

# SRI LANKA

## Old Town of Galle and Its Fortifications

### II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1988

#### Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Archaeological Survey Department (ASD)  
Sir Marcus Fernando Mawatha  
Colombo, and
- Central Cultural Fund (CCF)  
212/1 Baudhaloka Mawatha  
Colombo  
Sri Lanka

### II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C iv

#### Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:  
“The Harbour in Galle was a main port of call in the East for trading purposes since the 11th century. [...] The fortified city of Galle, complete with fourteen bastions, is still the best-preserved, fortified city in South and South East Asia. The original Portuguese bastions on the landside were enlarged and improved upon by the Dutch and the British. The total area within the fortifications is around 40 hectares. [...] The combined effects of the rampart, the street grid, the distinctive streetscapes and outstanding individual examples such as 17th century warehouses and churches, the views across the harbour and the esplanade, internal courtyard architecture, the underground drainage system makes the fort a unique example of town planning, architecture and engineering of yesteryear. It is also an example of a blend of professionalism of the east and the west. Whilst the military architecture of the fort its design and conception is truly western, the materials, the building techniques and the labour that implemented such a task were Sri Lankan.

This makes Galle fort a true example of a product of two cultures.”

#### Status of Site Boundaries

- The borders and buffer zone of the property are not considered adequate because they fail to reflect the relationship of the Fort to the harbour and the recently discovered underwater archaeological remains.
- A redefinition of the site boundaries and buffer zones will be formally submitted to the Committee. (Map supplied)

### II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

#### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- The World Heritage value is considered to have been maintained.
- The authenticity and integrity of the site are considered to have been enhanced by scientific enquiry in the relationship between the historic port and underwater archaeological remains.

### II.4 Management

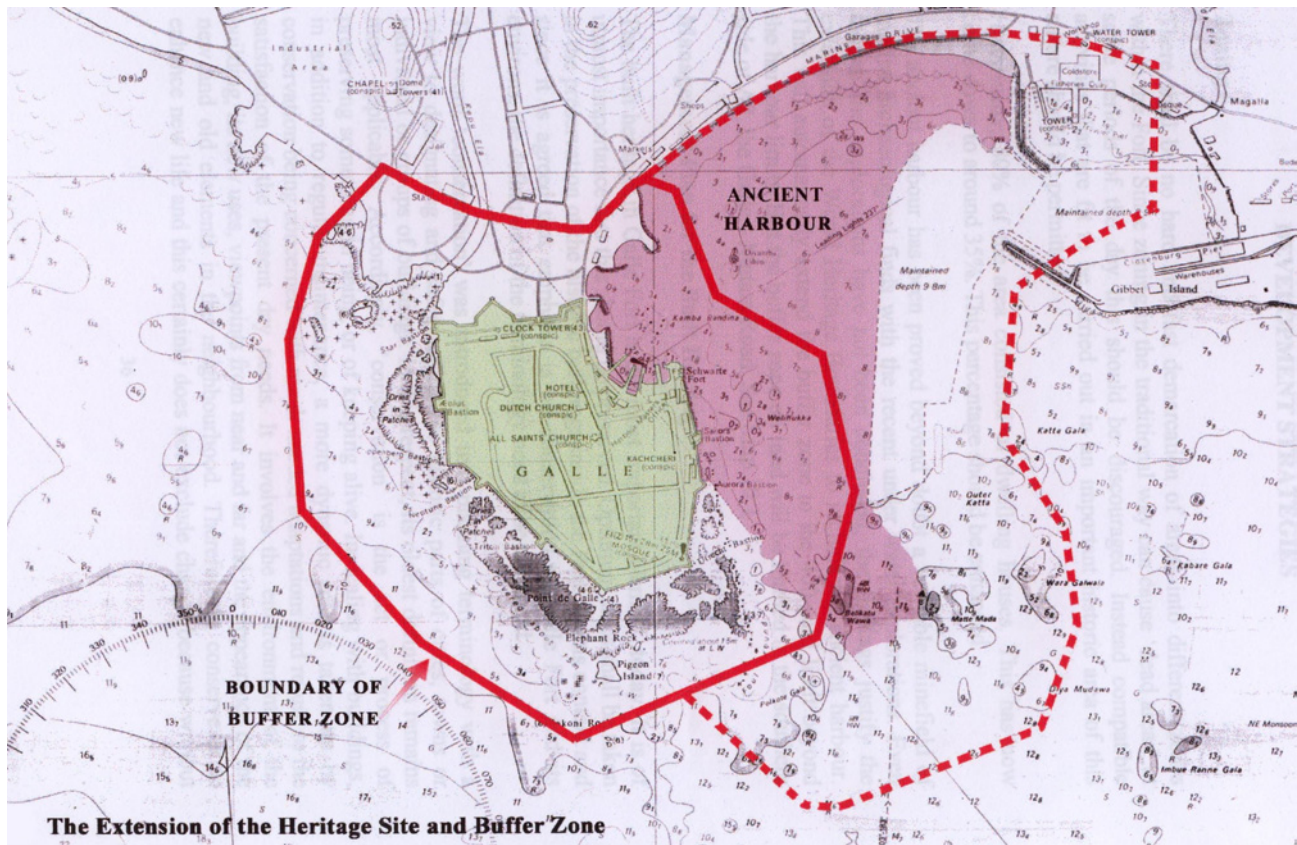
#### Administrative and Management Arrangements

- The World Heritage Site is managed by the ASD and CCF with Galle Municipal Council and the Urban Development Authority under the Galle Heritage Foundation Act of 1994. Other relevant line agencies are also represented.
- CCF established a Maritime Archaeological Unit and Conservation Laboratory in 2001.



