

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/TA/1671/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 21 December 2022

H. E. Mr Mohamad Oemar
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary, Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of the Republic of
Indonesia to UNESCO
Maison de l'UNESCO
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World Heritage List 2023

The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks (Republic of Indonesia) – Interim report and additional information request

Dear Ambassador,

As prescribed by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies have to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2023. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation procedure.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to “The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks” was carried out by Mr. Vasu Poshyanandana (Thailand) in August 2022. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organisation and implementation of the mission.

On 3 October 2022, a letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the boundaries, the legal protection, planned and approved development projects, the moratorium on hotel development, the informal settlements, and the management system. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 8 November 2022 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2022, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2023. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2023.

We thank you for the availability of your Delegation for attending the meeting held on 26 November 2022 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting. During the last part of its meeting, the Panel has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

Title of the nominated property and justification for Outstanding Universal Value

The proposed title of the property and justification for Outstanding Universal Value pertain primarily to the central axis (Component 1) and seem to be less applicable to the Royal Tombs (Component 2). The arguments presented for several of the criteria also relate to the axis, but not the tombs. These observations have raised questions about the rationale for including the second component part and the use of the serial approach.

The ICOMOS Panel notes that the overall narrative presented throughout the nomination dossier attempts to make a number of different arguments in order to justify four criteria, which does not, at this stage, come together in a way that clearly supports the inclusion of both component parts. In some parts, the justification focuses on the spatial elements of Javanese philosophy; in others, it considers the history of the Yogyakarta Sultanate and its ongoing cultural traditions; and in some others, the importance of the property in terms of town planning has been argued (but without including the entirety of the urban axis or adjacent residential areas). Each of these narratives raises issues that cause the overall case to lack the necessary coherence at this stage. The ICOMOS Panel understands that these issues are inter-related, but the attempts to justify four criteria mean that the strength of the argument is not consistently sustained and inclusive of both component parts.

In the meeting held with the Indonesian authorities during the ICOMOS Panel, representatives of the State Party explained that the rationale for inclusion of the Royal Tombs is based on the importance of the property in representing Javanese beliefs embedded in observances of the life cycle of the Sultan. While this aspect is included in the proposed justification of Outstanding Universal Value, this precision is not carried in the nomination dossier at this stage.

The ICOMOS Panel considers that there are several ways in which this could be resolved. One straightforward way would be to omit Component 2, and to adjust the justification of the criteria to address only Component 1. Another will be to rework the narrative carried by the justification of Outstanding Universal Value to focus on the characteristics of the Sultan's life cycle. Both of these will probably require the use of fewer criteria than is currently the case.

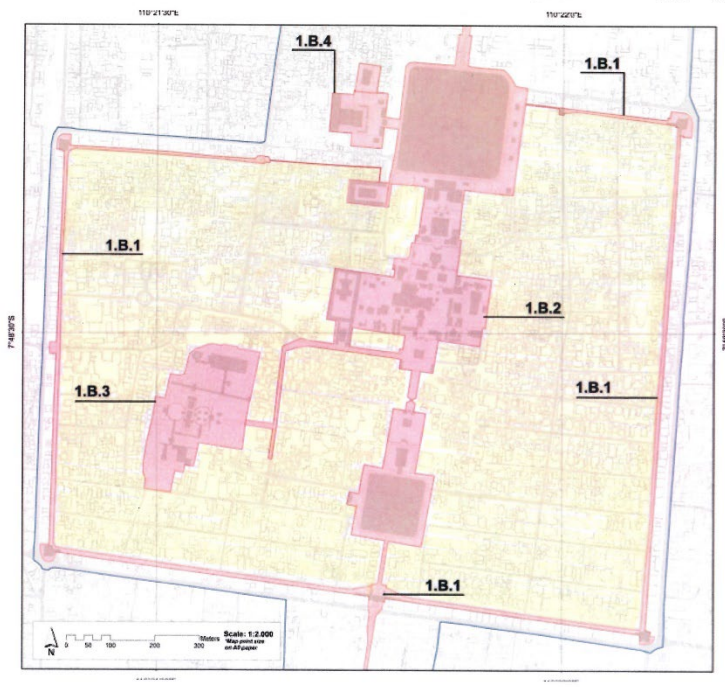
ICOMOS would be pleased to receive the views of the State Party on the proposed options and associated relevant information.

