

AMENDMENT

Item of the Agenda	8B
Amended Draft Decision	46 COM 8B.15
Amendment submitted by the Delegation of... .	Greece
Co-author(s)	Argentina, Bulgaria, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Qatar, Rwanda, Zambia
Date of submission	26.07.2024

TEXT

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/24/46.COM/8B and WHC/24/46.COM/INF.8B1,
2. Inscribes **Beijing Central Axis: A Building Ensemble Exhibiting the Ideal Order of the Chinese Capital, China**, on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iii) and (iv)**;
3. Adopts the following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

Brief synthesis

Beijing Central Axis runs from north to south through the heart of historical Beijing. It is defined by former imperial palaces and gardens, imperial sacrificial buildings, ancient city management facilities, ceremonial and public buildings and Central Axis roads remains. The Axis bears testimony to the evolution of the city exhibiting evidence of the imperial dynastic system and urban planning traditions of China. The location, layout, urban pattern and design of the Axis showcase the ideal capital city paradigm prescribed in the Kaogongji, an ancient text known as the Book of Diverse Crafts. The Central Axis originated in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) that established Dadu, its capital, in what corresponds to the northern section of the Axis. The property also features later historical structures built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and improved during the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912).

Criterion (iii): Beijing Central Axis contributes significantly to the global history of urban planning, with its specific characteristics reflecting a cultural and

political system developed in China during the imperial dynastic period. This urban planning tradition influenced the planning of other East and Southeast Asian capitals. The principles of planning used for the design of the urban layout which include the definition of the north-south axis and the establishment of a “centre” depict Confucian ideas expressed in the Kaogongji, or Book of Diverse Crafts, which intend to provide neutrality and harmony to the society by means of symmetry and balance in the urban layout. The ritual dimension of this urban planning approach also required placing temples in balance with the Axis and connections to the agricultural ritual calendar performed with seasonal festivities. This balance and symmetry as well as the specific elements of the temples and the centre are still visible and well conserved in the property. This urban planning tradition lasted until the end of the imperial dynastic system, and since then, has been influential but transformed with modern practices. Nevertheless, festivities connected to the ancient agricultural calendar are still performed, including rituals in some of the temples composing the Axis.

Criterion (iv): Beijing Central Axis is an exceptionally well-preserved example of an urban ensemble developed based on an ancient urban planning theory, founded in Confucian principles related to a ritual dimension with city planning, politics, and governance. The principles of the Kaogongji have persisted in the Axis during the imperial dynastic period against the growth and urbanisation of Beijing, providing an illustration of a distinct urban pattern which represents a particular typology in the urban history of the world originated and developed during the imperial dynastic system in China.

Integrity

The integrity of Beijing Central Axis is based on the completeness of the Central Axis as an urban ensemble which carries development over the imperial dynastic system. All the attributes necessary to convey the Outstanding Universal Value are found within the boundaries of the property. The buffer zone provides an added layer of protection helping to contain urban pressures which Beijing Central Axis is vulnerable to. Planning instruments have been developed to address these vulnerabilities as well as increasing tourism pressures, such as the Regulations on the Conservation of Beijing Historical and Cultural City (2021) and the Conservation and Management Plan for Beijing Central Axis (2022-2035).

Authenticity

The authenticity of the property is based on the continuity of the Central Axis as a core of the capital city. The location, natural setting and to some extent, the historical urban setting have been preserved, particularly its layout. The layout of the Axis, as well as some of its attributes, such as the Forbidden City, the Drum and Bell Towers, Jingshan Hill, the Temple of Heaven and other imperial sacrificial and ceremonial buildings have been preserved as they were developed during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. While some elements within the boundaries of the property, such as historical structures, have undergone demolition, reconstruction and remodelling, and areas of the property have undergone and continue to be under rehabilitation and renovation works, the form and design, urban and architectural characteristics of the imperial palaces and gardens, and most of the city management facilities have been maintained.

Traditional techniques related to the construction and maintenance of these historical buildings have been maintained, as well as some ritual traditions and knowledge connected to it, including music and festivals. The function of the historical buildings however has changed and has been converted to public uses. The functions of the Axis as a whole has been preserved, as the core of the capital city.

Protection and management requirements

Beijing Central Axis attributes are strictly protected by national and local legislation. In particular, the Regulations on the Conservation of Beijing Central Axis Cultural Heritage and the Conservation and Management Plan for Beijing Central Axis (2022-2035) have been enacted based on the consent of rightsholders and stakeholders, and tailored to the protection of the property and the buffer zone. Multi-level urban plans from the municipal level to the block level have been published and implemented.

Nineteen institutions are involved in the management system. An Advisory and Coordinating Mechanism has been established having Beijing Municipal Leading Group for Building the National Cultural Center as the main manager and coordinating entity. The Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau oversees the integrated protection of the property considering all aspects of the planning framework. The National Cultural Heritage Administration provides technical guidance to the Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau which functions under the People's Government of Beijing Municipality. Each heritage element is under the authority of a site management agency. The Beijing Central Axis Conservation Center has been created to coordinate the implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan for Beijing Central Axis (2022-2035) with all other eighteen institutions involved.

4. Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Continuing to enforce sustainable tourism management measures that mitigate impacts on the property, buffer zone and its residents,
- b) Reinforcing the involvement of residents of the property and buffer zone in the management system of the Beijing Central Axis by establishing a coordinating platform with clear mechanisms of participation,
- c) Continuing interpretation and presentation works to clearly convey the role of the World Heritage properties that form part of the Beijing Central Axis,
- ~~d) Clearly presenting the reconstruction and remodelling processes of the Tian'anmen Square Complex and the Yongdingmen Gate, clarifying that these are not attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value,~~
- e) d) Developing and implementing a Heritage Impact Assessment for development proposals.