
Medieval Mosques of Anatolia (Türkiye) No 1694

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure

Location

Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque
Merkez District, Province of Afyonkarahisar
Aegean Region

Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque
Altındağ District, Province of Ankara
Central Anatolia Region

Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque
Sivrihisar District, Province of Eskişehir
Central Anatolia Region

Mahmut Bey Mosque
Merkez District, Province of Kastamonu
Black Sea Region

Eşrefoğlu Mosque
Beyşehir District, Province of Konya
Mediterranean Region

Türkiye

Brief description

The nominated serial property is comprised of five hypostyle mosques built in Anatolia between the late 13th and mid-14th centuries, each of which is located in a different province of present-day Türkiye, as well as a number of associated buildings and a small graveyard. The unusual structural system of the mosques combines an exterior building envelope built of masonry with multiple rows of wooden interior columns ("hypostyle") that support a flat wooden ceiling and the roof. These mosques are known for the skilful woodcarving and workmanship used in their structures, architectural fittings, and furnishings. The construction of these mosques, five of which have been selected as the best representatives of the wooden hypostyle mosques of medieval Anatolia, can be linked to the Mongol invasions of this area in the 1240s and the subsequent immigration of Central Asian craftspeople knowledgeable about wooden construction technology and possessing excellent woodworking skills, coupled with the driving forces from powerful political figures in the Anatolia region.

Category of property

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

Included in the Tentative List

2 May 2018 as "Wooden Roofed and Wooden Columned Mosques in Anatolia"

Background

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 4 to 12 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 10 October 2022 requesting further information about the links between the component parts of the serial nomination, the rationale for selecting the component mosques, the documentation, research, management, and risk management plan.

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

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report, including the comparative analysis, implementation of the management plan, the documentation and baseline information, the coordinated management, the risk management plan, and Heritage Impact Assessment.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 27 February 2023.

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

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

10 March 2023

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 comprises five wooden columned or "hypostyle" mosques built between the late 13th and mid-14th centuries, each of which is located in a

different province of Türkiye, as well as a number of associated buildings and a small graveyard.

The mosques have a structural system whereby the exterior envelopes are of masonry but the rows of columns (hypostyle) that support the flat ceilings and the roofs are all of wood. The wooden columns sit on stone pedestals, and wooden *muqarnas* (three-dimensional “honeycomb” Islamic decorations) or stone spolia (repurposed architectural fragments) form the capitals of columns. The wooden corbel beams supporting the main beams rest on top of the capitals. Above the main beams are rows of rafters on which wooden planks are placed as roof boarding. The roofs were once flat and topped by an earthen layer, but were later changed to a gabled or pitched form sheathed in lead, copper or tiles. The wooden structures are richly decorated with hand-drawn paintings using natural pigments. The exteriors of the mosques are of rubble and cut stone masonry.

Component part 1 - Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque

The Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque, also known as the Great (*Ulu*) Mosque of Afyon, is at the foot of the Kocatepe Hill (crowned by the Afyon Castle) in the centre of the city of Afyonkarahisar. It has an irregular, somewhat rectangular plan with entrances in each of the north, east, and west walls. A single-balcony brick minaret is attached to the north façade of the building. The wooden ceiling is supported by forty wooden columns with wooden *muqarna* capitals. Some capitals have a stalactite form and are painted with hand-drawn decorations.

The white marble prayer niche (*mihrab*) with six rows of *muqarnas* is located on the *qibla* (Mecca direction) wall. The minbar is typical of late 13th-century pulpits, though its double-winged wooden door is one of the earliest examples from the Seljuk era. The names of the carpenters are written on the doors, which is rare amongst surviving mosques.

Component part 2 - Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque

Located outside the outer walls of the Ankara Castle on a slope visible from afar, this component part, located in the Province of Ankara, comprises four elements: the Ahi Şerefeddin Mosque; the Arslanhane Lodge; the Ahi Şerefeddin Tomb; and the Ahi Şerefeddin Tomb graveyard.

The mosque, also known as the Arslanhane Mosque, has a rectangular plan with entrances in each of the north, east, and west walls. A single-balcony brick minaret is attached to the northeast wall of the mosque. The wooden ceiling is carried by twenty-four wooden columns with reused-marble Roman Corinthian and Doric capitals. The *mihrab* is decorated with glazed mosaics. Centred in its upper portion is a large stucco medallion, while in the lower portion is a rectangular niche with six rows of *muqarnas*. The walnut minbar, with the signature of Muhammad bin Abi Bakr and the date of 1290 CE, is considered one of the best examples of the woodworking technique known as *kündekari*.

The Arslanhane Lodge (*zaviyya*) is located northwest of the mosque. It occupies the top of the slope, and is approached from the south by passing along a wall laden with spolia, including the iconic marble lions that give the building its name. The base of the porch was a fountain or possibly the *sadirvan* used for ablutions at the mosque.

The Ahi Şerefeddin Tomb is located next to the Arslanhane Lodge. It has an octagonal pyramidal cone that sits atop an octagonal drum, which in turn sits on a square base. The tomb once contained eight cenotaphs, prominent amongst them being the tomb of Ahi Husam ad-din, the father of Ahi Şerefeddin.

The Ahi Şerefeddin Tomb graveyard contains eight graves around the tomb and four burials on the northeastern terrace of the mosque. The tombstone of Ali Hüsameddin Hüseyin b. Yusuf, who died in 1379 or 1380, is the only surviving tombstone of the many that once existed.

Component part 3 - Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque

Located in the Sivrihisar District of the Province of Eskişehir, this mosque has a roughly rectangular plan with three entrances in the north, east, and west walls. A single-balcony brick minaret is attached to the southwest corner. The wooden ceiling in the main prayer hall is carried by sixty-three wooden columns, and an elevated platform (*Sölpük Masjid*) at the east end of the hall is carried by four additional wooden columns. Some columns are richly decorated with multiple patterns. Antique spolia are used as both the capitals and bases of the columns. Two columns next to the *mihrab* are topped with Corinthian capitals and bear carved ornamentation. Next to the minaret and attached to the west wall is a small brick-domed building (*Sölpük Masjid*) with a floor raised one metre above the mosque floor. The stone *mihrab* has a shallow niche whose outer frame is surrounded by a thuluth-calligraphic writing strip. The niche has a five-row *muqarnas kavsara* on cylindrical columns.

