HERITAGE AT RISK

Patrimoine en Péril / Patrimonio en Peligro

ICOMOS WORLD REPORT 2006/2007 ON MONUMENTS AND SITES IN DANGER
ICOMOS rapport mondial 2006/2007 sur des monuments et des sites en péril
ICOMOS informe mundial 2006/2007 sobre monumentos y sitios en peligro

edited by Michael Petzet and John Ziesemer

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Turkey

To postpone the flooding of Allianoi, pending the completion of the excavation, data-collection and documentation of the site. We also suggest that during this period, the Turkish Government commission an in-depth study of the social, cultural and economic benefits which could be generated for the wider region by a possible development of Allianoi into a cultural and health tourism centre. We believe that this should be considered as a serious sustainable development alternative to the foreseen local economic benefits associated with the creation of an irrigation reservoir whose effective life-span is not expected to exceed 50 years. We encourage the Turkish Government to explore the possibility of obtaining European or international support for the financing of such a feasibility study and are prepared to endorse any possible application for such funds.

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Istanbul – Risks in the Historic Urban Topography?
Visual Impact Assessment Study of Istanbul

The intention is to present some observations, documentation material (mostly of 2006) and principal arguments to evaluate the visual impact of high-rise building developments in Istanbul UNESCO World Heritage site. Traditional sights, landmarks and monuments as well as the protected urban silhouette are in danger. Serious consequences are to be expected due to global investment dominance in public space and skyline.

The Visual Impact Study of Istanbul with two maps concerning the metropolitan area (see also the Metropolitan Area Visual Impact Assessment Study map) and the historic town centre (see also the Historic Centre Visual Impact Assessment Study map) is intended to give an impression of the prospective unprecedented scale of global building development within the urban topography (see also the photographic presentation) and to support a discussion and moderation of conflicts in favour of Istanbul’s traditional public space, the unique topography, and the prospects and panoramas.

The starting point of this pilot study is Melling's topographical survey “Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore” (Paris 1819). Some of his viewpoints as Eyüp, Çamlıca and Galata Tower are still very popular as publicly accessible viewpoints in the metropolitan area of Istanbul. They form characteristic prospects, panoramas and visual axes in the historic urban landscape of today’s metropolitan area (see also the photographic presentation).

The World Heritage site Istanbul was adopted in 1985 in the boundaries of the Peninsula, not including Galata and without a buffer zone to protect the surroundings. This research and photo presentation intends to direct one’s eyes to the recent building development of the Istanbul metropolitan area. It wishes to call the attention to current disturbances and destructions as well as to conceivable dangers which the colossal new development projects would entail (see also the two maps of the Visual Impact Assessment Study of the Metropolitan Area and the Historic Centre). The evaluation should stimulate a discussion concerning the necessity to define a buffer zone and its boundaries in order to protect the effective range and authentic visibility of the WH Site within the metropolitan urban landscape.

A further aspect of this presentation could be a critical review of the existing high-scale buildings as to whether they should be considered as characteristic landmarks and appreciated icons in
one of the most beautiful ancient cities of the world. By this it might be possible to define elements of urban and architectural qualities and topics to create a 21st century modern Istanbul skyline without compromising the outstanding universal values for which it was put on the World Heritage List in the first place.

Today several skyscrapers of Beyoğlu, Sisli and Levent appear, but they do not give the impression of a planned skyline.

Istanbul's metropolitan area finds itself in the middle of a rapid process of drastic urban transformation, a renewal with new big-scale building complexes and skyscraper clusters of unprecedented dimensions as to their cubic measure, density and extreme elevation. Since the late 1970s high-rise buildings generally did not grow to more than 100 m while the new generation of skyscrapers is expected to start with 300 m and to end by about 650 m. To put this into perspective with the scale of the landscape: the highest mountain, the Çamlıca, rises to about 260 m. Comparable to this is also the change of bulk and height of the projected Galata Port development with a mass of up to five gigantic cruise ships located in the historic Tophane area.

