

## **Heritage Conservation in Macao**

### **Relevant legislation relating to heritage conservation in Macao**

Prior to 1976, when the first comprehensive legislation governing cultural heritage preservation was introduced, the Macao Government already had decrees in place for the protection of cultural heritage. These laws laid the basis for bodies such as the Committee for the Defence of the Urban Environmental and Cultural Heritage of Macao. Decree Law No. 34/76/M promulgated on August 7, 1976, classified cultural heritage in Macao for the first time, publishing a list of protected properties and sites.

On June 3, 1984, the Government issued a new law on heritage conservation, Decree Law No. 56/84/M which revoked Decree Law No. 34/76/M. This new law provided a more accurate and comprehensive definition and categorization of Macao's cultural heritage and gave more detailed stipulations governing the types of conservation measures for each category of cultural heritage.

Decree Law No. 83/92/M promulgated on December 31, 1992, is the most recent heritage conservation law to date. Attached to the decree are two appendices consisting of a list and a map of designated properties.

### **Classification of cultural heritage in Macao**

In a city like Macao, where there is such a rich array of cultural heritage, conservation work focuses on both the preservation of individual architectural legacies as well as the urban settings that are an integral part of the historic settlement. To ensure the full, long-term protection of heritage in Macao, conservation programmes strive to foster cultural activities within these areas, hence making heritage truly meaningful with the original spirit of place retained. The other purpose of heritage conservation is to preserve the sense of art and culture which has accumulated in the city over time, shaping the very rich and unique identity of Macao today, and giving the city its charisma and attraction.

In this respect, Macao's cultural heritage is classified by law in four different categories to ensure thorough protection:

**a) Monuments:** Individual buildings of outstanding historic value, such as churches, temples and fortresses (52 in total);

**b) Buildings of Architectural Interest:** Buildings whose architectural interest and quality reflect an important period in Macao's evolution, such as Moorish Barracks, the Post Office Building, and the Military Club (44 in total);

**c) Classified Complexes:** Group of buildings in urban settings such as the buildings along Almeida Riberio Avenue and the cluster of buildings around Senado Square (11 in total);

**d) Classified Sites:** are original natural or manmade landscapes with historic values such as Camões Garden, Guia Hill and Barra Hill (21 in total).

There are a total of 128 classified properties which are protected by varying levels of conservation measures according to legislation.

Areas known as 'Protected Areas' in the legislation refer to the immediate surroundings around the classified heritage. They are natural or built-up settings of classified monuments, complexes and sites, which are spatially or aesthetically integrated, and thus form an essential part of that heritage, bringing them under legal protection as well.

## Heritage conservation: promotion and education

In recent years, the Macao S.A.R. Government has strengthened promotional and educational efforts aimed at increasing heritage awareness. Excellent results have been achieved, both in terms of raising awareness of Macao's cultural heritage abroad and in the local promotion of heritage-related activities. The S.A.R. Government has emphasized the communication of cultural knowledge to Macao residents, particularly young people, and has also sought through various channels to cooperate with community groups and private organizations on issues of heritage promotion. Recent years have seen the general public participate in heritage conservation with increasing enthusiasm.

Alongside local events, the S.A.R. Government places great emphasis on maintaining close contact with the international community. By organizing and participating in various major conferences, worldwide attention has been focused on Macao's heritage. In 2001, a conference of the Modern Asian Architecture Network (mAAN) was held, engaging in dialogue with other Asian countries on heritage sites and





their maintenance. In 2002, an international conference entitled "The Conservation of Urban Heritage: Macao Vision" was held, providing a new outlook and perspectives for the task of conserving Macao's heritage sites. The S.A.R. Government has signed cooperation agreements with the Portuguese Institute of Architectural Heritage concerning the protection, maintenance and improvement of architectural heritage of historic, artistic, scenic, or social value. This



has resulted in technical support and added quality assurance for Macao's heritage conservation work. Starting in 2002, Macao has attended the World Heritage Conference as a member of the Chinese delegation. It also sends representatives to participate in the Asia Region Cultural Heritage Conference organised annually in Bangkok by UNESCO. At these international meetings, Macao's representatives have an opportunity to communicate with delegates from countries exchanging ideas and learning about the most up-to-date experiences in heritage conservation, as well as convey the message of Macao's cultural wealth and unique character to the various countries present.