Component part 4 - Mahmut Bey Mosque

Located in Kasaba village in the Province of Kastamonu, the rectangular-plan Mahmut Bey Mosque has a covered porch to the north, the only mosque of the five with such a configuration. The porch, framed by blind side walls, is supported by four wooden columns placed on stone pedestals and spanned by wooden beams and eaves. A reconstructed steel minaret clad in wood is located at the northeast corner of the entrance. The wooden ceiling of the prayer hall is carried by four wooden columns on stone pedestals. In addition, there are four corbeled tribunes that are supported by wooden columns, each of which has its own balusters. One of the tribunes is dedicated to the Muezzins, with its own staircase. The *mihrab* is made of plaster with a polygonal niche in an apsidal form. The interior wooden elements are richly decorated with hand-drawn paintings and wooden carvings.

Component part 5 - Eşrefoğlu Mosque

Located in the İcerişehir neighbourhood in the District of Beyşehir in the Province of Konya, on the shore of Lake Beyşehir, this component part is comprised of the Eşrefoğlu Mosque, Süleyman Bey's Tomb, and the Half Tomb (Ottoman Tomb).

The mosque has a rectangular plan which is truncated at its northeastern corner. It is accessed through a crowned gate in the northeast façade and small entrances in the east and west walls. A single-balcony brick minaret with stone footing and a fountain is attached to the northeast façade next to the crowned gate. The wooden ceiling of the hall is supported by forty-one wooden columns with ornamented *muqarnas*. The ceiling and upper structures are largely covered by hand-drawn paintings of vegetal, geometric, rumî, and star motifs. The raised platform of the *mahfil* of the Muezzin is in front of the *mihrab*. There is an opening in the middle of the ceiling, and a pit in the floor below the opening that collects snow to cool the building in the summer. The *mahfil* of the Sultan is a raised platform located in the southwest corner of the hall. Below the *mahfil* of the Sultan is the *cilehane*, a small underground space dedicated to devotion. The last prayer hall is located immediately to the right of the crowned gate, with access to the minaret door and the *mahfil* of women. A wooden *mihrab* with six rows of *muqarnas* and sacred inscriptions is in the last prayer hall.

The rectangular *mihrab* is richly decorated with mosaic tiles in turquoise, dark blue, and purple colours. The inside of its square niche resembles the starry dome of the Karatay Madrasah of the Seljuk period in Konya. A dome above the *mihrab* has sacred inscriptions. The minbar, located next to the *mihrab*, is made in the *kündekari* woodworking technique and ornamented with inlays of stars and geometric pieces. Attached to the north wall is a small modern (2017) one-storey sloped-roof annexe that contains a library and office.

Süleyman Bey's Tomb is a stone construction with a conical roof above its octagonal walls. It is attached to the east wall of the mosque and is connected to the prayer hall with a window. The so-called Half Tomb, a small rectangular stone building, was reconstructed next to Süleyman Bey's Tomb.

The area of the five components totals 0.61 ha, with buffer zones totalling 36.66 ha.

History and development

Evidence shows that wooden religious buildings have existed from the beginning of Islamic architecture in the 7th century. The wooden mosque typology flourished in the historic region of Anatolia in the late 13th and mid-14th centuries, with the cities of Ankara and Kastamonu as the two epicentres.

The emergence of the wooden mosques as a specific type of building in medieval Anatolia is closely related to the Mongol invasions of Anatolia between the 13th and 14th

centuries. Between the 11th and 13th centuries, the Seljuk Turkic group had been the dominant power, with Konya as its capital. The Mongol invasions in the 13th century weakened the power of the Seljuk sultans, and the Seljuk state started to split into small municipalities (*beyliks*) that increasingly became more independent of both Mongol and Seljuk control. Consequently, the construction of congregational mosques was no longer the prerogative of the Seljuk sultans. High officials of the Seljuk sultanates, chiefs of the *beyliks*, emirs, and wealthy merchants often patronised the construction of mosques that were smaller than the grand-scale stone and brick counterparts constructed by the sultans. Amongst these donors, Sahip Ata, a prominent minister of the Seljuk government, is known to have commissioned several smaller-scaled mosques that employed wooden columned or "hypostyle" structures within stone exterior walls.

A related consequence of the Mongol invasions was the introduction of construction techniques that were novel to Anatolia. Under the Mongol rule of the region, craftspeople moved more freely from Central Asia and elsewhere to Anatolia, bringing with them their knowledge of wooden building construction. These intertwining factors contributed to the emergence of this particular type of wooden hypostyle mosque in medieval Anatolia.

In the international context, while the origin of wooden mosques goes back to the beginning of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and Central Asia, almost all the early examples of this type of mosque, except the Juma (Friday) Mosque of Khiva in Uzbekistan, have been demolished, significantly altered or reconstructed in other materials. The selected group of wooden mosques located in Anatolia is therefore considered to include some of the earliest examples of this type of building. The tradition of constructing wooden mosques continues to the present day, not only in Türkiye but in all regions of the Islamic world.

Begun in 1272 and finished between 1277 and 1278, the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque underwent modifications and renovations in 1341, 1765, 1851, 1947, and 1984. The minaret was added to the structure in the Bayazid Period (1389-1402). During the 1947 campaign, the top layer of the structure was completely opened, some parts of the walls were reconstructed, and all the degraded wooden columns and most of the capitals were replaced. The original flat earthen roof was modified to a pitched form with a metal covering, and the lantern on the roof was removed. The traces of arched entrance eaves and some windows were removed. This campaign transformed the mosque into its current form.

The Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque was built during the late 13th century. It underwent renovations and transformations in 1289-1290, 1331, 1694, 1704, 1876, 1900, and 1902. Details about these interventions are not available. The Ahi Şerefeddin Tomb was constructed in 1330, while the *mihrab* was renovated at the end of the 13th century. Renovation activities continued from the beginning of the 1900s to 1962. Before 1962, the original

roof was changed to a hipped form and covered with tiles, and the upper part of the portal was demolished. Between 1962 and 1965, the roof was renewed and clad with sheet metal, the collapsed part of the portal was reconstructed, and interventions on deformed wooden columns were conducted. With these alterations, the mosque took on its current form.

The Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque was constructed in the mid to late 13th century and was renovated in 1274-1275, 1439-1440, and 1778-1779. There is no detailed record of what changes were made at these dates. The minaret was built in June 1487. The flat earthen roof was replaced with a gabled roof between 2012 and 2014. With this change, the mosque took on its current form.

