

JAPAN

Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area



© UNESCO

II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription * 1993

Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Nara Prefecture Board of Education
Culture Assets Preservation Division
30 Noborioji-cho
Nara City 630-8502, Nara Prefecture,
Japan
Tel : + 81 742 22 1101
Fax : + 81 742 27 5386
Email bunka@pref.narra.jp

II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C i, ii, iv, vi

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
“Eleven of the buildings in the Horyu-ji area were constructed before or during the eighth century; these buildings, are the world’s oldest remaining wooden buildings [...] These historic buildings are also outstanding not only from the point of overall design but also from the sophisticated design of details like the large pillars with entices the cloud-shaped bracket arms [...] There is no other example in which outstanding wooden structures of different ages beginning with the seventh century and extending to the nineteenth century are concentrated in one area and preserved [...] Horyu-ji, with its collection of temple buildings which date back to the age when Buddhism was just beginning to flourish in Japan, holds a very important position in the history of Japanese Buddhism [...] As examples of the oldest Buddhist structures in Japan, the groups of Buddhist structures in the Horyu-ji area have influenced the development of temples at different ages throughout 1,300 years of tradition. They are very important cultural properties in promoting the understanding of the culture of Japan.”

Status of Site Boundaries

- Borders and buffer zone of the property are considered adequate.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage values considered to have been maintained, no changes are foreseen.

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- The property is under the ownership of a religious juridical person who is appointed by the “Religious Juridical Person Law” and this organization is in charge of the management as the owner. The Agency for Cultural Affairs and Nara Prefecture provide financial support and technical advice for conservation repair of the buildings included in the property.
- The property is protected by the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, which prohibits alteration to existing conditions without permission from the National Government.
- Three laws determine the designation and preservation conditions of buffer zones and special protection zones: (i) the Natural Parks Law; (ii) the Law Concerning Special Measures for the Preservation of Ancient Cities; (iii) Scenic Zones under the Nara Prefecture Scenic Zone Ordinance.
- Traditional management practices: the Horyu-ji religious Juridical Person, with technical supervision from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, governs the management of the property.

Present State of Conservation

- The following repair work has taken place since 1996: (i) Repair of the Shoryoin (1996 to 1997); (ii) Repair of the Saionin Kyakuden, the Agetsuchimon, and the Karamon (1998); (iii) Repair of the Hojuin Hondo (1998); (iv) Repair of the Sangyoin and the Nishimuro (1998); (v) Roofing repair for Kitamuroin Hondo, the Taishiden, and the Omotemon (1999).
- The present state of conservation is considered in “extremely good state (...) for wooden structures”.

Staffing and Training Needs

- There is a total of 59 people involved in the preservation, conservation and interpretation of the property working within the Nara Prefecture and Ikaruga Town Board of Education, Cultural Assets Preservation Division and Lifelong Learning Division. This level of staff is considered adequate.
- Additional technical training for the staff in “conservation repair” is considered desirable. This training can be conducted by the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Financial Situation

- “Sufficient finance for the conservation of the property is available from subsidies from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Nara Prefecture and Ikaruga Town together with admission fees to the cultural assets included in the property.”
- * International Assistance from WHF: none.



Example of wooden architecture in Horyu-ji

Access to IT

- There are 30 PCs available to staff responsible for managing the property, with email access
- Internet access is available on site.

Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics are kept for the site. The number of visitors in recent years has declined steadily from a high of 1,026,000 in 1996, to 682,000 in 2000.
- Visitor facilities include a well-established on-site information centre. Visitor facilities are considered adequate.
- A visitor management/public use plan exists for the property. This plan integrates conservation of the property with comprehensive development of Nara Prefecture.
- Public information concerning the property is communicated through public symposia, seminars and a website: www.town.ikaruga.hara.jp

- In 1998, the Second World Heritage Meeting International Youth Forum was held at the site.

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- Fire is the greatest risk to the property.
- Development pressure is also a potential problem which requires monitoring and regulation.

Counteractive Plans

- “In order to cope with the largest risk to a wooden structure, i.e. fire, the automated fire alarm system, fire hydrants, and lightning conductors have been installed. In addition, private fire brigades are organized by the Horyu-ji and the Hokki-ji, which would work in co-operation with public fire offices.”
- “The development pressure in the areas around the property is controlled by the provisions under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, the Law Concerning Special Measures for the Preservation of Ancient Cities and ordinances of local governments. As for changes in the surrounding settings and natural disasters, efforts have been made to prevent them from affecting the property through the maintenance of the surrounding environments and the installation of disaster prevention facilities.”

II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- A monitoring system is in place, consisting of an annual review of the state of conservation, based on a set of key indicators. This system is considered adequate.

Monitoring Indicators

- Monitoring is based on a series of “key indications for monitoring the state of conservation.”

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- Present management practices are considered sufficient to ensure the preservation of heritage values of the property as well as the conservation of its component parts (buildings and other non-movable and movable cultural properties). It is foreseen that these practices will continue to be executed on schedule and in co-operation with all concerned stakeholders.

* *No State of Conservation Reports*