At a local level, a range of activities and events serves to stimulate research into local culture and history and to promote the







heritage conservation message through the Arts. Below is a selection of some of the forms in which this work is carried out:

- An annual Academic Research Scholarship competition, which places a priority on projects involving post-graduate research into Macao's history and cultural heritage;
- History and Culture Research Report Award organized with the same aim but directed towards school students;
- *Review of Culture*, a quarterly magazine which publishes the results of research into the many facets of Macao;
- Periodic seminars on Macao's history and culture given by expert speakers in order to increase the general public's interest in local culture and heritage;
- Large-scale exhibitions to promote the link between artistic creation and heritage conservation: *Macao's Cultural Heritage: An Exhibition of Art, Photography and Posters*; *Chinese Treasures: Art Exhibition on Monuments and Sites in China Bidding for UNESCO World Heritage*; *Macao's Heritage—Beyond History*, giving Macao's heritage monuments an artistic life that goes beyond their historic value;





- Combining artistic performance and heritage cityscapes in the Macao International Music Festival and the Macao Arts Festival, to bring historical architecture to the performance art stage, presenting the modern side of cultural relics to the acclaim of the international community and local residents.



Starting from the launch of Macao's bid for inscription on World Heritage List, promotional and educational activities have been being carried out through various channels and at different levels with the aim of encouraging the entire population to value Macao's heritage monuments. The ranks of "heritage conservationists" have grown ever larger, with a growing appreciation of local heritage and culture at all levels of society.



A large-scale "Macao Heritage Promotion Plan" and "Heritage Conservation Year" were launched with activities for Macao's citizens, teachers and students. Given their rich subject matter, strong focus and far-reaching educational significance, these programmes have penetrated into the urban districts and schools receiving a widespread welcome.

An important strategy in the development of Macao's long-term heritage conservation task involves making Macao's teachers and students primary targets. This work has covered a wide range of activities:

- The "Heritage Ambassador Training Scheme", providing training for teenage students in Macao and giving them specialized knowledge in heritage conservation. As fully-fledged "Heritage Ambassadors", they are assigned the task of passing on their knowledge through "Cultural Heritage Tours of Macao";
- The "Macao Heritage Architecture Exhibition" has travelled throughout Macao's secondary schools, using large scale exhibition boards, presentations, games and other methods to give a multi-faceted introduction to Macao's cultural heritage:







- The "Heritage Story" Story-writing Contest and "Heritage Glimpses" Photography Competition have used modern subjects and methods of expression to awaken the interest of Macao's students in historical buildings;
- The "Heritage Journalists" Summer Training Camp likewise targets school students through heritage-site instruction, on-site investigation and courses in news reporting, training up a group of junior heritage reporters familiar with Macao's cultural heritage. After writing up reports on heritage sites, they can effectively increase recognition and awareness among individuals of the same age group for heritage sites;





- "Macao's Application for World Heritage Inscription—Interschool Poster Design Contest" generated levels of involvement that serve to prove that awareness of the preservation of heritage sites already widely exists in the hearts of today's youngsters;
- The "Macao Cultural Heritage Tour" Route Design Competition attracted broad and enthusiastic participation from Macao residents of all ages. As individuals visited places of scenic beauty and historical significance, they became familiar with the heritage sites and designed numerous interesting cultural routes. "Macao Cultural Heritage Tours" have already become an aspect of Macao tourism that is praised by visitors to Macao;



- Macao Heritage Net went online and the "The Historic Monuments of Macao" booklet was issued. These served as an important promotional function in transmitting heritage knowledge and raising heritage preservation awareness.



Following Macao's inscription on the World Heritage List, the S.A.R. Government will work hand-in-hand with the public to encourage all sectors of society to participate, support and cherish Macao's World Heritage and enrich the lives of the city's children and grandchildren.



## The Inscription Process

Following the handover of Macao's administration to the People's Republic of China in 1999, the process for inscribing "The Historic Centre of Macao" on UNESCO's World Heritage List was handled by the Macao S.A.R. Government. The outcome of this tremendous endeavour will certainly change the global image of the city and impact on the tourism industry and the economy, affecting the overall prosperity and stability of the Special Administration Region. Consequently, inscription is important both to Macao and to the entire Chinese nation.