The Mahmut Bey Mosque was constructed in 1366-1367 and first repaired in 1852. The flat earthen roof was replaced by a wooden structure covered with tiles in 1945, which transformed the mosque into its current form. The minaret was destroyed by an earthquake in 1943 and was reconstructed, repaired repeatedly, and finally reconstructed again with a steel framework covered by wooden panels.

The Eşrefoğlu Mosque was built between 1296 and 1299, and has been the subject of many modifications and repairs throughout its history, although no detailed information is available on most of the interventions. The most significant alteration happened in 1941, when the original flat earthen roof was replaced with a tile roof. With this modification the mosque took on its current form. Some relatively minor changes have been undertaken recently, such as adding a small library and office annexe to the north wall of the mosque.

State of conservation

The five component parts are well maintained, being living religious places in constant use. However, in terms of historic material, their states of conservation vary from one mosque to another.

Component part 1- Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque

Modern conservation started in the 1980s. The wooden hipped roof was repaired in 1983, while the honeycomb of the minaret was renovated in 1984. Following the designation of a "conservation area" in 1987, the surroundings of the mosque were addressed, with structures of poor quality around and adjacent to the mosque being expropriated and demolished between 1987 and 2005. In 2006 an extensive structural restoration campaign was carried out. Poor-quality materials, architectural elements, and annexes were removed to reveal the original configuration of the mosque. Missing pieces and lost elements of the original structure were reinstated with new ones of the same materials and colours, and were made distinguishable from the historic fabric. The painted surfaces were cleaned, consolidated, and documented. The settings of the mosque were improved, and the streets around the mosque were rehabilitated.

Overall, the condition of the mosque is stable. However, active deterioration has been observed, including a loss of material in the walls and window openings due to rainwater washing down from the roof. The problem of moisture due to an inadequate drainage system is persistent. These deterioration processes should be controlled.

Component part 2 - Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque

There have been many conservation interventions conducted since 1992. Displaced wooden columns have been put back in their original positions, cracks and checks in the columns have been filled, original wooden ceiling elements have been reinforced, a groundwater drainage system has been installed around the structure to address a moisture problem, later-period architectural elements and additions of poor quality have been removed, and the roof structure, coating materials, and rainwater drainage system have been renewed.

The physical fabric and the significant features of this component part are in good condition. The impact of deterioration processes is being controlled, though the unsolved humidity issue is causing swelling and peeling of the plaster and paint on the exterior walls and interior surfaces. Cracks, ruptures, and colour changes in the wooden materials due to external factors have also been observed.

Component part 3 - Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque

A large-scale restoration campaign took place at the Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque between 2006 and 2007. The original plaster, annexes, and decorations of the envelope were revealed at that time and were examined using archaeometric methods. The roof was dismantled between 2012 and 2014 and replaced with a gable roof. Displaced ceiling beams were put back in place, and parts of decayed beams were replaced with the same materials. Rainwater was channelled down into the ground through downspouts, and exterior façade plaster of later periods was removed to reveal the original surface. Steel supports were placed against a structural deformation in the western façade, and low-quality architectural elements and annexes that had been added in later periods were removed to reveal earlier features and details. Monitoring of structural stability is in place to inform decisions about potential physical interventions. Concrete shops that were built close to the northern and western façades have been removed.

Both the stone envelope and wooden structure are stable. However, the condition of the physical fabric and its significant features should be improved. Swelling and peeling of the interior plaster and insect and fungi attacks on the wooden elements are active. Deterioration and discolouration of the stone envelopes have been observed.

Component part 4 - Mahmut Bey Mosque

Several conservation campaigns have been conducted at the mosque since the 1940s. The collapsed minaret was reconstructed between 1944 and 1945, and the roof was reconstructed with wooden materials and covered with tiles. The minaret was repaired in 1961. From 1985 to 1987, the minaret, the exterior walls of the mosque, the wooden ceiling, the tribunes, and the wooden columns were repaired. Finally, between 2005 and 2008, the minaret was reconstructed with a steel framework covered by wooden panels, the wooden columns and ceilings in the narthex were replaced with the same materials, blocked windows were reopened, the roof was renovated, the façades were consolidated, missing parts of the painted surfaces were completed, and landscaping with washrooms and an ablution area were put in place.

Both the stone envelope and wooden structure are stable. However, some problems remain with the physical fabric and its significant features. Intensive insect damage is observed, causing material losses, colour changes, and cracks in wooden elements and architectural features.

Component part 5 - Eşrefoğlu Mosque

The recorded conservation history of this mosque starts in 1900, when the structure was repaired, and ends with a campaign that was completed in 2020. The minaret was renovated in 1920, and the structure was thoroughly repaired between 1934 and 1940. The flat earthen roof was changed to a tiled roof in 1941, which transformed the form of the mosque into the present one. The roof was renovated again between 1962 and 1965, when a roof opening was installed and covered with glass. The roof tiles were replaced with copper in 1978 and with lead in 2004. Fifteen restoration campaigns are recorded between 1990 and 2020. The 1994-1996 campaign addressed a stability problem with the mosque. The *muqarnas* were renovated, and stone pedestals below the floor were reinforced with concrete beams, the main outer walls were insulated, and missing parts of the wooden minbar were completed. In 2002 the roof was insulated and gutters were installed. Between 2004 and 2020, the glazed tiles were restored, a camera system and a fire alarm system were installed, and a one-storey library and office annexe were added to the north wall. The surroundings of the mosque were also improved.

Routine maintenance has been undertaken in terms of renewal of the roof cover and gutter system, consolidation and renewal of wooden façade sections and floor coverings, and repair of painted surfaces and micro-cracks in the interior plaster.

The wooden structure and stone envelope are in good condition and the impact of deterioration processes is being controlled. However, material losses are observed on the wall surfaces, joints, and stone blocks due to the combined factors of high humidity in the rainy season, the low location of the mosque, and an inadequate drainage system. Insect damage is also observed.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the stone envelopes and wooden structures of the component parts are stable. However, some immediate actions are needed to address the active deterioration of building materials caused by moisture in the fabric, insect attack of the wooden elements, and problems with the painted decoration.

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 nominated property are environmental pressures such as insect attack and moisture, as well as the risk of fire, earthquakes, and floods. There are also demographic pressures, including changes to the surrounding social structure. In addition, there are a number of factors that are specific to individual mosques.

Insect attack of the wooden elements is a severe threat to the Eşrefoğlu Mosque component part. The same risk, although less acute, is observed in the four other component parts. Immediate action based on thorough scientific research and testing should be undertaken to address this threat, followed by preventive measures that can ensure the long-term survival of the nominated property.

