

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/EG/1678/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 21 December 2022

H.E. Mr Alexander Kuznetsov
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of the Russian
Federation to UNESCO
8, rue de Prony
75017 Paris

World Heritage List 2023

Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University (Russian Federation) – 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 “Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University” was carried out by Ms. Natalia Turekulova (Kazakhstan) in September 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 of the nominated property, the comparative analysis, the state of conservation, the legal protection, the management, and the documentation. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 9 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 25 November 2022 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. During the last part of its meeting, the ICOMOS Panel discussed this nomination and has considered that the property does not fulfil at this stage the requirements set out in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

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

Historic context of the Kazan Observatories' development

The nominated property forms part of the heritage associated with astronomy and astronomical observations and with science in general. As rightly underlined in the nomination dossier, this type of property is considered underrepresented on the World Heritage List even though an enormous and valuable science heritage legacy is present across the planet. ICOMOS would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to the authorities of Kazan Federal University for preserving and presenting the observatories as a valuable heritage of science.

ICOMOS acknowledges the input and importance of Russian scientists in the development of astronomy and related fields. In order to better understand the value of the nominated property, ICOMOS would be thankful to receive further information on the history of Kazan Observatories in the context of the history of the Russian realm and the development of the two Observatories after 1917. The information required concerns the architectural ensembles and key semi-movable astronomical instruments functioning as an inseparable whole. Information on the scientific networks the Kazan Observatories were members or part of during the time in question would also help to understand their importance in a given period, geographic area and the field of astronomical science.

Functional links between the component parts and identification of attributes

ICOMOS would like to thank the State Party for the additional comparison of Kazan Observatories with other optical observatories. However, the Panel notes that there are many similar observatories worldwide, particularly in Europe, which may have comparable qualities.

The nomination dossier does not provide clear justification for the serial approach. In many aspects the nominated component parts are presented separately or as individual units, not as a whole. ICOMOS recalls that paragraph 137 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* requires to explain the functional links between the component parts of a nominated property, to justify the serial approach. A rationale for the selection of the component parts of the serial nomination as well as their attributes should be provided. Especially in light of the historic development of the Kazan Observatories, the issue of functional links between the two component parts needs to be better addressed.

The ICOMOS Panel was unclear about the role of the planetarium in the Engelhardt Observatory. The planetarium is mentioned in the proposed brief synthesis and justification, as well as in the justification for criterion (iv) and in the proposed statement of integrity. Still, it is not listed among the constituting elements or attributes and not described in detail. From the limited information available on this object, the ICOMOS Panel understands that this is a construction for interpretation and education purposes. ICOMOS would be grateful if the State Party could provide a detailed description of the planetarium and confirm its status.

Conservation documentation for the nominated property

The ICOMOS Panel notices that the nominated property, its structural elements and its instruments are maintained in good condition and appreciates the additional information provided on this matter. Inventories followed by technical drawings together with historical and technical analyses of individual buildings, instruments and landscapes are important to understand their development over a span of time and would allow assessing the current state and demands for conservation works. In that respect, ICOMOS would be grateful if the State Party could provide technical conservation documentation for key semi-movable instruments, buildings and structures and their immediate settings (in the case of Kazan Observatory) and area/landscape (in the case of Engelhardt Observatory).

Development pressures, both existing and potential

The ICOMOS Panel considers development pressure as a threat for the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property. ICOMOS would be grateful to receive additional information in this respect, namely on the following matters:

- a. the high-rise constructions in the immediate neighbourhood of the Kazan Observatory, and
- b. development of transport routes in the case of Engelhardt Observatory.

In order to properly evaluate the integrity of the nominated property, ICOMOS would appreciate receiving the results of the impact assessments, including Heritage Impact Assessments, conducted for the above-mentioned existing and planned developments, as well as for the development of the Engelhardt Observatory, and further development plans regarding the planetarium and astropark, as recommended by paragraph 118bis of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

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 requested 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 Committee of the Republic of Tatarstan for the Protection of Cultural Heritage
 Kazan Federal University
 Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tatarstan
 Museum of History of Kazan University
 State Committee for Tourism of the Republic of Tatarstan
 Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO
 UNESCO World Heritage Centre