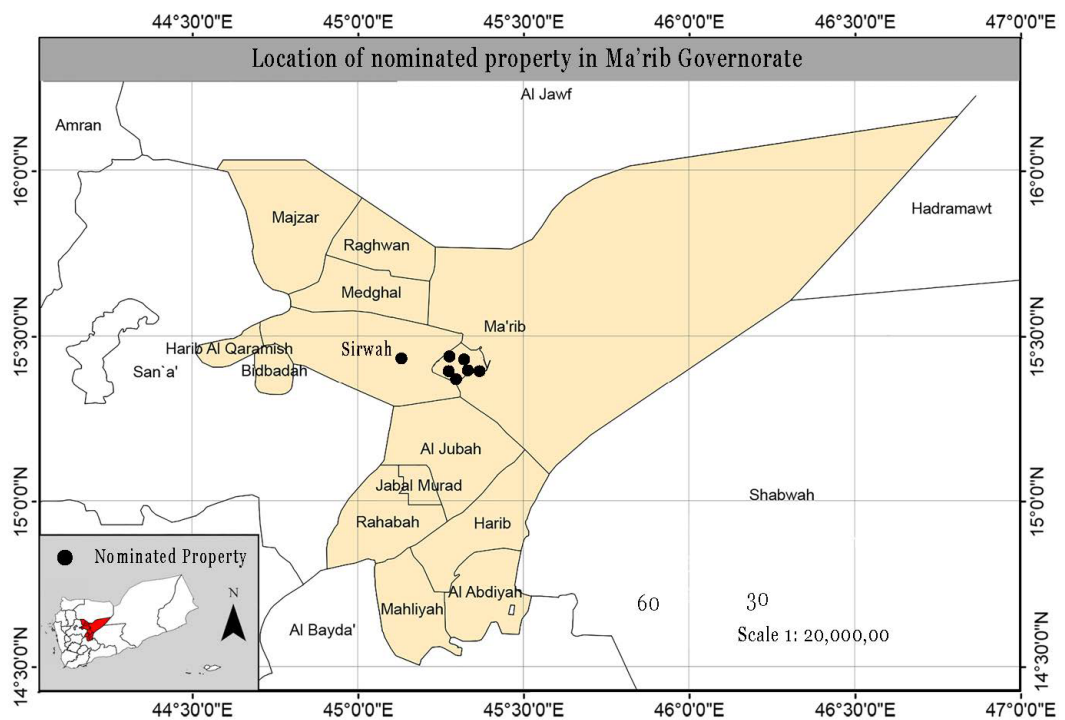
Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give urgent consideration to the following:

- a) Inviting, as soon as is feasible, a reactive monitoring mission to the property, to:
 - i) Prepare a detailed report on the state of conservation,
 - ii) Assess protection of the property and its buffer zones,
 - iii) Consider the effectiveness of its boundaries;
 - iv) Establish a Desired state of conservation and a programme of corrective measures to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger,
- b) Halting the implementation of the 2018 Master Plan until a full assessment has been undertaken, through a Heritage Impact Assessment, of its potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its setting, and, based on the results of the Heritage Impact Assessment, undertaking necessary revisions of the Plan,
- c) Reinstating funding for management and conservation,
- d) Developing as a matter of urgency risk preparedness plans for each component part to address vandalism and looting as well as overall protection,
- e) Including local tribes as traditional custodians of the component parts in the management and protection of the property to ensure buy-in from local communities and prevent potential conflicts,
- f) Extending protection measures onto the post-Sabaeen vernacular architecture in the ancient cities of Ma'rib and Sirwah as part of the safeguarding of the historic and traditional context of the property, and involving local populations in the protection and management of these heritage resources,
- g) Completing an inventory of Sabaeen monuments and sites,
- h) Enhancing the coordination of inputs from varied research institutions and international agencies to ensure that there is no duplication of work or resources and to maximise and sustain the initiatives aimed at capacity-strengthening, knowledge production, protection and management of the property,
- i) Informing the World Heritage Centre of the intention to undertake or authorise all major projects which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in line with paragraph 172 of *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*,

- j) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session;

Since the governorate of Marib is a present-day administrative unit, which does not reflect the boundaries of the ancient Kingdom of Saba, there is no need to reference it in the name of the nominated property. ICOMOS recommends that the name be changed by excluding the mention of the Marib Governorate.



Map showing the location of the nominated component parts

I Cultural properties

A Arab States

Nominations to be processed on an emergency basis

B Europe – North America

Nomination to be processed on an emergency basis

Historic Center of Odesa (Ukraine) No 1703

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

The historic center of the port city of Odesa

Location

City of Odesa
Ukraine

Brief description

The historic centre of Odesa is part of a port city located on the Ukrainian shores of the Black Sea. It stands on a shallow indentation of the seacoast about 30 kilometres north of the Dniester River estuary. The city was founded in 1794 by a strategic decision of the Empress Catherine II to build a warm-water port after the Russo-Turkish war of 1787-1792. As the port prospered in the 19th century, the city grew rapidly, attracting residents from within the empire and beyond, but declined in the early 20th century.

Planned as a system of spacious straight streets and rectangular blocks, the city's architecture reflects its rapid growth in the 19th century, its wealth and its multicultural communities, to which Odesa owed its reputation as a cosmopolitan city. Its rapid decline helped to preserve the 19th century character of the mercantile areas; the port was developed in the 21st century to become one of the largest in the Black Sea.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*.

Included in the Tentative List

6 January 2009

Background

The nomination was submitted to the World Heritage Centre by the State Party on 11 October 2022 to be evaluated under the emergency evaluation procedure as set out in paragraphs 161 and 162 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. It was transmitted to ICOMOS on the same date.

The nomination was submitted by the State Party as an emergency nomination because of the invasion of Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine.

This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

ICOMOS, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre, considered the feasibility of a technical evaluation mission to the nominated property. However, given the safety and security conditions, the mission could not take place.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 26 October 2022 requesting further information on the description of the nominated property, its attributes, as well as the emergency response to threats affecting the nominated property.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 18 November 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

29 November 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

The nominated property has an area of 237.5 ha and a buffer zone of 1068.5 ha. It covers part of the historic centre located at the elevated plateau together with part of the railway and port area situated below on the coastal area of the bay.

Although a settlement existed on the site in ancient times, and in the 14th century a Turkish fortress of Khadzhibey was established there, the present city was founded in 1794 by a strategic decision of the Empress Catherine II to build a warm-water port named Odesa.

Planning and building Odesa started with the foundation of a military camp at the site of the Turkish fortress Khadzhibey, developed by François-Paul Sainte de Wollant, a Dutch military engineer, and built in 1792-1794. Already in 1794, De Wollant planned the city as a system of straight perpendicular spacious 32-metre wide streets and rectangular blocks with 85-120-metre sides, the direction of which conformed to the orientation of two deep ravines cutting through the Odesa high plateau perpendicular to the sea, coastline, and location of the fortress. The ravines served as natural water collector and descent to the shore and the harbour. To the west to rectangular streets was planned another grid of blocks laying at a forty-seven degrees angle in relation to the first.