Moisture in the building fabric has been a persistent threat to the stone envelopes and plaster finishes of the mosques. Comprehensive research on the cause of this problem should be undertaken, followed by targeted actions that address the cause.

The risk of fire is common in all the component parts. Very limited fire alarm systems and fire extinguishing equipment are in place.

Changes to the surrounding social structure as population income declines, and deterioration of abandoned historic houses in the buffer zones, are factors common to the historic environments of the four urban component parts. Addressing underlying societal issues can include raising awareness about the value of the nominated property to the communities in which these mosques are found.

In addition to the above common factors, specific factors are found at the individual mosques. There is a potential risk of rock falls at the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque, which is beside a "Disaster Exposed Area". In addition, a cable car is planned to be built near the mosque, which could significantly affect views to and from the mosque. This project has been halted to allow a Heritage Impact Assessment to be made. Traffic around the Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque has increased, causing a corresponding increase in potentially damaging air pollution.

A pilot project to address a number of these threats has been conducted at the Eşrefoğlu Mosque component part, and its outcome will be used to develop a risk

management plan for all five component parts. The ICOMOS Interim Report included a request for additional information about this project. In its response provided in February 2023, the State Party advised that the Workshop on Risk Management and Protection in Wooden Mosques of Foundation Cultural Heritage: Konya-Karaman Project was held from 5 to 6 January 2023. The outcome document of this workshop, the *Final Declaration of the Workshop on Risk Management and Protection in Wooden Mosques of Foundation Cultural Heritage: Konya-Karaman Project*, was officially distributed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to all the relevant stakeholders, which initiated the drafting process of the comprehensive risk management plan.

ICOMOS considers that the overall state of conservation is stable. ICOMOS considers that the factors affecting the nominated property should be controlled, and that the threats common to all five component parts, including insects, moisture, and the risk of fire, earthquakes, and floods, as well as deterioration of the settings, should be addressed immediately. Threats specific to certain component parts should be addressed at the same time, and the comprehensive risk management plan should be completed in priority.

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 five mosques represent outstanding examples of a specific building type that holds an important place in the development of Islamic architecture. The mosques were built with a unique wooden structural system, where a flat wooden ceiling is carried by wooden columns with *muqarnas* or spolia column capitals, while the exterior of the buildings was built of masonry using rubble and cut stone.
- These mosques are significant for the skilful woodcarving and workmanship lavishly used on the architectural fittings and furnishings, including doors, minbars, columns, capitals, ceiling beams, and consoles. Some have outstanding examples of late 13th century minbars with the tongue-and-groove (*kündekari*) technique. They also bear inscriptions giving the names and titles of the craftspeople who made them as carpenters (*neccar* or *derüdger*) or decorators (*nakkaş*).

Based on the nomination dossier and the additional information, the key attributes of the nominated property are the five mosques, their associated buildings and graveyard, their wooden columns with *muqarnas* or spolia column capitals, their flat wooden ceilings, the woodcarving, painting, and workmanship expressed in their architectural fittings and furnishings, and their

masonry walls, as well as key views to and from the mosques.

ICOMOS considers that the name of the nominated property should be changed to “Wooden Hypostyle Mosques of Medieval Anatolia” in order to convey more concisely and accurately the essential characteristic of the nominated property.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed around the following parameters: construction date; role played in developing and disseminating the typology; representativity of wooden post-and-beam construction; quality and refinement of architectural fixtures and fittings; authenticity of conservation materials and techniques; present state of conservation; and continuity of original use and function. It has examined properties, within the country and the relevant geo-cultural region, inscribed on the World Heritage List and one inserted in a Tentative List, as well as other properties.

The comparative analysis is presented in three parts. In the first part, a methodology described in *The World Heritage List: Filling the Gaps* (ICOMOS, 2004) is used to examine the World Heritage List. The State Party concludes that the typology of the nominated property is underrepresented on the World Heritage List on the basis of there being no mosques amongst nine religious properties built with a wooden structural system that are currently inscribed.

In the second part, regional comparisons with mosques in Central Asia, Iran, and East Asia are made, and a detailed comparison with mosques within the State Party (the historic region of Anatolia) is conducted. The regional comparisons include, amongst others, the Djuma (Friday) Mosque of Khiva (Itchan Kala, Uzbekistan, 1990, criteria (iii), (iv) and (v)); mosques in Bonab, Maragheh, and elsewhere in East Azerbaijan Province, Iran; and Tomb of Bibi Jawindi, Baha'al-Halim and Ustead and the Tomb and Mosque of Jalaluddin Bukhari (Pakistan, Tentative List). Comparisons are made with a large number of mosques in the national context, amongst them the Gökçeli Mosque and the Yaycılar-Şeyh Habil Mosque. None are seen to be comparable to the nominated property in terms of scale, design, workmanship, furnishing, and decoration.

In the third part, the position of the nominated property in the temporal and spatial contexts of wooden mosques is summarised, the criteria for selecting the component parts are described, and justification for the selection of the component parts against these criteria is made. The State Party concludes that the five selected mosques are the most representative of their typology and the most outstanding examples of a once-widespread wooden tradition.

In October 2022, ICOMOS requested additional information about the serial approach to the nomination, including the links between the component parts and the

rationale for selecting them. The State Party responded in November 2022 with a comprehensive explanation outlining the historical, cultural, and artistic links between the component parts; the methodology, rationale, and criteria for selecting the five components; and how each component part contributes to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the methodology for the comparative analysis is sound, the links between the component parts are demonstrated, and the rationale and criteria for selecting the nominated component parts are justified.

ICOMOS considered that the international comparison was limited. The ICOMOS Interim Report included a request for an extended comparative analysis in order to better understand the origin of the construction technique. In its response sent in February 2023, the State Party provided an extensive comparison, suggesting that this technique did not emerge locally but was introduced from Central Asia through both immigration of the craftspeople with this particular knowledge and intentional technical transfer promoted by important political figures. ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis has successfully established the important position the nominated property holds in the development of Islamic architecture.

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), (iv) and (vi).

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 five mosques with wooden columns and timber ceilings that comprise the nominated property are significant evidences of the interchange of ideas and practices regarding an early Islamic building type that originated in the Arab region and Central Asia and was transmitted to Anatolia during the medieval period. These mosques also exerted considerable influence in large areas of Anatolia and beyond from the 14th century to the early 20th century.