This presentation concentrates on only some of the colossal building development projects under discussion such as Haydarpasa, Dubai Towers, Bosphorus Tower and Galataport, which might come in conflict with the World Heritage sites of Istanbul. With regard to these projects a general lack of official information and transparency on the side of the metropolitan administration has to be stated. In a general way these simulations may map out a coming reality even if the elements of skyscrapers and ships were chosen without detailed knowledge of the actual projects and plans and even without a topographical town-plan which would indicate the exact locations. Nevertheless, it might be relevant for the discussion to recognize the gigantic scale of the development project, to visualize the dimensions of urban renewal and to become aware of the alarming extent of the impending transformation within the metropolitan area of a WH site.

Even if there were aesthetic design alternatives of iconic architectural works created by “star architects”, this would not really diminish the risk of compromising the outstanding universal value of Istanbul's historic urban landscape.

This presentation, realised at the Technical University of Berlin by Prof. Astrid Debold-Kritter as a member of ICOMOS CIVVIH, concerns a number of colossal development projects. At the Department for Town and Regional Planning, Prof. Debold-Kritter was assisted by Dipl. Ing. Canan Sarıkaya, student research assistant Jan Polívka and cartographer Sibylle Hengstmann-Reusch. The topic was stimulated by the ICOMOS CIVVIH Scientific Symposium on “Historic Centres in Metropolitan Areas” held in Istanbul in 2005.
Presentation of historic prospects, panoramas and viewpoints by Melling (1819), photo documentation and digital simulations from 2006

This research on the historic urban metropolitan landscape of Istanbul is based on an extensive topographic folio volume by Antoine-Ignace Melling, which contains panoramas and topographical maps with detailed locations and descriptions of each presentation.

Fig. 1 Part of Constantinople with point of Serail, seen from Pera (Melling’s Panorama 24, 1819). This well known panorama represents the Peninsula with the cape of Topkapı Palace and the town silhouette crowned with mosques, domes and minarets, as well as the Golden Horn and the Princess Islands.

Fig. 4 Viewpoint at Eyüp, 2006. Haydarpasa lies in this view angle at a distance of about 10 km. It seems possible that on days of high visibility this high rise project with seven skyscrapers would appear in the background between the Galata Tower and the protected WH site silhouette. The extent of the disturbance from this viewpoint at Eyüp near the famous Pierre Loti’s café will depend on the future elevation, bulk and surface material of the projected tower buildings.

Figs. 2 and 3 Constantinople seen from Eyüp (Melling’s Panorama 14, 1819) and view from Eyüp towards Istanbul World Heritage Site, 2006. This view from Eyüp towards the natural harbour is seen from an elevated viewpoint. At the horizon to the left appears the Galata Tower. Istanbul’s Golden Horn and World Heritage site is almost undisturbed (if one ignores the bridge). The city’s vulnerable town shape has been protected and preserved for 70 years due to effective and active measures by restricting the height of buildings to 50 m.

Figs. 5 and 6 Haydarpasa seen from Marmara Sea, 2006, and Haydarpasa Towers (simulation). It is this shore area between the Selimiye Baracks and the Bagdad Railway Station which is supposed to become a private development project Haydarpasa with seven high-rise towers of at least 300 m height and several less high but densely packed new buildings. This Simulation of the Haydarpasa Towers is an alternative attempt to the one of the Architectural Chamber, which presents the complete building project including seven uniform towers. In order to demonstrate how drastically these new colossal towers might influence the historic urban silhouette, different existing skyscrapers were chosen and have been made unidentifiable for this purpose.
Figs. 7 and 8 Haydarpaşa seen from Topkapı Terrace, 2006 and Haydarpaşa Towers (simulation). A very much appreciated viewpoint is the one very near the Topkapı Terrace. The simulation presents that it would become a gigantic Manhattan-like sight.

Figs. 9. and 10 Cape of the peninsula with Topkapı (simulation). A recent view on the cape of the peninsula with Topkapı taken in the evening from the boat coming from Princess Islands. The slightly rising hills and Topkapı Palace on the cape of the peninsula seen from Karaköy would be compromised by a gigantic new scale: seven towers of 300 metres height.