In 1819, during the Count Alexandre-Louis Andrault de Langeron's administration, a new master plan was developed by architect François Shalem. The plan resolved pressing urban problems and streamlined the planning structure of the city. The project envisaged the construction of a wide boulevard along the edge of the plateau and a central street perpendicular to the course of the boulevard underlined by squares and ending with a staircase leading to the port.

It was the port that played a dominant role in determining the development of the city and its character. It also, together with the conducive policy of the governors and skilful administration of the Duke of Richelieu, the first Governor of Odesa, and of his successor, gave the foundation to the city's rapid development in the 19th century, compounded by the status of free port held in the years 1819-1859 and coming of railways in 1865. In 1802, the population of Odesa stood at about 8,000 to 9,000 persons; by 1825, it had quadrupled to some 32,000 and was still rapidly growing in 1900s.

Odesa became Russia's second most important port, after Saint Petersburg. Grain was its principal export.

The presence and competition of various diverse communities was an important factor of the city development. The trade and the liberal policies – i.e. the inhabitants of Odesa were given land and exempt from taxes, the settlers and their descendants were exempt from military recruitment, enjoying freedom of religion – attracted newcomers who formed a multi-ethnic and multicultural community. Multiculturalism gave a flavour to the city and created its special atmosphere. It also caused tensions that triggered a number of violent events since 1821 with the year 1905 known as the worst pogrom in Odesa's history.

The city maintained the pace of development but in the first decades of the 20th century strikes and revolutionary agitation brought about the city's decline. In the 1930s, during the period of the Great Terror in the USSR, there were so-called national operations – Polish, Harbin, Romanian, German. As a result of these, Odesa lost many residents. The city also suffered some severe damages and many casualties during the Second World War. After the war, it rebuilt its status by becoming one of the largest ports in the USSR, and since 1991, of free Ukraine.

The city centre is a densely built-up area characterised by the relatively low-rise two- to four-storey buildings of historic quarters with the courtyards typical of Odesa and wide perpendicular streets lined with trees. Most of the buildings and structures located within the proposed boundaries of the nominated property were erected in the 19th-early 20th centuries. Theatres, religious buildings, schools, private palaces and tenement houses, clubs, hotels, banks, shopping centres, warehouses, stock exchanges, terminals and other public and administrative buildings designed by architects and engineers, mostly from Italy in the early years, but also of other nationalities,

represent both diversity in architectural styles, with eclecticism as a dominant feature, and in the main activities in the trading city. Prymorsky Boulevard with a single row of building with fronts looking to the port, Potemkin Stairs and the ensemble of Odesa Opera and Ballet Theatre and Palais-Royal are the city's main landmarks.

Historic maps show large number of religious buildings in the wider city testifying to the presence of residents of various confessions and different cultures are underlined by the toponymy in the old town. Street names such as: Jevrejska (Jewish), Polska (Polish), Nemetska-Remisnycha (German-Artisan), Italijska (Italian) identify areas where different communities lived at this stage of Odesa development. But most of these are not included within the boundaries of the nominated property.

Gradually, the process of adaptation and a certain assimilation meant that street names no longer reflected the diverse composition of the city's residents.

The port area is included in the boundaries of the nominated property because of its historic relevance and its dominant role in determining the urban system of the city. The description of the site in the nomination dossier does not include a description of the port and the railroad, sited between the city and the bay. It has not been provided due to security considerations that have prevented the submission of any details, as explained by the State Party in its response to ICOMOS' additional information letter.

The original orientation of the urban complex to the sea and the port remains a distinctive feature of the city and the historic centre retains the main administrative and cultural functions. However, the importance of the port to the economic life of modern Odesa has decreased compared to the 19th century. This is due to administrative and economic changes and the associated decline in the direct contribution of the port to the economy of the city.

State of conservation

As a technical evaluation mission has not been conducted and as no detailed information has been provided in the nomination dossier due to lack of comprehensive monitoring of the state of conservation of the property during the current emergency situation, it is not possible to draw an accurate description and assessment of the state of conservation of the nominated property.

Within the development of the nomination dossier, a "Research and Production Center ECOSTROY+" conducted, before the recent conflict, an inspection of the technical condition of 196 monuments (30 of national significance and 166 of local significance) located on the territory of the nominated property. The results of the inspection show that the degree of damage and physical wear of structures, parts, and elements of buildings differ. Twenty-four monuments were found to be in a good condition, seventy-five in satisfactory condition, forty-six in satisfactory close to unsatisfactory condition, thirty-

seven in unsatisfactory condition, one in unsatisfactory condition, and thirteen in unsatisfactory close to dilapidated condition.

The state of conservation of the internal parts of the building quarters, such as courtyards and background buildings, have not been assessed. Nor is any information provided on the state of conservation of the port area.

It should be noted that the main building material was local shell rock cut into blocks, quarried in the traditional manner from quarries around the city. Natural conditions and stone quarrying within the city led to the creation of a labyrinth of underground tunnels, known as “catacombs” or “mines”. Their presence can affect structures and limit the height of buildings.

It is acknowledged that the history and current state of the ownership – nationalisation and the process of property reprivatization – has an impact on the state of conservation, as has the lack of effective development control measures.

There has been a range of conservation and urban renewal projects undertaken in the nominated property over the last decade. Nevertheless, as it is stated in the nomination dossier, ICOMOS recommends that a regeneration plan is developed, that includes the restoration and adaptation of legally protected architectural monuments, the conservation of background buildings, and the removal of some insensitive recent new additions.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party, ICOMOS considers that the main factor affecting the nominated property is the recent conflict, while development pressures, the lack of adequate development control measures, and traffic are also other key factors.

The main threat affecting the nominated property is the current unstable situation brought about by the recent conflict, and the potential for damage or destruction of the port and historic centre of Odesa. The risks of damage to cultural heritage come from direct strikes and other hostilities. The seaport was hit by missiles on 23 July 2022. Some damage has been detected and identified in five locations. Two of them involve the Vorontsov Palace located within the proposed boundaries of the nominated property and Odesa Fine Arts Museum which is in the buffer zone. The monitoring and its analyses did not reveal any severe structural damages yet, only breakage of windows and glass rooftop, but the threat remains.

Information on emergency responses and risk preparedness plan has been requested from the State Party in ICOMOS’ additional information letter. In its response the State Party informed that some of the buildings were secured with sandbags, windows of some buildings were sealed, several monuments were shielded, several were scanned, and the material was secured in the

city archives. Fifty buildings of the city are marked with the Blue Shield.

The nominated property is located within the area where the main administrative, public, business, and cultural institutions are situated. It experiences various development pressures characteristic of city centres. ICOMOS has been informed about constructions of new buildings in the centre, on the site of historic buildings, or next to them, that negatively affect the nominated property. There are also cases of new developments which exceed the scale of historic buildings. They pose negative impact on the coherent 19th-century historic urban landscape and its visual integrity. Constructions of high volume in the city core above the catacombs may also cause structural changes of the ground and of the neighbouring historic buildings, which, in many cases, have relatively low resistance due to unauthorised redevelopment and demolition of load-bearing walls.