The nomination dossier was meticulously drafted with the full support and technical guidance of the Central Government, prior to formal submission to UNESCO by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, in Paris in early 2002. In early 2004, "The Historic

Centre of Macao" proposal was selected by the Central Government as the sole national bid to be assessed by the World Heritage Committee in July 2005, at its 29<sup>th</sup> Session. An ICOMOS representative conducted an on-site evaluation in September 2004, followed by a request from ICOMOS to collate a Supplementary Document to the dossier. This was submitted to UNESCO in December 2004.



The Supplementary Document included certain clarifications and the fine-tuning of some details, while addressing comments from heritage experts from all over the world. While the initial proposal focused on a selection of twelve Historic Monuments, the adjusted scope conveyed in the Supplementary Document provided a more extensive, enriched representation of the historic settlement, encompassing the urban context in which architectural legacies are interwoven.

ICOMOS’ technical evaluation report was submitted to UNESCO on 6 February 2005 for final assessment. The nomination reached the final stage of consideration for inscription on the World Heritage List in Durban, whereby it was evaluated by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 29<sup>th</sup> Session. On

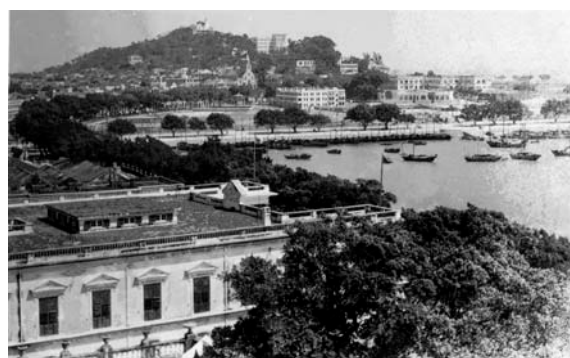
15 July 2005, the Committee gave its consent to the inscription, officially entitling “The Historic Centre of Macao” as World Heritage.



## Outstanding Universal Value of "The Historic Centre of Macao"

"The Historic Centre of Macao" is the product of cultural exchange between the western world and Chinese civilization. The settlement of Macao by Portuguese navigators in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century laid the basis for nearly five centuries of uninterrupted contact between East and West. The origins of Macao's development into an international trading port make it the single most consistent example of cultural interchange between Europe and Asia.

The emergence of Macao with its dual function as a gateway into China, and as Ming China's window onto the world, reflected a relaxation of certain restrictions combined

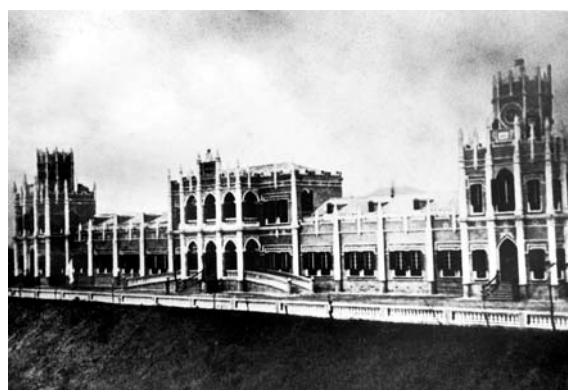


with a degree of open-mindedness that offered a creative way to supplement China's vassal-state trading system and marked a turning point in the history of both China and Europe. Macao, as the West's first established gateway into China, was remarkable in setting off a succession of connections and contacts that progressively enriched both civilisations across a huge range of human endeavour, both tangible and intangible, at a critical point in history.