ICOMOS considers that the construction of the wooden hypostyle mosques on a large scale in medieval Anatolia during a relatively short period of time demonstrates in an important way the interchange of human values on developments in architecture within this geo-cultural region of the world. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

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 five mosques that comprise the nominated property are surviving representatives of the hypostyle-type mosques built with a wooden structure where the timber ceilings are carried by wooden columns topped with either wooden *muqarnas* or marble spolia capitals. As a specific group, they testify to an important historical period of medieval Anatolian architecture that illustrates expertise in timber construction techniques, the use of wood as a structural element, interior decoration, woodcarving, and artwork.

ICOMOS considers that, in the context of Islamic religious architecture that is dominated by stone and brick buildings, the nominated property is an outstanding physical testimony of a rarely surviving type of wooden hypostyle mosques that once flourished in medieval Anatolia, and which illustrates a significant stage in Islamic architecture. In addition, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is directly and tangibly associated with the historical event of the Mongol conquests of Anatolia in the 13th and 14th centuries. On the one hand, this event released from the Seljuk sultans the prerogative of constructing congregational mosques. High officials of the Seljuk sultanates, chiefs of the *beyliks*, emirs, and wealthy merchants were allowed to build mosques of this type. On the other hand, the Mongol control of Anatolia facilitated the immigration of Central Asian craftspeople with their timber structure construction technology and woodworking skills. These intertwining factors led to the prevalence of wooden hypostyle mosques in Anatolia. ICOMOS considers that this criterion is justified.

Criterion (vi): *be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the five mosques are tangibly associated with the Islamic beliefs, art, and architecture that prevailed in Anatolia during the medieval period. They illustrate unique examples of craftsmanship and artwork regarding woodcarvings and hand-drawn painted decoration.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is indeed tangibly associated with the Islamic beliefs, art, and architecture then prevalent in medieval Anatolia, but that all the mosques within and outside Anatolia and throughout the history of Islam also have such associations. In addition, the dimension related to craftsmanship and artwork is better reflected under criterion (iv). ICOMOS considers that this criterion is not justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iv). Criterion (vi) is not justified. The serial approach and the rationale for selecting the component mosques are justified.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on medieval Anatolian hypostyle-type mosques built with a wooden structure consisting of wooden columns carrying a flat timber ceiling.

At the level of the whole series, the nominated mosques and related buildings cover the entire period between the late 13th and mid-14th centuries when the construction of wooden mosques prevailed in Anatolia. The distribution of the mosques stretched from northern to central to southern parts of the historic region of Anatolia, reflecting the extent of once widespread wooden mosque construction activities in the medieval period. ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property at the level of the whole series is justified.

At the level of individual component parts, all the key attributes necessary to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, particularly the wooden load-bearing structure within the stone envelope, are included within the boundaries of the nominated serial property. Its size is adequate to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that convey the significance of the nominated property.

In order to meet the conditions of integrity, the attributes supporting the nominated property must be intact, and major pressures on them must be managed. A number of interventions have had a visual impact on the integrity of the nominated property, such as alterations to the roof forms, additions, deteriorating settings, and unsympathetic installations of infrastructural facilities.

While each mosque has undergone its own distinct path of evolution, which compromised the integrity of each component part to a certain extent, ICOMOS considers that the key attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value largely remain. ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the nominated property at the individual component part level have been met.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the forms and designs, materials and substance, locations, uses and functions, and spirit and feeling of the mosques and the related buildings located within its five component parts.

All five component parts have undergone alterations in the past, some of which did not respect the original materials, forms, and/or designs, thus affecting their authenticity. The

roofs of the mosques have been changed from flat earthen to gabled or pitched. Roof openings and lanterns have been adapted or removed. Almost all the upper windows have been replaced by a later standard version. Other windows have been added or changed over time. A large quantity of wooden material has been replaced on a semi-cyclical basis. A certain amount of the original decorations on the wooden structure and other elements remain unchanged. The settings around the urban mosques have evolved constantly over time and some have deteriorated in recent decades.

While many of these changes have had a negative impact on the authenticity of the nominated property, the key attributes that define this particular type of Islamic architecture such as the wooden load-bearing structures, stone envelope, interior woodwork, and painted decorations remain authentic. The majority of the interventions over the centuries have been sympathetic to traditional techniques. The original functions of all the mosques are also authentic. All continue to be the religious centres of their local communities and have preserved an authentic religious spirit and a strong feeling of the place. The institution known as waqf has for generations been the main guarantee for the preservation and continuity of the component parts by means of specific endowments. ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole series as well as the authenticity of each of the component parts has been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

Boundaries

There are no permanent inhabitants in the nominated serial property. As of 2021, a total of 1,562 people live in the buffer zones of the nominated property.

The boundaries of the nominated property encompass all the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The buffer zones are demarcated to include all areas that contribute to the settings of each component part. They include important views and other supporting and functionally linked elements. The boundaries consider topographic features, land-use patterns, and ownership status.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List, criteria (ii) and (iv) have been met, and the serial approach is justified. ICOMOS also considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met. The boundaries include all the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and the buffer zones provide an extra layer of protection for the nominated property.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

Most documentation of past interventions, historical photographs, measured drawings, and other archival materials are deposited at the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums and the General Directorate of Foundations under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, as well as in the archives of their regional branches. These documents are used as historical references to inform conservation interventions.

In response to the additional information request sent by ICOMOS in October 2022 regarding the structural aspects of the mosques, the State Party provided, in November 2022, architectural drawings, some of which were of inadequate quality. This highlighted a lack of comprehensive baseline documentation of adequate quality for the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. A programme is needed to establish baseline information that can be used for monitoring the condition of the nominated property, as well as for evaluating the effectiveness of protection, conservation, and management activities, all in support of making informed decisions. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS recommended that the State Party conduct a comprehensive documentation programme, create a database of all the information from this programme plus the relevant archives of past interventions and historical texts, and share this database with all stakeholders to benefit the conservation, management, and monitoring of the nominated property. In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party confirmed that the comprehensive documentation campaign will be conducted, and the database is already in place and accessible to all stakeholders.

Conservation measures

The conservation measures in place are a combination of daily maintenance and occasional conservation campaigns.

The primary roles of daily maintenance are to keep the mosques functioning as local religious centres and to monitor the conditions of the structures and materials. The monitoring results are recorded and analyzed. When conditions are deemed by the analysis to be serious enough, a conservation campaign is conducted.

Maintenance activities for each component part of the nominated property have included renewal of the roof cover and gutter system, consolidation and renewal of wooden façade sections and the wooden floor of the interior gathering place, and repair of micro-cracks in the interior plaster and painted decoration. Since some of these activities intervene directly on key attributes, a cumulative loss of authenticity of the nominated property has occurred.