Finally, and depending on the State Party's responses to the issues raised here, it would be appreciated if a succinct outline of the historical influences of Javanese culture in the wider region could be provided.

Boundaries

The ICOMOS Panel would appreciate clarifications regarding several issues about the proposed boundaries and buffer zones:

- In Component 1, the outer wall of the palace complex is shown in pink (and labelled 1.B.1) and a number of key buildings are also shown in pink, indicating their inclusion in the boundary. However, there are also many other buildings and urban elements occurring within this enclosed space. While the ICOMOS Panel understands that these other structures are not proposed as attributes, it is not clear whether this area (shaded in yellow in the image below) is considered by the State Party to be inside the property boundary, inside the buffer zone, or excluded from the nominated property and the buffer zone. The ICOMOS Panel would be grateful to receive a clear indication of the status of these areas.



- For the urban axis (Component 1), the ICOMOS Panel notes the exclusion of many buildings that line the axis other than the identified monuments which are proposed as attributes. It would be appreciated if additional information can be provided on whether it would be possible to include all the buildings that form the alignment of the axis within the property boundary.
- For the Royal Tombs (Component 2), the ICOMOS Panel notes that the Imogiri site is significantly older and more extensive than the nominated elements. Based on the clarifications already provided, ICOMOS appreciates that the included areas are the tombs (and the pathway that joins them) that are directly associated with the Yogyakarta Sultanate from the 18th century, and that the excluded areas lack this association. However, this also seems to cut up a larger and more coherent heritage property. Accordingly, the ICOMOS Panel would be grateful to receive information on whether it is possible to include the entire Imogiri site in the nomination.
- Finally, given the cosmological basis of the siting of the axis, ICOMOS notes that only parts of the rivers on either side of the axis are included in the buffer zone/wider setting of the nominated property. The ICOMOS Panel would appreciate additional information about whether it could be possible for a greater portion of the alignments of these two rivers to be included in the buffer zone and/or wider setting proposed for the nominated property.

Informal settlements

The ICOMOS Panel is grateful for the additional information that has been provided on the issue of the informal settlements which was very helpful, particularly in relation to the more recent settlements that have grown up around the outer walls of the palace complex. The ICOMOS Panel notes that in the additional information received in November 2022, it is intended for these residents to be relocated, taking into account their social and economic needs, and that this process could take many years. The ICOMOS Panel would be very pleased to receive further information about the process used for relocating these households, and whether this is a compulsory or voluntary process. It would also be of interest to understand how the needs of these people are being identified and respected, as well as an indication of the time line for this to be concluded (if known).

Land ownership in the urban axis

The ICOMOS Panel is interested to understand whether all identified attributes within the entire length of the axis in Component 1 and its buffer zone are in the ownership of the Sultan, including the areas with informal settlements.

Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach

The materials received mention that the HUL approach is being applied to the nominated property, and that this is being used as a basis for managing the dynamics of the urban environment (Component 1). Because the HUL approach provides a very broad framework, the ICOMOS Panel wishes to deepen its understanding about how the HUL approach is being implemented, including actions and timeframes.

We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation procedure.

We would be grateful if you could provide **ICOMOS** and the **World Heritage Centre** with the above information **by 28 February 2023 at the latest**, the deadline set out in paragraph 148 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* for additional information on nominations to be received. Please note that any information submitted after this date will not be considered by ICOMOS in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted, however, that while ICOMOS will carefully consider any additional information submitted, it cannot properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or large amounts of new information submitted at the last minute. So, we would be grateful if the State Party could keep its response concise and respond only to the above requests.

We thank you for your support of the World Heritage Convention and the evaluation procedure.

Yours faithfully,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of
 Indonesia
 The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta Management Unit
 UNESCO World Heritage Centre