The State Party acknowledges the need for stronger development control measures and has indicated that new measures had started to be developed before the start of the recent conflict.

The development of the Maritime Station on the New Pier, along with the dominant Odesa Hotel built in 2001 on the extension of the Potemkin Stairs, blocks the distant view from the stairs and affects the historic compositional layout of this part of the city.

Traffic congestion in the historic centre of the city is considerable and has an impact on the nominated property. Descents like Vijskovy, Polsky, Karantynny and Devolanivsky Uzvis have lost their former importance as arteries related to the port but have retained their role as corridors connecting the central part of the city located on elevated plateau with the Prymorska Street running along the port area, which has evolved from a secondary route to one of the most important highways of the city, with a ring road function.

The authorities of the city have taken steps to reduce traffic volume in the central part of the city by introducing restrictions on vehicular traffic (one-way traffic on selected sections of the city centre) and excluding individual streets from traffic. In addition, vehicular traffic was restricted on weekends in the area of the strict historic centre.

The State Party also reports that, in addition to the flow of traffic, a problematic issue that needs to be resolved in the near future is the insufficient number of parking spaces near and in the nominated property. The existing underground parking lot in Hretska Square does not meet the growing demand for parking spaces.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- It represents a unique example of a city founded in the late 18th century on the north-western shore of the Black Sea, representing, as stated in the nomination dossier, “the last, both geographically and chronologically, founded European city”. It was developed according to “a plan that ideally echoed the Late Renaissance concept of the “ideal city” and represents a unique phenomenon in European cultural and urban planning history”.
- The historic centre of Odesa, within the boundaries proposed, maintains spatially legible, consistent, designed urban layout, with compositional axes forming a regular grid of blocks. Individual buildings together comprise what is seen as the complete 19th century architectural ensemble reflecting the city evolution during that time.
- The link to the port remains clear in the structure and composition of the city. Straight, wide streets leading towards the port, a seaside boulevard on an elevated bank facing the port, a giant staircase leading to the sea highlight one of the main compositional land-city-port-sea axes of symbolic character of the city.
- The multi-ethnic and multicultural society of Odesa was created by coexisting traditions of Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Italians, Moldovans, Poles, Russians, Romanians and Tatars. The multiculturalism of the city is reflected in eclecticism of architectural styles (classicism, empire, historicity, eclecticism, and later modernism), which, despite the modularity of the urban layout, presents diverse stylistic and compositional solutions represented by individual iconic buildings.
- The port which played a dominant role in determining the development of the city and its character represents today one of the main strategic nodes for international naval trade.

ICOMOS considers that it is difficult to see Odesa as an “ideal city” designed around central administrative buildings. Such a notion is not recorded by those who provided the designs – either the original design by François-Paul Sainte de Wollant in 1794, or the later revision of the 1803 General Plan of Odesa, which are not included in the nomination dossier. And it was not until the 1820s that the outline of the city took shape with the construction of Prymorsky Boulevard, the semi-circular square at the southern end of Katerynynska Street and the Potemkin Stairs. These later developments also created the administrative and cultural centre of the city, with the main landmarks located there. Odesa was not the last European city to be constructed and cannot be seen as outstanding for its urban planning. It is also difficult to see it as an outstanding classical settlement.

Odesa was certainly a multicultural city. The tensions and competition between those communities appear to have contributed to its growth and prosperity but they never merged into a multicultural social unit. This multiculturalism is reflected in different cultural quarters and in the heterogeneous urban buildings that lined the boulevards. In this respect, Odesa has similarities with other Eastern European cities whose built form reflects the diversity of their inhabitants and a diversity of architects. It is distinguished from other cities by its land form, with the main buildings raised above the port, by the central access and staircase linking the city to its port, and by its comparative intactness that reflects its rapid growth and rapid decline.

The current proposed boundaries encompass only part of the city that emerged in the 19th century – covering part of the area of the late 18th-century plan – although the majority of its buildings date from the second half of the 19th century as a result of the construction boom of the 1870s, rather than from earlier periods of the city’s development. The boundaries also exclude some important buildings and some areas that reflect the cultural complexity of the city.

This issue was highlighted by the “map of the multinational toponymy in Odesa”, provided by the State Party as part of the additional information. The map shows that most of the streets whose names refer to the national or cultural groups that settled in Odesa are located beyond the proposed boundaries of the nominated property, such as Polska (Polish) Street that runs along the proposed boundary, and with only Hretska (Greek) Street being within them.

Religious buildings are also mentioned as testimony to the city’s multiculturalism. And again, some of these are apparently outside the current proposed boundaries – such as the Greek Orthodox Cathedral Holy Trinity, the Orthodox Dormition Cathedral, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul, and the main synagogue.

The restricted area of the boundaries causes some discrepancy between the early designed plan and the overall 19th-century architectural ensemble of buildings as a considerable portion of the planned 19th-century city is within the buffer zone.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property are too narrowly drawn and cannot be seen to reflect the complete historic ensemble of the 19th-century city.

The port area is included within the boundaries of the nominated property in recognition of its current significance as a strategic node for international naval trade. Although the port had a considerable role in shaping the significance of the city, and the connection between the city and sea is still preserved, it cannot be said to have survived as a reflection of its 19th-century layout and function. Therefore, the port is not a key attribute of the nominated property.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has examined properties throughout the world inscribed on the World Heritage List, inserted in the Tentative Lists of States Parties as well as other properties considered to possess similar values. The comparison has been structured in two levels: a broad overview of sites presented in a table and a deepen comparison with the most similar ones to clarify the similarities and/or differences in greater detail. Forty-six port cities in Europe and in other parts of the world dating from the 18th to 19th centuries and the 20th century were selected for comparison. The properties identified are cities with a port settlement and which were crossroads of trade routes: historic port town, colonial port town and newly founded port town. The attributes of the nominated property chosen for comparison are the time and period of construction, the importance in international trade, the multicultural character, and the presence of the original urban plan together with buildings representing different cultures, ethnic groups, economy and social life.

Twenty-seven World Heritage sites were considered, of which eight were reviewed in depth. The latter included Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City (UK, 2004, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv), delisted in 2021); Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments (Russian Federation, 1990, criteria (i), (ii), (iv) and (vi)); White City of Tel-Aviv – the Modern Movement (Israel, 2003, criteria (ii) and (iv)); Historic Centre of Macao (China, 2005, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi)); Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai (India, 2018, criteria (ii) and (iv)); Kulangsu, a Historic International Settlement (China, 2017, criteria (ii) and (iv)); Urban Historic Centre of Cienfuegos (Cuba, 2005, criteria (ii) and (iv)); and Historic Town of Grand-Bassam (Côte d'Ivoire, 2012, criteria (iii) and (iv)). All of the World Heritage sites considered represent port cities from the 19th and 20th centuries developed with a combination of local and European influence. However, Odesa appears to differ from these by location, chronology, urban qualities and integrity, and the unique combination of multi-ethnic cultures.