ICOMOS noted in its Interim Report that maintenance activities may cause detrimental changes to the authenticity of the component parts of the nominated

property over the longer term, if such activities are inappropriate or improperly implemented. ICOMOS considers that a maintenance manual based on internationally accepted conservation principles should be developed and implemented by the staff responsible for undertaking maintenance activities. In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party advised that under the consultancy of the Scientific Committee, the preparation of maintenance and repair manuals will be planned by the General Directorate of Foundations.

Conservation campaigns are carried out to address larger issues such as structural instability and water infiltration, as well as the renovation of roofs, floors, and wall openings. Proposals for conservation campaigns are prepared based on *in situ* investigations and the collection and analysis of scientific data through a multidisciplinary approach, and are approved by competent authorities in consultation with conservation experts. The funding for conservation campaigns is mainly from government budgets. Recent campaigns have followed internationally accepted conservation principles such as respect for authenticity, minimum intervention, and distinguishability of new work from old.

ICOMOS considers that, overall, the current conservation measures are adequate. ICOMOS nevertheless considers that capacity building is needed for the maintenance personnel, and that a maintenance manual should be developed to guide the personnel in their activities so as to avoid a cumulative loss of authenticity over the longer term.

Monitoring

Seventeen monitoring indicators have been defined by the State Party in categories such as structural stability, material deterioration, environmental impact, water-related damage, tourism-related impacts, number of restoration projects, education resources and activities, and risk preparedness. The periodicity varies from three months to five years. The monitoring at each mosque is carried out by the maintenance staff and the Site Managers, with the involvement of institutions from national, regional, and local governments. In addition, implementation of the management plan is monitored by the Site Management Unit within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The Site Management Unit compiles the annual reports with information collected from institutions or individuals responsible for implementing the management plan. These annual reports are shared with the Advisory Board and the Coordination and Supervision (Audit) Board, the site management bodies.

ICOMOS considers that the current monitoring system establishes a broad framework for the continuous assessment of the conditions of the mosques. For the monitoring system to be fully effective, ICOMOS considers that the comprehensive documentation campaign should be conducted following a common standard, and the outcomes are compiled to serve as the starting point for monitoring. ICOMOS further considers

that, in order for the monitoring system to inform the decision-making process, the links between monitoring outcomes and responsive actions should be developed, and capacity building for the personnel responsible for monitoring should be carried out.

ICOMOS considers that baseline documentation is needed for all the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The conservation measures are generally appropriate, though capacity building for maintenance personnel is imperative and a maintenance manual should be developed. The monitoring system needs to be improved. Furthermore, it would be advisable that the monitoring system be adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The legal framework for protecting the nominated property is comprised of laws, regulations, and plans at the national, regional, and local levels. At the national level there are two Laws and four Principal Decisions that specify the legal status of the nominated component parts, demarcate the nominated property and buffer zones through legal provisions, regulate activities regarding the component parts and their settings, and establish the management system.

Each of five component parts is registered as cultural property “that requires protection” under the Law on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property (Law No. 2863, 23/07/1983 as amended by Law No. 5226, 14/07/2004; hereinafter referred to as Conservation Law No. 2863). This is the highest level of protection for cultural heritage in Türkiye. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism is the primary government department responsible for implementing Conservation Law No. 2863.

In addition, the Mahmut Bey Mosque component part and its buffer zone are in a designated “conservation area”, while each of the four other component parts and their buffer zones is situated in an area designated as an “urban site”. Any project proposals concerning buildings or areas in the conservation areas and urban sites require prior permission from the relevant Regional Councils for the Conservation of Cultural Properties, which are the regional branches of the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Conservation Law No. 2863 also stipulates that cultural properties located in urban sites should have conservation plans. Conservation plans for the Sivrihisar Ulu Mosque, Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque, and Eşrefoğlu Mosque component parts have been prepared by the relevant municipalities, and have been implemented in cooperation with the regional conservation councils. ICOMOS notes that these plans need to be updated, since some of them were made decades ago. In addition, the relevant Regional

Council for the Conservation of Cultural Properties has specified “Temporary Protection Principles and Terms of Use” for the urban site in which the Ahi Şerefeddin (Arslanhane) Mosque is located, to create an added layer of protection.

The nominated property is also subject to protection by the Foundations Law No. 5737, since all the component mosques are owned by the General Directorate of Foundations under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. According to this Law, projects concerning these properties must be carried out by the relevant Regional Directorate of Foundations. A Principal Decision (Decision No. 731) made in 2007 by the High Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties, a national-level consultative body for the conservation and management of cultural heritage, lays out the conservation principles to be observed in interventions carried out at properties owned by the General Directorate of Foundations. These principles apply to the nominated property.

Principal Decisions are issued by the High Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties. These Decisions prescribe the principles to be followed in heritage conservation and management activities. Some Decisions also designate heritage categories to be protected, conserved, and managed, according to their specific characteristics. In 1999, the Principal Decision on Classification, Maintenance and Repair of Immovable Cultural Properties (Decision No. 660) was issued. It stipulates intervention methods, restoration principles, and supervisory procedures. This Decision is a guiding document for any interventions undertaken in the nominated component parts. In addition, all the mosques except for the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque have been registered as “1st Group” cultural properties, which is the highest designation under this Decision.

The Principal Decision on Protection and Use Provisions in Archaeological Sites (Decision No. 658) specifies the legal protection system for archaeological sites and the regulations relating to each protection status. Since the Eşrefoğlu Mosque is located in a “3rd Degree” archaeological site, it is protected by the provisions of this Decision.

The Principal Decision on Urban Sites, Terms of Protection and Use (Decision No. 681) was issued in 2017. Construction and development activities in urban sites are regulated under this Decision. It applies to the nominated property because four of the five component parts are located in urban sites.

In addition to these national legal frameworks, there are several regional and local legislative provisions as well as planning policies, guidance, and plans that affect the nominated property. All of them stem from these national legal frameworks. Collectively, the national, regional, and local protective mechanisms ensure the safeguard of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, and mechanisms are in place to ensure that the buffer zones provide the necessary added layer of protection.

Management system

The management system has been established pursuant to Conservation Law No. 2863, which prescribes the establishment of the management bodies and mechanisms for the management of heritage sites.