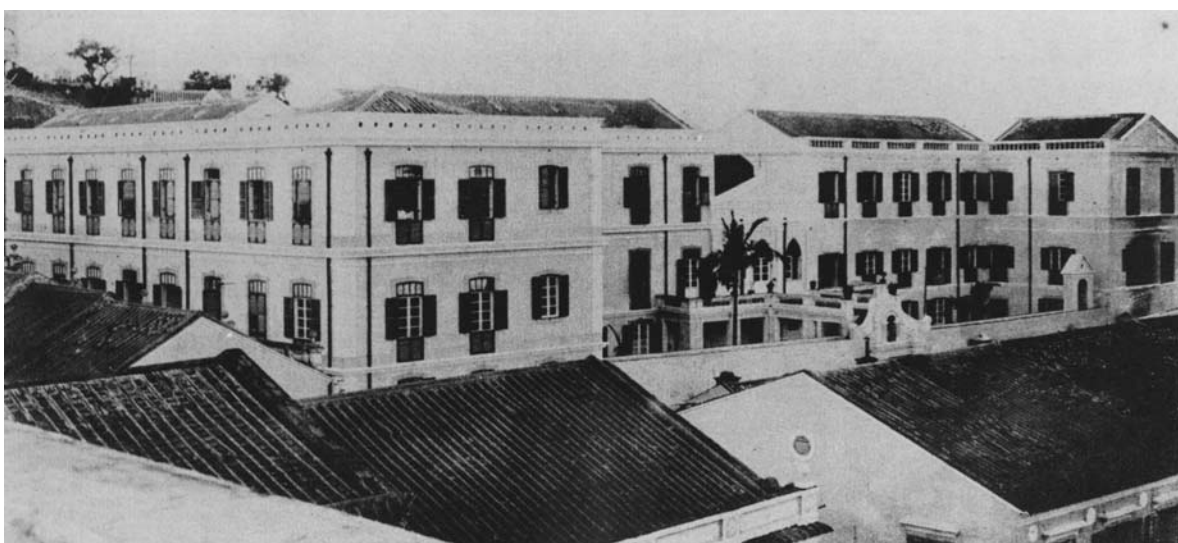




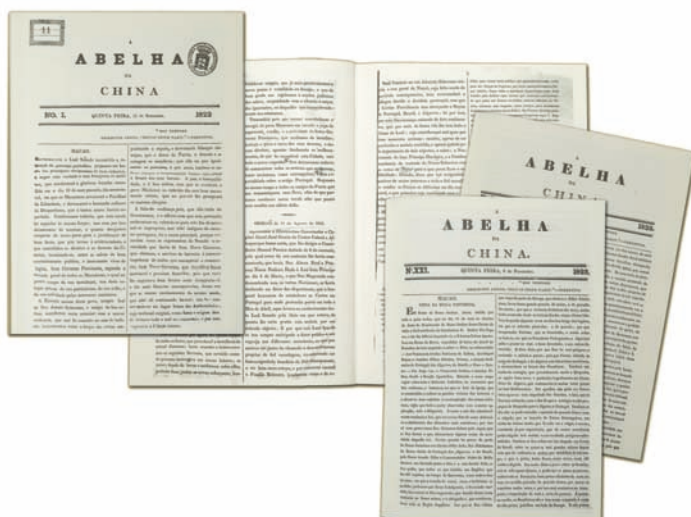
For almost three centuries, until the colonisation of Hong Kong in 1842, Macao's strategic location at the mouth of the Pearl River meant that it retained a unique position in the South China Sea, serving as the hub in a complex network of maritime trade that brought tremendous wealth and a constant flow of people into the enclave. People of different nationalities came, bringing their own cultural traditions and professions, permeating the life of the city as can be seen in both intangible and tangible influences. This is evident in the introduction of foreign building typologies such as western-style fortresses and architecture. Macao also inherited various cultural experiences and regional influences, further developing these in conjunction with the local ancient Chinese culture and blending them to produce the rich texture seen in the city's exceptional heritage legacy. Exposure to diverse cultures during the lasting encounter between the eastern and western worlds has therefore benefited Macao in assimilating a rich array of cultural heritage.



During the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, missionaries from different European religious orders such as the Jesuits, the Dominicans, the Augustinians and the Franciscans entered China through Macao, engaging in missionary work and bringing with them a certain cultural influence. They introduced western concepts of social welfare and founded the first western-style hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages and charitable



organizations. They brought in the first movable-type printing press to be used on Chinese soil, and published the first paper in a foreign language. As Macao was the base for the Jesuit mission in China and other parts of East Asia, Jesuit priests entering into China service would always come first to Macao where, at St. Paul's College, they would be