Fig. 11 Haydarpaşa and Süleymaniye Mosque seen from Zeyrek Terrace (simulation). The colossal Haydarpaşa site would appear from Zeyrek Terrace in the range of the Süleymaniye Mosque degrading the venerable silhouette and aura of the cupola and four slim minarets. (The Haydarpaşa towers are presented in a calculated scale). The Haydarpaşa Project will be visible from Galata Tower as well as from Galata Bridge and might even appear as a monster project in the view from Çıngırak Mosque Garden. It was Yahya Kemal who in a poem perpetuated this famous view from Çıngırak to Üsküdar at sunrise.
Fig. 15 Tophane (Melling’s Panorama 21, 1819). This panorama presents the Tophane place situated on the European shore of the Bosphorus with vast barracks and other representative still existing buildings: the Kılıç Ali Paşa Mosque built by architect Sinan, the Tophane fountain (1732) and the gunfoundry vaulted with six domes. It forms a highly representative urban prospect and scenery of the distinguished residential Pera quarter including the harbour with splendid ships in the foreground.

Fig. 16 Tophane Pier with Cihangir Mosque, 2006. Today there are stores and administrative buildings situated right at the shore and covering a large fenced area. There are still freighters being loaded, which however can only be observed from the terrace of Istanbul Modern Museum, located in one of the reused stores. The public Tophane place of today is very much reduced and dominated by traffic. Behind this the densely built up hill of Pera with the Cihangir Mosque right up.

Fig. 17 Cruise ships at Galata Port hiding the prospect of Tophane. Tophane shore is frequented by huge cruise ships which, if several ships are mooring at the same time, form a high and long barrier. The famous Pera prospect seen from boat excursions on the Bosphorus is hidden very often behind gigantic tourist steamers. This applies accordingly to the characteristic domes of the gun-foundry and mosques. The cruise ships present a new scale in the urban landscape which implies a break with the traditional cultural landscape of Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul.

Fig. 18 Galataport (simulation). Galataport is planned for the moorage of four or five cruise ships at a quay about 1.5 km long. Five ships of the size which can already be seen in a simulation here will necessarily cause extensive demolition and new building development. The traditional city prospect seen from the Bosphorus will disappear with its historic monuments.

Fig. 19 Tophane Fountain and Kılıç Ali Paşa Mosque, 2006. The projected Galataport would even enlarge the barrier between the restored fountain and the Sinan Mosque and cut off the main remaining view on Bosphorus and Marmara Sea for ever. This would also mean a further loss of public space in favour of a private project.
Fig. 20 Cruise ship at Tophane Pier seen from Cad Nectabey, 2006. These huge cruise ships up to 60 m high will block the traditional views from the city, that is to say the characteristic prospects on Bosphorus, Marmara Sea, Üsküdar and Haydarpaşa in perpetuity.

Fig. 21 Cruise ship seen from Cihangir Slope near the Mosque, 2006. Already now some brutal barriers blocking the view from public streets and elevated places of Cihangir, as for instance right near the Cihangir Mosque and its garden can be noticed. Considering the expected mass tourism – up to 15,000 daytourists could arrive here more or less at the same time – this would cause a tremendous pressure on the city neighbourhood, especially with regard to public space and places. This dense, various and ambiguous urban structure with narrow stairs, crooked and steep streets are substantial remainders of the old and famous Galata harbour and Pera quarter.

Fig. 22 Dubai Towers and Bosphorus Tower seen from Süleymaniye Terrace (simulation). The Dubai Towers and Bosphorus Tower will appear in the view angle out of the WH Site from the terrace of Süleymaniye Mosque (which is about 50 m high and 10 km away) in the background of Galata, Beyoğlu, Şişli in a truly colossal dimension. They might extremely rise above the height of the Galata Tower and the context of several high-rising modern buildings. The Dubai Towers und Bosphorus Tower as viewed from the WH Site will definitely degrade and compromise the Byzantine Galata Tower of the Genuese port (the hill has an elevation of 45 m, the gallery of the tower of 44.5 m).

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ISTANBUL UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE
Visual impact assessment study (preventive plan project)

METROPOLITAN AREA
Historic urban landscape, modern skyline, high-rise metropolitan development
- Area almost within sight from Galata Tower
- Prospects, panoramas and visual axes seen from traditional publicly accessible viewpoints
- Protected urban silhouette
- Traditional sights, landmarks and monuments
- Current high-scale buildings and skyscrapers
- Colossal landmark building locations and global development projects in discussion

ISTANBUL ŞEHİRİNİN UZAY HARITASI
Space map of Istanbul, Turkey

Technical University of Berlin
Produced by KV Verbund
Soylen Hengstmann-Krötz
June 2006, data based on air survey map

Produced 1992 at the University of Klagenfurt, Austria.
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