Twelve sites were considered from the Tentative Lists of State Parties. Of these, only three were reviewed in depth: Rade de Marseille (France); The Historical Port City of Izmir (Türkiye); and *Casablanca, Ville du XX^{ème} siècle, carrefour d'influences* (Morocco). What emerged is that Odesa is very different from colonial historic ports.

Finally, Odesa was compared to other sites including Helsinki (Finland), Trieste (Italy), Kherson (Ukraine), Mykolaiv (Ukraine), Izmail (Ukraine), Kerch (Ukraine), and Varna (Bulgaria). In conclusion, the comparative analysis testifies to the uniqueness of Odesa in several areas: in regional location uniting the Russian Empire with Western Europe and the East; as a new built city developed during a specific period of time with an urban plan still legible; as a stone-built city; as a duty-free port; as a multi-ethnic enclave with diverse cultural influences and with a high level of artistic accomplishments and integrity.

ICOMOS notes that the comparative analysis proposed by the State Party shows Odesa among port cities of the same period. It highlights the extremely rapid development of Odesa in the previously unurbanised area during the late 18th-early 20th century and the multiculturalism of its residents, reflected in the urban planning and stylistic diversity of the architecture of the city.

ICOMOS considers that the urban plan presented by the State Party as main attribute of the nominated property, as designed by François-Paul Sainte de Wollant in 1794, provided a basis on which Odesa could develop into a 19th-century European modern town, evolving freely, in accordance with the liberal credo, no longer like a decade earlier in Paris under Haussmann or in other cities to achieve a harmonious, uniform design of the buildings. The concession of economic, cultural and communal privileges such as tax exemption, freedom of trade, freedom of religion or the transfer of building land, building materials and building plans/types of buildings etc., are part of the instruments of the state settlement policy. This required a highly rational settlement ground plan that is reliably developed and expanded over decades. A city layout with an orthogonal street grid, which takes into account topographical and climatic conditions as well as future requirements, has perfectly met these requirements. The creation of rectangular blocks of similar size, which were also very deep, and the relatively wide streets made it easier to market the plots. The structure of the building blocks and the variety of styles in the design of the facades reflect the freedom and pace of development of the city.

ICOMOS considers that, in this respect, a suitable comparative example would be in addition to port cities also other cities, which, like Odesa, show a comparable development from a small town into a metropolis in the 19th and early 20th centuries, are located in East Central Europe or in Eastern Europe and were hegemonized by the great powers of the time, such as Tsarist Russia, the German Empire or the Habsburg Empire.

The urban planning and architectural quality represented in Odesa can also be found in other cities in the former Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Unlike in other cities, Odesa has preserved large areas of its historic fabric that still represent its development in the 19th century and the population structure at that time, which was far more diverse than in many other cities as a result of the liberal policies of the governors and its status of free port. The society was, at the time, mixed with Russians, Ukrainians, Greeks, Germans, Poles, Bulgarians, French, Armenians, Russian ethnic groups, and a very high proportion of Jews. Therefore, Odesa, through its urban planning and built heritage reflecting different cultures, values, customs, social structures, and denominations, can be considered to stand out as a testimony to multicultural and multi-ethnic traditions of Eastern Europe cities of the 19th century.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii) and (iv).

Criterion (ii): *to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the historic centre of Odesa shows an important exchange of values in Eurasia as a Late Renaissance western European civilisation at the northern coasts of the Black Sea. It is represented by the urban environment of the rapidly developed port city of Odesa under the influence of many cultures: Ukrainians, Poles, Greeks, Jews, Italians, Armenians, Karaites, Bulgarians, French, Moldovans, and other peoples, with the composition originally reflected in various European architectural styles.

ICOMOS considers that the historic centre of Odesa could be seen to represent an important interchange of human values within Eastern Europe through its heterogeneous architectural styles, developed during its rapid growth in the 19th century, that reflect the coexistence of many cultures and a combination of influences characteristic of the border area of Europe and Asia.

However, ICOMOS considers that to justify criterion (ii) the boundaries of the nominated property would need to be expanded in some areas to include all relevant attributes and areas that evidence the way multiculturalism has shaped the architecture and planning of the city during the century following its foundation, while the port area would need to be reduced to those structures that still reflects its 19th-century form.

Criterion (iv): *to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the historic centre of Odesa is an outstanding example of a newly founded ensemble of the 19th-century classicist town, which witnesses the period of industrial revolution in Central and Eastern Europe, and the formation of a market economy integrated into international trade. Its engineered plan effectively using the topography, reflecting climatic conditions and the entrepreneurial orientation, resulted in a largely coherent urban ensemble.

ICOMOS notes that the nominated property is an urban ensemble dominated by heterogeneous buildings mostly from the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, which successively occupied earlier defined square blocks, and form a coherent historic landscape of the time which reflects the rapid evolution of the town during the 19th century. Thus, the historic centre could be seen as an outstanding "time capsule" of 19th-century urban planning and architecture which reflects the

exceptionally fast growth of the city based on the prosperity generated by the Industrial Revolution.

However, ICOMOS considers that to justify criterion (iv) the boundaries of the nominated property would need to be expanded to include all relevant areas that are integral to the 19th-century historic layout and also reduced to exclude those areas of the port that do not reflect its 19th-century layout.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property could justify criteria (ii) and (iv) if its boundaries are expanded to include all relevant attributes and areas that express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and if the port area is reduced to exclude those that do not contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property relies on the intactness of the town planning and architecture that reflects its rapid development in the 19th century, and whether sufficient attributes of proposed Outstanding Universal Value are included within the boundaries.

In the absence of a technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS has been unable to evaluate fully the integrity of the property and its potential vulnerabilities. The following reflects what has been presented in the nomination dossier, in the additional information provided by the State Party, and in the views of experts familiar with the city.

While the designed plan of Odesa evolved in certain respects as the city grew, its main outline remained unchanged. The grid structure and the linear connection with the port and the sea are retained and legible in the cityscape, while many of its 19th-century buildings have survived. ICOMOS notes, though, that the boundaries of the nominated property have been narrowly drawn and some important parts of the early development of the city have been excluded, such as many examples of religious buildings and areas of settlement, which reflect the multicultural diversity of the inhabitants of the city and their religious affiliations. These areas can be seen as attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and ICOMOS notes that they are included in the Integrated Protection Zone of the current General Plan of Odesa.

On the basis of the information available, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property are drawn too tightly to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The conditions of integrity of the city's 19th- and early 20th-century architecture, this seems to be mainly satisfactory for the key buildings, but remain highly vulnerable due to the lack of adequate planning controls, as the State Party has indicated. There could also be an issue in respect of the intactness of the form and characteristics of Odesa's

building quarters behind the main street facades, as has been mentioned above.