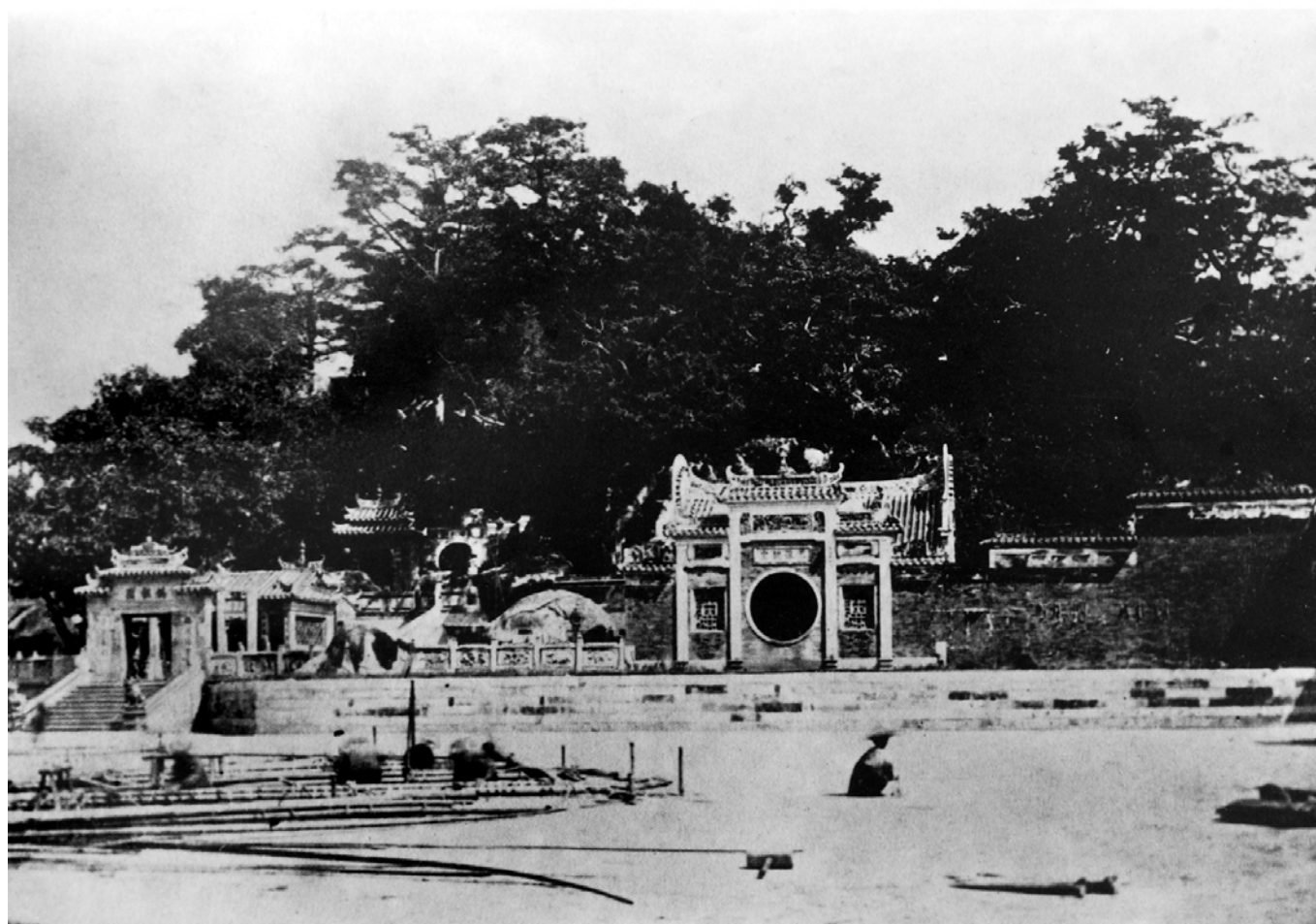




trained in the Chinese language together with other areas of Chinese knowledge, including philosophy and comparative religion. Macao was thus the training ground for the Jesuit's mission to China and other parts of Asia. St. Paul's College was the largest seminary in the Far East at the time, acclaimed as the first western-style university in the region. Other achievements of Christian missionaries in Macao include the production of the first

English-Chinese Dictionary and the first Chinese translation of the Bible by Robert Morrison.

The worship of A-Ma in Macao originated with the folk beliefs of fishermen living along the coast of South China. Due to Macao's special position in channeling cultural exchange between East and West, A-Ma Temple has played a prominent role as the earliest reference to A-Ma worship abroad.





