

PRESS RELEASE ON INSCRIPTION OF THE RED FORT IN THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST -2007

The World Heritage Committee in its meeting held on 23rd to 27th June, 2007 at Christchurch, New Zealand has accepted the nomination of the Red Fort Complex, Delhi for inscription in the World Heritage List. The monument was earlier referred for inscription on World Heritage List in the year 1992 but was deferred due to multi-administrative control of the Red Fort. The nomination was submitted by the ASI to the UNESCO in 2006 after it was vacated by the Indian Army in December, 2003.

The Red Fort World Heritage Site shall constitute the Red Fort and Salimgarh Fort, both. While the Salimgarh Fort was built by Islam Shah Suri in 1546 A.D., the Red Fort and the city of Shahjahanabad was constructed by the Emperor Shahjahan in 1639 A.D. The layout of the Red Fort was organized to retain and integrate this site with the Salimgarh Fort. The fortress palace is an important focal point of the medieval city of Shahjahanabad. The planning and aesthetics of the Red Fort represent the zenith of Mughal creativity which prevailed during the region of Emperor Shahjahan. This Fort has come across many layers of development after its construction by Emperor Shahjahan. The significant phases of development were under Aurangzeb and later Mughal rulers. Important physical changes were carried out in the overall settings of the site after the First War of Independence during British Rule in 1857. After Independence, the site experienced a few changes in terms of addition/alteration to the structures. During the British period the Fort was mainly used as a cantonment and even after Independence, a significant part of the Fort remained under the control of the Army till the year 2003.

Red Fort showcases the very high level of art form and ornamental work. The art work in the Fort is a synthesis of Persian, European and Indian art which resulted in the development of unique Shahjahani style which is very rich in form, expression and colour. Red Fort, Delhi is one of the important building complexes of India which encapsulates a long period of Indian history and its arts. Its significance has transcended time and space. It is relevant as a symbol of architectural brilliance and power. Even before its notification as a monument of national importance in the year 1913, efforts were made to preserve and conserve the Red Fort, for posterity.

The nominated property (Red Fort Complex) has a total area of 92.6 hectare. The core zone of about hectare includes the Red Fort and Salimgarh Fort while the buffer zone measuring over 40 hectares includes the immediate surroundings of the Red Fort and Salimgarh Fort.

The Red Fort Complex, Delhi is classified as a cultural property with an outstanding universal significance. The inscription of the Red Fort on the World Heritage List is very significant for Delhi since the Red Fort Complex would be the third World Heritage Site in the city, an honour that no other single location in the country can boast of. The inscription of the Red Fort Complex is also significant for the country since it was from the ramparts of the Red Fort that the country's independence was declared. The Independence Day Celebration, every year, is organized at the ramparts of the Red Fort and the Prime Minister unfurls the National Flag.

The inscription of the Red Fort to the World Heritage List does not provide it with any extra formal international legal protection. However, inscription on the list does place an international obligation on the ASI to provide for careful protection and management of the site, to prevent any

further damage to the built fabric and historic gardens in the fort and its setting and to ensure its survival for future generations.

As per the directions given by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, the Archaeological Survey of India had initiated efforts to get a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan prepared for the site. The draft management plan, which is a collaborative effort of the ASI and MIS Cultural Resources Conservation Initiative (CRCI) through the engagement of a multi-disciplinary team has already been submitted and is being examined in depth. The draft report along with recommendations would eventually be placed before the Committee of experts appointed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India for taking a final view.

The principal purpose of the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan is to establish the overarching strategy on long term framework for management based on an analysis of the site's significance. The Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan lays down the key principles, objective and methodology that are necessary to be adopted and adapted in the preparation of the detail action plans.

The Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan identified and recognizes the importance of the wide range of mechanisms, both statutory and non-statutory, which already exist to project and manage the site and its immediate environs. The plan emphasizes the need for an integrated statutory conservation and development framework at the national, regional and local level to protect the outstanding universal value of the site and guide development in the setting.

It is recognized by the ASI, the management authority of the Red Fort, that achievement of the plan objectives requires the support and participation of multiple organizations. The plan has been prepared following

a methodology of interdisciplinary planning processes wherein there was close dialogue between the various departments and agencies which operate from within the tort and are responsible for the various management activities therein. Primary data was collected through an intensive and extensive surveys and interviews.