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity relating to overall intactness could be met if the boundaries were modified to include the areas within the Integrated Protection Zone of the current General Plan of Odesa. A mission would be necessary to define clearly the integrity of individual buildings and ensembles of buildings.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property relies on how clearly the attributes, both individually and collectively, convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

In the absence of a technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS has been unable to evaluate fully the authenticity of the property and its potential vulnerabilities. The following reflects what has been presented in the nomination dossier, in the additional information provided by the State Party, and in the views of experts familiar with the city.

The key attributes of Outstanding Universal Value relate to the planned layout of the city, and its heterogeneous architecture that reflects the diversity of its multicultural trading communities. There needs to be enough of these attributes to convey the idea of a coherent city, developed rapidly during a period of economic growth and with buildings that reflect fully the intertwined social, cultural and architectural influences that prevailed.

ICOMOS considers that currently an insufficient area of the city has been nominated to encompass all the necessary attributes and fully convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

In terms of the authenticity of individual buildings, currently the information available is insufficient to allow an appropriate assessment of how well they have been conserved, how their contexts have been respected, and how the new buildings that have been developed during the last twenty years have impacted adversely on the overall authenticity of the urban ensemble.

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of authenticity relating to the inclusion of sufficient attributes conveying the proposed Outstanding Universal Value could be met if the boundaries were modified to include the area within the Integrated Protection Zone of the current General Plan of Odesa. A mission would be necessary to assess the authenticity of individual buildings, ensembles of buildings, and the visual coherence of the urban plan.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the historic centre of Odesa, relating to intactness and the need to include enough attributes within of the nominated property, could be met if the boundaries of the nominated property are modified

to include the area of the Integrated Protection Zone of the current General Plan of Odesa. A mission would be necessary to assess the integrity and authenticity of individual attributes.

Boundaries

The nominated property is part of the coastal area of the city, and includes some areas of the port. It covers the territory of the city defined by Prymorska Street, Torhova Street, Sadova Street, Soborna Square, Preobrazhenska Street, Zhukovskoho Street, Polsky Descent, Karantynny Descent, Kanatna Street, Nakhimova Lane, Suvorivska Alley.

While the boundaries of the nominated property correspond to the late 18th-century plan, according to which the city was founded, the majority of the buildings date from the second half of the 19th century during which the city plan had been enlarged. The restricted area of the urban boundaries thus results in a degree of mismatch between the designed plan and the overall 19th-century architectural ensemble that supports the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS notes that a large historic area that was indicated already in the 1803 and 1809 plans of the city is not included into the proposed boundaries of the nominated property. This area is part of the early development of the city, and could have been delimited following the limits determined by the early line of terrestrial fortification present on the 1809 and later maps and still legible in the current city layout. In addition, it is confirmed by the delineation of the Integrated Protection Zone in the current General Plan of Odesa.

The cartographic material included in the nomination dossier shows the extent of the historic areas, as well as the Integrated Protection Zone covering the area of the grid layout of the city within the boundaries of Prymorska, Staroportofrankivska and Panteleimonivska, Leontovicha Streets and Lydersovskyi Boulevard, including the area of the fortress which is now Shevchenko Park. This area coincides with the proposed buffer zone in this part of the city.

Therefore, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property should coincide with those of the Integrated Protection Zone as shown in the current General Plan of Odesa so that all relevant attributes are included in the nominated property.

The proposed boundaries of the port area are not described in detail in the nomination dossier and their delineation is not easily legible on the map submitted. No detailed description is offered for any components of the port area.

From the individual and historical materials available, ICOMOS considers that the port, which now functions as a modern utility, cannot be said to have survived as a reflection of its 19th-century layout. Although the inclusion of the port area is seen by the State Party to be relevant as its function had motivated the city's foundation, how its

contemporary function, infrastructure and spatial arrangements relate to the city and its proposed Outstanding Universal Value are not explained in the nomination dossier, nor does the nominated port area have any legal heritage protection.

ICOMOS considers that the port should be excluded from the boundaries of the nominated property but included in its buffer zone for the reasons set out under the section on the justification for inscription.

The proposed buffer zone consists of three main parts: the internal waters of the port defined by wave breakers; the area of the city that had been a “free port” in the 19th century; and the Shevchenko Park together with the area between Frantsuz'ky Boulevard and the coast.

Buffer zones are established in order to give an added layer of protection to the nominated property through supporting its proposed Outstanding Universal Value, as explained on paragraph 104 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. A clear explanation for how the buffer zone protects the nominated property should be provided in the nomination dossier as well as justification for its delineation. No details of either of these are provided in the nomination dossier. Once the boundaries are modified in different areas of the nominated property, a new buffer zone should be defined to protect the immediate setting of the property and facilitate the preservation of functional and spatial ties with the nominated property and controlling existing urban pressures.

In summary, ICOMOS recommends an extension of the boundaries of the nominated property to cover more of the historic city in line with the delineation of the Integrated Protection Zone as shown in the current General Plan of Odesa, the removal of the port areas from the nominated boundaries, and a new delineation of the buffer zone to encompass the immediate setting of the enlarged boundaries of the city. This will facilitate the preservation of functional and spatial ties of the nominated property with the rest of the city and support the protection of its attributes in relation to existing urban pressures.

Odesa is the third largest city in Ukraine with slightly over 1,000,000 inhabitants (2022). The estimated population of the nominated property as proposed for inscription was approximately of 14,000 people in 2021. The number of inhabitants within the boundaries of the buffer zone was approximately of 117,000 people in 2021.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the property “The historic center of the port city of Odesa” on the World Heritage List; that criteria (ii) and (iv) could be justified and the overall conditions of integrity and authenticity could be met if the boundaries of the nominated property are expanded to include all relevant areas that are integral to of the historic urban layout of the initial 18th-century plan

and its evolution during the 19th century; and that the port area should be excluded from the boundaries of the nominated property and included within a new buffer zone defined around the modified urban area; a mission would be needed to assess the integrity and authenticity of individual attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

No comprehensive and complete inventory of the property's condition has been carried out. Only the technical condition of individual monuments, which were restored and repaired, have been recorded.

The “Historic architectural reference plan, project of monument protection zones, and the graphic definition of the historic area boundaries of Odesa” developed in 2007 by the Scientific Research Institute of Monument Protection Studies (Kyiv, Ukraine) as a component of the master plan of Odesa, is, according to the information provided in the nomination dossier, the only document with a basic inventory of historic areas and buildings. The document is in the process of being updated and completed as part of a revision of land use documents. The final version will include mapping of the monuments and their configuration.