The nominated property is managed at the national, regional, and local levels. At the national level, the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums and the General Directorate of Foundations under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism are in charge of managing immovable cultural properties. The General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums is responsible for preventing the destruction of historical and cultural properties, keeping the values of these properties alive, and developing, promoting, and evaluating the cultural property. The General Directorate of Foundations is responsible for identifying and protecting movable and immovable cultural properties belonging to foundations. It is also a central government institution authorised to expropriate, evaluate, repair, restore, and, if necessary, rebuild cultural properties and conservation areas of foundations whose ownership has changed. The High Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties stipulates the terms for the protection and use of urban sites. It also determines, through its Principal Decisions, the intervention methods, major repair principles, and terms of implementation and inspection for cultural properties owned by the General Directorate of Foundations.

At the regional level, the regional branches of both the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums and the General Directorate of Foundations are responsible for the management and conservation of individual cultural properties. Any activity regarding the nominated property must be approved by the relevant Regional Directorate of Foundations with the prior consent of the relevant Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Properties. The implementation of approved projects is controlled by experts from the Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Properties to ensure conformity with the approved proposals.

At the local level, the component parts are managed by three interrelated bodies: the Site Manager, the Advisory Board, and the Coordination and Supervision (Audit) Board.

The Site Manager, who receives payment from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, is responsible for coordinating the development of site management plans, preparing work programmes to realise the annual targets of the management plan, and preparing annual audit reports and submitting them to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The Advisory Board, composed of at least five persons with the right to property in the area plus persons from professional chambers, civil society organisations, relevant university departments, the Site Manager, and members determined by the competent authority, is responsible for examining the management plan and submitting proposals for decision-making and implementation regarding the plan. The Advisory Board meets at least once a year.

The Coordination and Supervision (Audit) Board is chaired by the Site Manager and composed of two members from the Advisory Board and at least one representative from each of the administrations whose services are needed within the scope of the management plan. The Board examines the management plan, approves the final version, and controls its implementation. It meets at least twice a year. Being living religious places for the local populations, the mosques are maintained by the Imam, the Muezzin, and their assistants, assigned by the local muftis.

In addition to the current management system established pursuant to Conservation Law No. 2863, the Scientific Committee has been established according to the Science and Consultancy Protocol Concerning Works to be Realized in "Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure", which was signed between the General Directorate of Foundations and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Foundation University. An art historian and an architect were appointed to the Committee, and additional support can be obtained from different academic experts including the preservation of hand-drawn painting (*kalemişi*) and wooden structures. The Scientific Committee will evaluate, direct, and monitor all kinds of study and conservation activities concerning the mosques, making decisions in a scientific manner in accordance with national and international legislation and contemporary conservation principles.

The management plan of the nominated property, which was approved in 2022, is the guiding document for the management system. The management plan was developed through a participatory process that respected diversity, equity, gender equality, and human rights, and conforms to Conservation Law No. 2863. It defines the common vision and eleven management policies for the nominated property as a whole: preserving the proposed Outstanding Universal Value; developing conservation approaches; increasing social awareness; involving local people and other stakeholders; improving conservation and management standards; making contributions to tourism; solving infrastructural and access issues; improving the quality and safety of visitation; minimising adverse tourism impacts; ensuring risk preparedness; and encouraging scientific research and publications. A set of management objectives and actions has been developed under each of the eleven common policies for every component part of the nominated property. The period of implementation of the plan is five years. Heritage Impact Assessment and risk management mechanisms are embedded in the management plan.

ICOMOS considers that the management plan of the nominated property provides a comprehensive framework to address the pressing conservation and management issues. Its implementation is of utmost importance. In its Interim Report to the State Party, ICOMOS requested additional information on how the implementation progress of the management plan is monitored. The State Party responded in February 2023 that it is monitored primarily by the "Annual Implementation Progress Report" mechanism exercised by the Site Manager. In the annual report, the

stages at which each planned action have been implemented are listed, and the reasons are analysed. The first report is due in March 2023. The report is examined by the Coordination and Supervision (Audit) Board, and a revision of the action plan for the next implementation year is made. ICOMOS considers that, while the progress of implementing the management plan is monitored, the effectiveness of the outcomes of the implementation is not assessed. A set of indicators for assessing the effectiveness of the outcomes of implementing the management plan should be developed and applied to the current management system.

There are adequate levels of staff and expertise at the national and regional levels. Since the responsibility of conservation interventions and supervision resides mainly in the regional branches of the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums and the General Directorate of Foundations, their staff members form the backbone of the effective management and conservation of the nominated property. However, at the local level the staffing level and expertise are inadequate from a heritage conservation perspective. Training for the local staff is held, but these activities should be broadened and carried out more frequently to improve the local capacity and conservation expertise over the long term. The funding for the conservation campaigns is from the government budget.

ICOMOS considers that, overall, the current management system is adequate for the individual component parts. ICOMOS considers, however, that the overall management system for the nominated serial property demonstrates a weak sense of interconnection between the component parts in terms of coordinated efforts, shared experiences and expertise, and common interpretation and presentation of the values of the nominated property as an integral whole. A mechanism for managing the individual component parts as a whole should be established. In its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested additional information on this issue. The State Party responded in February 2023 that the coordinated management is undertaken by the Site Manager who convenes the consultation and coordination meetings every six months, with the participation of all the stakeholders. Additionally, sub-working groups will be established to ensure the coordination of tourism, promotion, and capacity-building activities.

Visitor management

The level of visitor management varies between component parts. Currently, the primary function of the mosques is to serve the religious needs of the local population. Tourism has not yet developed as a factor that requires immediate visitor management actions. While adequate attention to the needs of both worshippers and visitors is available at all the mosques, facilities and information services dedicated specifically to tourism are insufficient.

A national tourism strategy is in place that includes the nominated property amongst its promoted destinations. In addition, the management plan of the nominated property encourages the development of tourism to increase

national and international awareness of the values of the mosques and, at the same time, contribute to the local economies. Detailed tourism strategies and actions are developed in the management plan for each mosque, including aspects such as enriching experiences of tourists while ensuring there is no negative impact on the nominated property, and providing adequate information, facilities, and access.

Although the current situation may not appear to demand immediate action regarding tourism, ICOMOS considers that this may change in the near future with the promotion of the nominated property at the international, national, regional, and local levels. This is even more likely in view of a potential inscription on the World Heritage List. Tourism-related actions that are described in the management plan of the nominated property should therefore be implemented as soon as possible, so as to prepare the nominated property for a possible surge in tourism.