Aerial view of the Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications

- New legislation governing maritime archaeology and building regulations is being introduced.
- ICOMOS Sri Lanka produced a Conservation and Development Plan in 2002.



Map of Galle showing WH existing (green) and proposed extension of core zone (pink), and existing (red line) and proposed extension of buffer zone (red dotted line)

## Present State of Conservation

- Government institutions are being re-located out of the Fort.
- An existing building will be adapted as a museum and visitor centre.
- Conservation of the Dutch Reformed Church is underway.
- Building Regulations are in place for the core area. A committee including ASD, CCF, UDA and ICOMOS will implement them.
- Inscription is seen as having increased the number of visitors and raised the commercial value of property within the Fort.

## Staffing and Training Needs

- ASD has an Assistant Director and technical team on site. CCF has an Officer in Charge and technical team. The Maritime Archaeological Unit is staffed by a Manager, archaeologist divers, and conservators.
- Staffing levels are considered inadequate particularly in the field of maritime archaeology.
- Professional training needs include: museology, GIS, ICT applications and non-destructive investigation.

## Financial Situation

- ASD is funded directly from central government. CCF is largely funded from admission charges in the Cultural Triangle. Galle Heritage Foundation has its own funds derived from loans, donations and grants. Funds are considered inadequate to undertake major capital projects. (No figures supplied).
- Financial and technical support is acknowledged from the Western Australian Maritime Museum and the Government of the Netherlands. ICCROM, JICA and IHS have provided training opportunities.
- \* International Assistance from WHF: none.

## Access to IT

- 3 PCs are in use.
- There is Internet and e-mail access.

## Visitor Management

- There are no visitor statistics available.
- Comprehensive tourist facilities commensurate with town centre location. Lighting of the external face of the ramparts has increased the amenity value.
- There are identified needs for improved visitor signage, information services and a maritime archaeology museum. Also a "socio-cultural policy towards enhancement of tourism".

- In its section on tourism, the ICOMOS Conservation and Development Plan, 2002, highlights the lack of cultural value and tourism potential awareness, and the limited access of local communities to the tourist market.

### II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

#### Threats and Risks

- Development pressures are characterised as follows: (i) difficulty of removing existing unauthorised activity; (ii) inadequate sewage and solid waste management; (iii) traffic pollution and vehicle management; (iv) lack of a management plan for the coral reef; (v) overhead wires, cables, TV antennae and water tanks; (vi) closing-in of verandas for domestic security reasons; and (vii) “unauthorised change use”.
- Maritime sites are threatened by: (i) lack of security; (ii) damage by boating, harbour and commercial activities; (iii) construction of breakwaters; (iv) contamination by oil spills and solid waste discharged into the sea.
- Threats are considered to be increasing due to demand for property in the core area, and growing tourism.

#### Counteractive Plans

- There is no risk preparedness plan.
- Danger from sea erosion has been addressed in the ICOMOS Conservation and Development Plan.
- The 1998 amendment to the Antiquities Ordinance provides for archaeological impact surveys to be funded by potential developers.

### II.6 Monitoring

#### Monitoring Arrangements

- The monitoring regime consists of site visits to observe development activities and marine environment in the case of underwater archaeological remains.
- Further training and development of computer-aided monitoring is foreseen.
- A system of listing individual as well as groups of buildings is under consideration.
- Annual external technical audits are proposed.

#### Monitoring Indicators

- Indicators are proposed based on the identified threats: (i) trend in property transfers; (ii) number of unauthorised interventions; (iii) number of applications for interventions; (iv) number of visitors; (v) trend in property values; (vi) constant traffic surveys; (vii) constant recording of deterioration of buildings & road surfaces.

### II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

#### Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- The Conservation and Development Plan, 2002, “will be implemented by the Galle Heritage Foundation in collaboration with all the associated line agencies and the host community”.
- Assistance from the WHF may be needed for training in monitoring and evaluation, for signage and visitor management, community awareness programmes, non-destructive investigation technology, GIS and other surveying techniques.

#### \* State of Conservation Reports

1999 WHC-99/CONF.204/5 The Bureau received the ICOMOS report which stressed the need for a clear demarcation of the site boundary and buffer zones, and strongly recommended that the core zone include the ancient harbour. Eleven recommendations were made including addressing (a) the need to increase the standards of conservation of the site; (b) the need to research the development of the historic town and; (c) the need to prepare and implement a Plan for development within the town and conservation of historic buildings following international norms.

2001 WHC-2001.205/5 The Bureau received a report from the DIR WHC concerning the poor state of conservation of the Dutch Reformed Church and the extent of deformation to the urban fabric caused by uncontrolled building activities. It was recommended to request the authorities to strengthen control on building permits, allocate funds for the maintenance of the historic monuments and submit an international assistance request for a programme of corrective measures.