Conservation measures

Successively, since the decision to apply for World Heritage status was taken, the Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Objects of the Odesa City Council, which is responsible for heritage protection at the municipal level, developed programmes aimed at improving the state of conservation of the heritage of the city. In 2013, the “City target program for inclusion of the central historical building area of Odesa in the main list of UNESCO World Heritage for 2013-2015” has been adopted by decision of the Odesa City Council. It was then continued under the programme called “Nomination of the historical heritage of Odesa to the UNESCO World Heritage List” adopted for the years 2016-2018. Then the “City comprehensive program for the preservation and development of the historic center of Odesa for 2019-2021” was approved. A number of repairs, restoration and conservation works were carried out in the historic centre of the town, mainly the landmark buildings and architectural monuments of national or local importance, but also some streets, boulevards and squares were subject to conservation works. No details have been provided in the nomination dossier, the works that have been undertaken are listed in the draft management plan.

ICOMOS notes that the programmes aimed at conservation have been suspended due to the current emergency situation.

Monitoring

A comprehensive and complete monitoring of the condition of the nominated property has never been carried out.

The current situation is holding back concrete actions. Nevertheless, the draft management plan envisages the establishment of an administrative structure dedicated to the development, in cooperation with international experts, of a monitoring system that will take into account the current state of conservation of the nominated property and damages arising from the recent conflict it is facing. First, an inventory and assessment of the structural condition of the nominated property is planned to be conducted and indicators will also be developed. In the proposal, the State Party indicates the areas of concern that will be addressed by the monitoring system. These are the state of conservation (technical aspects), restoration works and their methodology, natural and anthropogenic factors affecting the nominated property, the effectiveness of protection and conservation measures, and controls for new developments and constructions.

ICOMOS considers that, given the recent conflict situation, the development of an inventory of buildings of national and local importance, together with an assessment of their condition, should be a priority task. Ongoing monitoring, even to a limited extent, will allow timely estimation of the situation and planning of actions that could help mitigate potential casualties.

ICOMOS considers that comprehensive conservation plans for individual historic monuments of national and local significance should be developed as soon as the emergency situation allows. A general document for the revitalisation of the overall historic district (including the modified nominated area and a re-defined buffer zone) should also be developed as soon as possible. It should include measures for potential conflict damages and other casualties that may occur as its outcomes. Allocation of human and financial resources and their effective management are crucial.

ICOMOS considers that it would be desirable for a monitoring system to be developed as soon as possible to encompass all the attributes of proposed Outstanding Universal Value and is conceived for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

General provisions for cultural heritage protection are established by the Law of Ukraine on Cultural Heritage Protection adopted in 2000 (No.1805-III of 8 June 2000, with amendments as per the Law of Ukraine No. 2518-VI of 9 September 2010). On the basis of this regulation, a register of monuments is created, in which monuments of national importance are included by decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, and monuments of local importance by decision of the Ministry of Culture and

Information Policy of Ukraine. In accordance with this law, cultural heritage assets that are registered monuments are protected and all proprietors (or their representatives) of these historic architectural monuments and their component parts, regardless of the type of property, are obliged to receive a protection agreement from the relevant heritage protection body.

The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine is the highest authority in the sphere of cultural heritage, acting on behalf of the Cabinet of Ministers. It formulates and implements state policy on cultural heritage and directs the activities of state institutions related to culture and art. The Ministry is responsible for supervising and monitoring the protection of historic monuments, which may be managed at the municipal level. At the municipal level, the Department of Cultural Heritage Protection of the Odesa City Council is responsible for the protection and conservation of cultural heritage sites in compliance with regulations on historic preservation in urban planning.

There are 235 individual buildings and their complexes as well as places (memorial sites) and structures, located within and outside of the nominated property (there is no map included showing their location), entered in the State Register of Immovable Historical Monuments of Ukraine and protected in compliance with the Law of Ukraine on Cultural Heritage Protection.

The nominated property, its administrative and residential part, is protected according to the local regulations established in 2008 by the General Plan of Odesa. For the central zone, the most significant part of the city, where the main administrative, public, business, and cultural institutions are located, an Integrated Protection Zone was established by the plan. Its boundaries are delineated according to the current Historical and Architectural Reference Plan of Odesa, approved by Order of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ukraine No728/0/16-08 in 2008, and integrated into the General Plan of Odesa.

The nominated property is currently only a part of the central zone and thus only part a of the Integrated Protection Zone. ICOMOS considers that its boundaries should be widened to be in line with the entire Integrated Protection Zone.

One of the priorities of the plan is the protection of historic sites and the conservation and rational use of monuments and cultural heritage sites located within the Integrated Protection Zone. Any project concerning the construction or reconstruction of buildings and structures should be preceded by the development of historical and urban planning justifications. It is unclear whether there is a presumption against demolition of protected monuments or what parameters might justify demolition in exceptional circumstances. It is also unclear whether constraints exist to control the setting of protected monuments.

In terms of new construction, the Historical and Architectural Reference Plan of Odesa limits the height of

new construction in the historic centre to 18.6 metres for buildings with facades facing the street and 21.3 metres on the corners of blocks. However, for buildings that do not directly face the street, the figure may increase and will be determined as a percentage according to the neighbouring houses. It allows for construction of buildings higher than historic ones in the direct vicinity.

The Historical and Architectural Reference Plan of Odesa is under revision. Clearer restrictions on new constructions and reconstructions of buildings are planned to be developed but what form these restrictions will take has not been set out. The final version will also include detailed mapping of the monuments.

On the basis of the documentation provided, and without the benefit of a mission, it appears that there is a need to strengthen protection, to ensure that the historic urban fabric is respected as an overall entity within which harmonious street scenes, and particular characteristic ensemble of courtyard building, distinctive to Odesa, can be conserved for their contributions, even though not all their distinctive features are protected as heritage assets.

Except individual buildings (the Passenger Maritime Station, Commercial Port Administration, Red Warehouses and Vorontsov Lighthouse) the port, as included in the nominated property, is not protected for its heritage assets.

A buffer zone has been proposed as an additional layer of protection. As ICOMOS recommends that the boundaries of the nominated property be modified, it would be necessary to redefine the boundaries of the buffer zone.

Management system

The heritage management system dedicated to the nominated property is at the organisational stage.

The Department of Cultural Heritage Protection of the Odesa City Council is the main body responsible for the protection and conservation of cultural heritage sites and compliance with the legislation on monument protection in urban planning activities.

A separate governing body for the management of the nominated property has not yet been established. There is a plan to establish a special structure dedicated to the management of the nominated property, hinged on the Odesa Center, a managing body that will be co-founded by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine and Odesa City Council. The managing body is planned to be organically integrated into the existing structure of the local self-government and state authorities responsible for the protection of cultural heritage. Its main scope will be to develop management policies relating to the nominated property in compliance with the state policy. The future governing structure and cooperation framework are presented in the draft management plan annexed to the nomination dossier.

The draft management plan mainly reports on current city programmes and describes the future governing structure. There are no explicit strategies or programmes in the document. Also, the status of the document needs to be clarified.

There is no emergency plan existing for the historic centre of Odesa or for any individual monuments. In its response to the ICOMOS' request for additional information on measures to be implemented in emergency situations, the State Party indicated that measures are still to be developed and will be done as part of further work on the management plan and its implementation.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In the absence of a technical evaluation mission, it has not been possible to assess fully the effectiveness of protection and management measures put forward in the nomination dossier or their current implementation.