Community involvement

The local communities are involved in the protection, conservation, and management of the nominated property in two ways. They are consulted as stakeholders in the process of preparing the management plan of the nominated property; and they are employed in the conservation campaigns and daily maintenance of the mosques on a contractual or voluntary basis.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is legally protected under the highest level of cultural heritage protection in Türkiye as well as other protective mechanisms that safeguard the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. The management system is in place, and the management plan was approved in 2022. The management effectiveness depends on the implementation of the management plan and priorities should be placed on risk management, conservation interventions on active deterioration, and tourism-related actions. A set of indicators should be developed for effectiveness assessment of the outcomes of implementing the management plan of the nominated property.

6 Conclusion

The Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure is a serial nomination of five mosques, and collectively they are an outstanding representative of the early wooden hypostyle religious buildings in the historic development of Islamic architecture. Located in five different provinces of Türkiye and constructed between the late 13th century and mid-14th century, the five mosques share a common feature where a flat ceiling is supported by columns through wooden or stone capitals and this load-bearing structure is enclosed by a stone envelope. The excellency of the woodwork and painted decorations testify to the exceptional level of artistic and craftsmanship achievement once prevalent in mediaeval Anatolia. Rarely

surviving due to the vulnerable nature of wood as the building material, the selected mosques are the best example of this type of building in medieval Anatolia in terms of scale, design, workmanship, furnishing and decoration. More elaborated examples of this type of architecture can be found in other parts of the world, however, they are dated to a much later period.

The comparative analysis successfully establishes the outstanding position that the nominated property occupies in the historic development of Islamic architecture, and as an underrepresented typology of the World Heritage List. The nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iv), and conditions of integrity and authenticity.

The current legal protection and management are adequate, and the management plan of the nominated property is comprehensive. However, improvements can be made to the current management system by establishing the sub-working groups. The implementation of the management plan should be monitored closely, since most of the acute issues are expected to be addressed by the actions listed in the plan.

The mosques being religious centres in continuous use, their functional aspects are under constant and good care by local people. However, they are affected by certain factors such as fire risk, moisture in the fabric, and insect attack. Immediate actions are required to address these issues. In addition, a Heritage Impact Assessment Report of the cable car project near the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque should be submitted and the project halted. Capacity building to improve knowledge and skills in heritage conservation and monitoring is imperative for those responsible for regular maintenance.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of the Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure, Türkiye, be **referred back** to the State Party to allow it to:

- Complete the establishment of the sub-working groups within the scope of the management plan;
- Submit the Heritage Impact Assessment Report of the cable car project near the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque and halt the project;
- Complete the comprehensive risk management plan for the series as a whole;
- Develop a maintenance manual based on internationally accepted conservation principles;
- Update the outdated conservation plans of the nominated component parts;

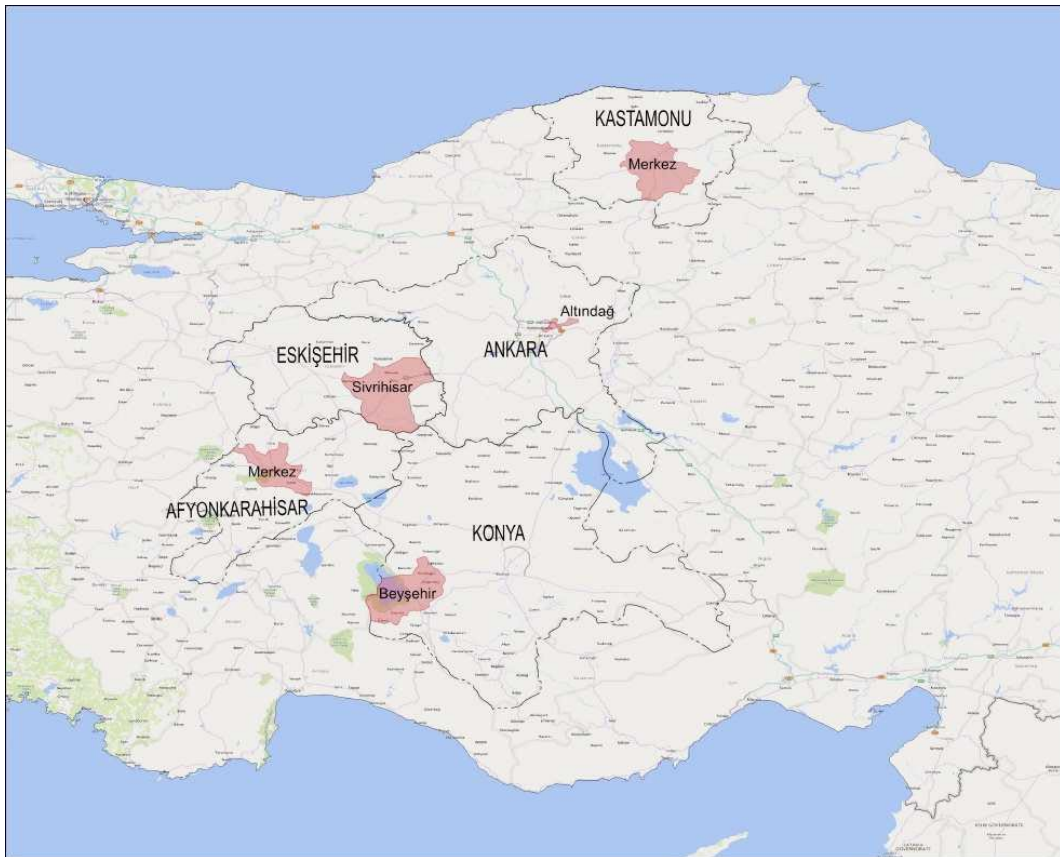
- Implement the tourism-related actions described in the management plan;
- Develop a set of indicators to assess the effectiveness of the outcomes of implementing the management plan of the nominated property.

Additional recommendations

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

- a) Controlling the factors that affect the nominated property and, in particular, immediately addressing the threats common to all five component parts, including fire, insects, moisture, and deterioration of the settings,
- b) Undertaking comprehensive documentation of all the mosques following a common standard, with the outcomes to be used as the baseline information for monitoring and management,
- c) Building capacity for maintenance and monitoring staff,
- d) Conserving the dismantled original pieces in safe storage for research and reference,
- e) Improving the current monitoring system by establishing the links between the monitoring outcomes and responsive actions;

ICOMOS recommends that the name of the serial property be changed to: "Wooden Hypostyle Mosques of Medieval Anatolia".



Map showing the location of the nominated component parts