

ICOMOS TECHNICAL REVIEW

Property	Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region
State Party	Japan
Property ID	1535
Date of Inscription	2017
Criterion	(ii)(iii)
Project	Kanezaki Fishing Harbor Improvement Project

Background

The World Heritage property of the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region in Japan was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2017. The property comprises a total of eight components: Okinoshima and three nearby islets, two shrines on Oshima Island and two locations on the Mainland. The buffer zone encloses a long stretch of sea, linking Okinoshima Island to the coastal areas and comprising Oshima as well as Jinoshima Islands. The Sacred Island is today only accessible by boat, nearly exclusively by local fishermen.

During the nomination process, ICOMOS requested further information in its letter dated 7 October 2016 regarding various development projects planned by the local authorities in charge of Okinoshima in different parts of the buffer zone. One of these projects is soon to start in Kanezaki, located at the eastern limit of the buffer zone on the Mainland and facing Jinoshima Island.

As part of the Kanezaki Fishing Harbor Improvement Project, a 20-page long Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) was sent to ICOMOS on 3 September 2019 by the State Party, via the World Heritage Centre, detailing the planned construction of extensions.

This document has served as the basis for the present Technical review.

Improvement of the facility of the Kanezaki Fishing Harbour

The HIA report was written by Munakata City Office.

The harbour project is part of the work being carried out by the same city office of Munakata, and therefore, to assuage any concerns regarding a conflict of interests, the review process included, in addition to Munakata City Landscape Advisor Meeting, the Experts Meeting for the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region, including its Subcommittees on Preservation and Management of Component Sites and on Buffer Zone Conservation. In addition, the Council for Preservation and Utilization for the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region consulted a group of independent academic experts to study the impact of the project.

The technical documents transmitted in the HIA report about the proposed changes to the port facility of Kanezaki are reasonably detailed. They indicate the location of the changes planned at the western entrance of the port, the length of the new roads, parking and wind barrier constructions, as well as the surface of the new dock facility and its height. The objectives of these improvements are also well stated. From the data presented in the HIA report, it appears that this project was finalised with the will to minimise any possible impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property. The photos are explicit, showing the absence of any significant visual disturbance in relation to the planned project. The different maps and views also indicate that the direct impact of these

constructions on the components of the property will be very limited, as all the new constructions will be positioned in a corner of the buffer zone, with no building or wind barrier exceeding 5m in height. Furthermore, the view from Okinoshima Island to Kanazaki Fishing Harbour, a straight distance of 55km, is blocked by Jinoshima Island.

However, as the expansion of the harbour facilities under this project will still consequently change the traditional appearance of the fishing harbour within the buffer zone, even if only a little, it is advised that the Standards of Permission for Important Fishing Ports for Landscape mentioned in the Munakata City Landscape Plan (an extract of which is presented in item 6 of section 4 of the HIA report) should be carefully followed.

Conclusions

The information provided by the State Party on the Kanazaki Fishing Harbor Improvement Project show that there is no apparent risk of adverse impact of the planned constructions on the overall Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property. The project appears to have integrated the constraints of the buffer zone into the plans, in order to limit risks as much as possible.

ICOMOS therefore suggests that this project could be carried out, following the provisions of the Standards of Permission for Important Fishing Ports for Landscape.

ICOMOS remains at the disposal of the State Party for further clarification on the above or assistance as required.

ICOMOS, Charenton-le-Pont
July 2020