ICOMOS considers that the current legal framework provides a basis for effective protection of individual monuments in the nominated property as well as in the wider central zone of the city, while the General Plan of Odesa has established an Integrated Protection Zone that should allow consideration for conservation and development at a territorial scale. So far, this does not appear to be the case as both demolitions and new constructions impacting the integrity of the historic urban landscape have been allowed.

Existing measures for the Integrated Protection Zone area should be strengthened to ensure that: there is a presumption against demolition of both national and local monuments except in exceptional circumstances; that the harmony of streetscapes and blocks of buildings that are particular characteristics of Odesa are defined and treated as discrete entities for the purposes of conservation in terms of how they contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the historic centre of Odesa; and that new constructions that do not fit the historic urban landscape and environmental conditions are not approved. The legal framework should also include Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms as a pre-requisite for all development projects and activities that are planned within or in the setting of the nominated property.

The draft management plan should be revised as set out above, adopted, and implemented as soon as the current situation allows. In respect of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value which is underpinned by the history of multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity in Odesa, it is recommended that the management plan include special measures to reflect and, where relevant, support the tangible and intangible multicultural aspects of the city. It is also important that the management plan includes disaster, climate change and other risk preparedness measures.

6 Threats affecting the nominated property

The State Party has set out the following threats as a reason for requesting an emergency inscription:

- On 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine and the country is currently at war.
- Cultural heritage is in danger of being destroyed or severely damaged as a result of direct strikes or other forms of hostilities during war operations.
- There is a risk of damage and destruction of cultural heritage during hostilities, even if they occur at a considerable distance from the territory of the nominated property, due to fragility of the area caused by systemic anthropogenic factors.

On 23 July 2022, the seaport in Odesa was hit by the missiles.

According to the nomination dossier, five damaged sites have been detected and identified. Two of them involve the Vorontsov Palace located within the proposed boundaries of the nominated property and Odesa Fine Arts Museum which is in the proposed buffer zone. The analysis did not reveal any severe structural damages, only breakage of windows and glass rooftop.

7 Conclusion

In response to the requirements of emergency nomination as set out in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, paragraphs 161 and 162, ICOMOS has considered whether:

- The property is in danger, as a result of having suffered damage or facing serious and specific dangers from natural events or human activities, which would constitute an emergency situation;
- An immediate decision by the Committee is necessary to ensure its safeguarding;
- The property may unquestionably justify Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the current conflict in Ukraine poses a threat to the historic centre of the city of Odesa. The unstable situation calls for decisive action to preserve its urban heritage.

ICOMOS considers that the historic centre of Odesa has the potential to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value but with wider boundaries than those currently proposed and excluding the port area. The boundaries of the nominated property should cover the historic area of the city, as it was developed by the end of the 19th century, and should coincide with those of the Integrated Protection Zone as shown in the General Plan of Odesa. The port area should be part of the buffer zone and protected for the way it supports the significance of the nominated property.

As the port is not a key attribute of the nominated property, ICOMOS recommends that the name of the property be changed to: "The Historic Centre of Odesa".

In order to ensure as much as possible the immediate safeguarding of the nominated property, and even though the current boundaries are not adequate to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value or to reflect its integrity, ICOMOS recommends the nominated property for inscription on the World Heritage List and, at the same time, on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and with a recommendation that the boundaries of the urban area be modified to coincide with those of the Integrated Protection Zone.

ICOMOS considers that this recommendation should be seen as a means of ensuring that as many of the attributes as possible are not affected by direct strikes and other hostilities caused by the current conflict, and an opportunity to gain the attention and support of the international community for the protection and conservation of the nominated property.

In view of the lack of a technical evaluation mission, combined with limited details on certain aspects being provided in the nomination dossier, ICOMOS has not been able to fully evaluate the justification proposed for Outstanding Universal Value in the nomination dossier, particularly in relation to integrity, authenticity and management, but does consider that there are potential vulnerabilities and weaknesses in the nominated property as presented.

Accordingly, ICOMOS also recommends that appropriate planning regulations be developed, that resources be mobilised to address the conservation challenges, and that the protection, conservation, management and monitoring regimes for the nominated property be completed and implemented.

ICOMOS considers that the dangers facing the property constitute an emergency situation for which a decision by the World Heritage Committee is necessary for its safeguarding, and that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property has been demonstrated under criteria (ii) and (iv), with modified boundaries.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that The historic center of the port city of Odesa, Ukraine, be inscribed on an emergency basis on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (ii) and (iv)** and at the same time on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

ICOMOS recommends that a joint ICOMOS/WHC reactive monitoring mission be invited to the property, if this is feasible, to establish a Desired state of conservation and a programme of corrective measures to

remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The historic centre of Odesa is part of a port city located on the Ukrainian shores of the Black Sea. It stands on a shallow indentation of the seacoast about thirty kilometres north of the Dniester River estuary. The city was founded in 1794 by a strategic decision of the Empress Catherine II to build a warm-water port following the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish war of 1787-1792.

The new city, built on the site of a Turkish fortress, was initially planned by a military engineer and then expanded further during the 19th century.

Odesa owes its character and rapid development during the 19th century to the success of its port, the favourable policies of its governors, and its status as a free port city from 1819 to 1859. Trade attracted many diverse people who formed multi-ethnic and multicultural communities, making Odesa a cosmopolitan city. Its pace of development, the wealth it generated and its multiculturalism all influenced its architectural expression and the variety of styles that still remain in the urban landscape. It has also caused tensions that, beginning in 1821, triggered a series of violent events.

The historic centre of Odesa is a grid system of spacious tree-lined streets divided into two rectangular blocks, the direction of which conformed to the orientation of two deep ravines cutting through the Odesa high plateau perpendicular to the sea. The city is characterised by relatively low-rise buildings. Designed by renowned architects and engineers, many from Italy in the early years, its theatres, religious buildings, schools, private palaces and tenement houses, clubs, hotels, banks, shopping centres, warehouses, stock exchanges, terminals and other public and administrative buildings represent both eclectic diversity in architectural styles and all the main activities of a trading city.

Prymorsky Boulevard, stretching along the edge of the plateau, Potemkin Stairs coming down to the shore, and the ensemble of the Odesa Opera and Ballet Theatre, and the Palais-Royal are the main landmarks of the city.

While the urban planning and architectural quality represented in Odesa can also be found in other cities in the former Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires, Odesa has preserved large areas of its historic fabric that reflect its rapid and prosperous development in the 19th century and its population which was far more diverse than in many other cities. Thus, Odesa, through its urban planning and built heritage as a reflection of many cultures, values, customs, social structures, and denominations, can be considered to stand out as a testimony to multicultural and

multi-ethnic traditions of Eastern European cities of the 19th century.

Criterion (ii): The historic centre of Odesa represents an important interchange of human values within Eastern Europe through its heterogeneous architectural styles, developed during its rapid growth in the 19th century, that reflect the coexistence of many cultures and the combination of influences characteristic of the border area of Europe and Asia.

Criterion (iv): The historic centre of Odesa is an outstanding “time capsule” of the 19th-century urban planning, with heterogeneous buildings mostly from the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, which reflects both the exceptionally fast growth of the town, based on the prosperity generated by the Industrial Revolution, and its notable diversity.

Integrity

While the designed plan of Odesa evolved in certain respects as the city grew, its main outline remained unchanged. The grid structure and the linear connection with the port and the sea are retained and legible in the cityscape, and many of 19th-century buildings have survived. The modified boundaries matching those of the Integrated Protection Zone of the current General Plan of Odesa encompass all the necessary attributes expressing the Outstanding Universal Value.

The intactness of the city's 19th- and early 20th-century architecture, seems to be mainly satisfactory for the key buildings, but remains highly vulnerable due to the lack of adequate planning controls and inappropriate conservation. The integrity of the form and characteristics of the building quarters behind the main street facades, also appears highly vulnerable to modern infill and inadequate conservation. Given the emergency procedure and the lack of a mission to the site, at the moment of inscription an appropriate assessment of how well the integrity of individual buildings and group of buildings has been maintained is to be envisaged.

Authenticity

The key attributes of Outstanding Universal Value relate to the planned layout of the city, and its heterogeneous architecture that reflects the diversity of its multicultural trading communities. The modified boundaries matching those of the Integrated Protection Zone of the current General Plan of Odesa encompass all the necessary attributes that convey the idea of a coherent city, developed rapidly during a period of exceptional economic growth and with buildings that reflect fully the intertwined social, cultural and architectural influences that prevailed.

Given the emergency procedure and the lack of a mission to the site, at the moment of inscription an appropriate assessment of the authenticity of individual buildings, their state of conservation, how their contexts have been respected, and how the new buildings developed during

the last twenty years have impacted adversely on the overall authenticity of the urban ensemble is to be envisaged.

Management and protection requirements

General provisions for cultural heritage protection are established by the Law of Ukraine on Cultural Heritage Protection adopted in 2000. The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine is the highest authority in the sphere of cultural heritage, acting on behalf of the Cabinet of Ministers. It formulates and implements state policy on cultural heritage and directs the activities of state institutions related to culture and art. The Ministry is responsible for supervising and monitoring the protection of historic monuments. At the municipal level, the Department of Cultural Heritage Protection of the Odesa City Council is responsible for the protection and conservation of cultural heritage sites in compliance with regulations on historic conservation in urban planning.

The property is protected according to the local regulations established in 2008 by the General Plan of Odesa.

The property is situated in the central zone, the most significant one in the city, where the main administrative, public, business, and cultural institutions are located. An Integrated Protection Zone was established. Its boundaries are delineated according to the current Historical and Architectural Reference Plan of Odesa, approved by the Order of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ukraine and integrated into the General Plan of Odesa. Selected individual buildings and their complexes are listed in the State Register of Immovable Historical Monuments of Ukraine and protected in compliance with the Law of Ukraine on Cultural Heritage Protection as historic architectural monuments.

The enhancement of the management system is needed to cover all attributes and provide for coordinated management with supporting administrative tools and decision-making mechanisms. The management system should include detailed monitoring and conservation programmes, and an overall interpretation and presentation policy. Risk management should be included.

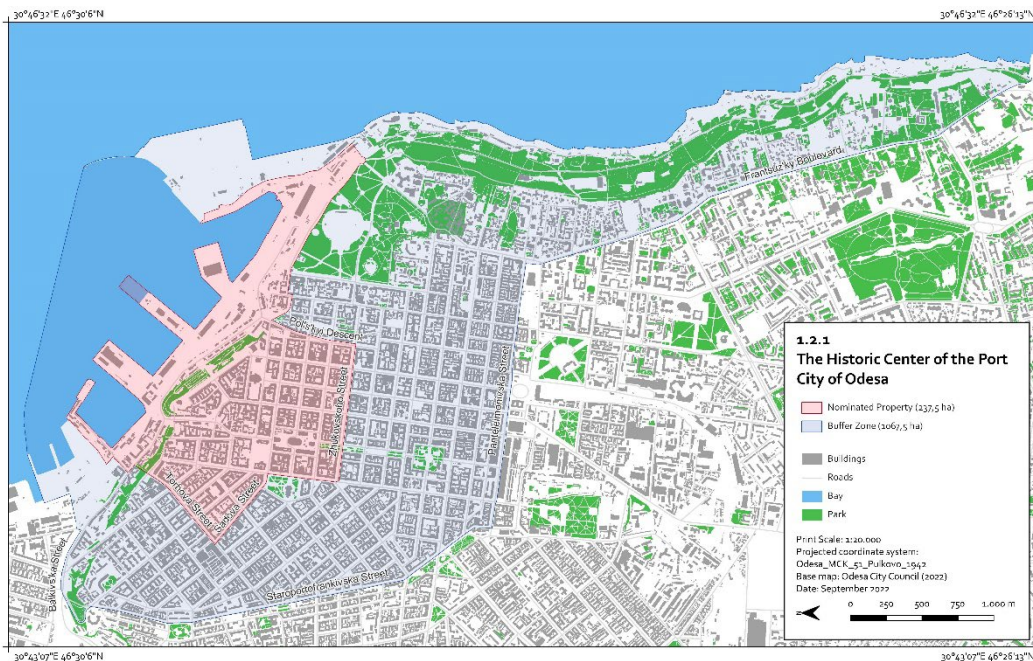
Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give urgent consideration to the following:

- a) Submitting a map and geographical coordinates showing the modified boundaries of the property, with wider boundaries than those proposed in the nomination dossier and excluding the port area, covering the historic area of the city, as it was developed by the end of the 19th century and coinciding with those of the Integrated Protection Zone as shown in the General Plan of Odesa, with the port area as a part of the buffer zone, by 1 June 2023,

- b) Extending the buffer zone to encompass the immediate setting of the modified boundaries as well as the port area, and submit a minor boundary modification request in this respect with details of how the buffer zone will be managed to support the Outstanding Universal Value of the property,
- c) Reinforcing the legal regulation for the Integrated Protection Zone to protect the attributes of the property against unsuitable development,
- d) Integrating Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms into the legal framework as a prerequisite for development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within the property or its buffer zone,
- e) Developing an inventory and indicators for the assessment of the state of conservation of the property together with developing and implementing a monitoring system,
- f) Continuing the implementation of conservation programmes with priorities given to buildings at risk and areas that need urgent stabilisation or conservation interventions,
- g) Developing a study to identify tangible and intangible aspects of multi-ethnic and multicultural heritage of the city and developing measures for an interpretation policy,
- h) Revising the draft management plan to include disaster, climate change and other risk preparedness measures, as well as implementation measures for emergency responses,
- i) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session;

ICOMOS further recommends that the name of the property be changed to: "The Historic Centre of Odesa".



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property