Since the time the Portuguese first settled there, Macao has developed a visible dual culture which continues even now, and this cultural accommodation is seen in the city's history, administrative structures, as well as in physical features like architecture, gardens and public spaces. The legacy of this culture is evident in both tangible and intangible forms, some to be seen in the blending of architectural styles of many of



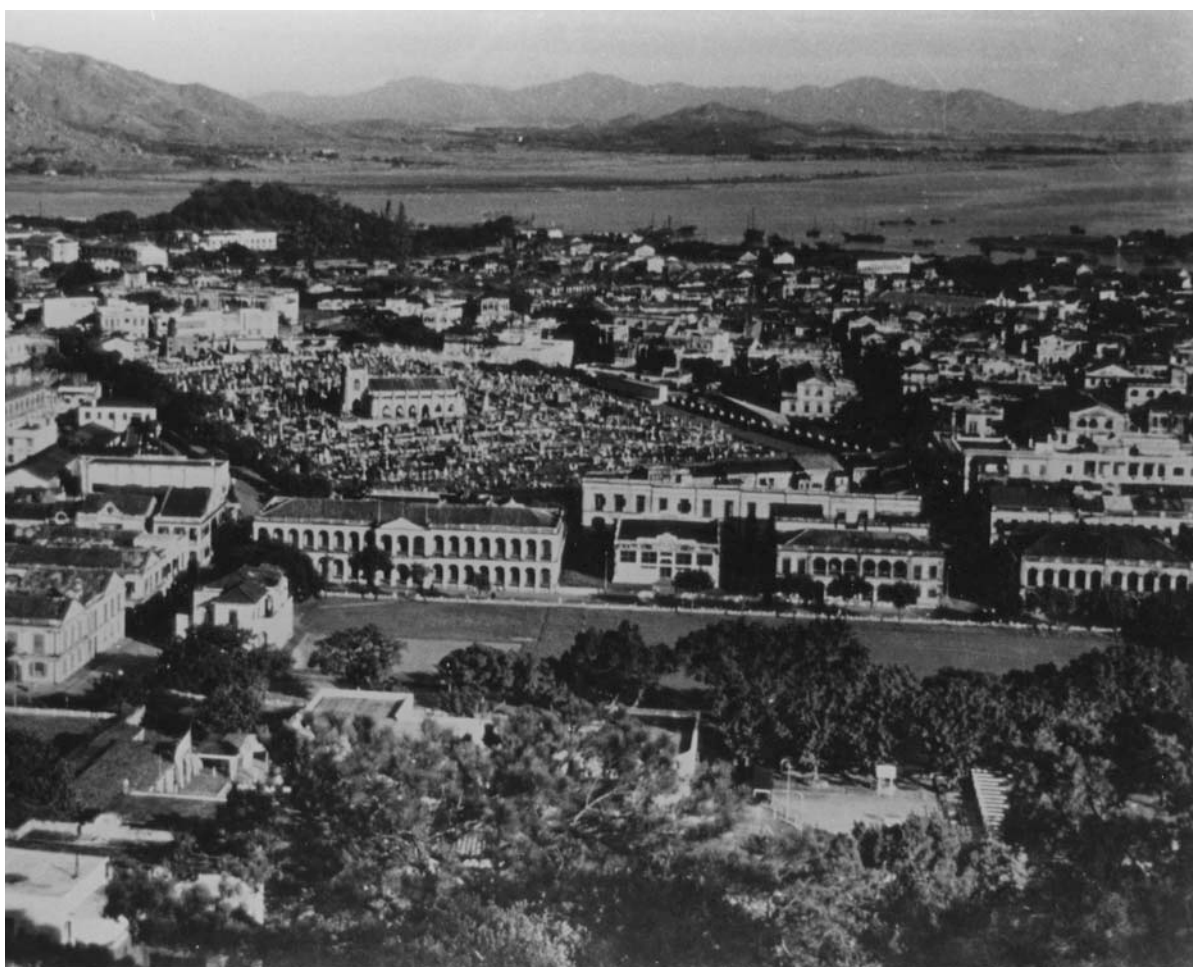


the monuments, in religious tolerance, or in the cuisine unique to this city, itself a fusion of culinary traditions, reflective of different historical and geographical influences. Of utmost importance, however, is the intangible legacy of Macao and this is understood not only as something inherent in the city itself but also in the long exchange between China and the rest of the world, and thus amounts to a wider cultural legacy with outstanding universal value.



## **Basis for Inscription**

**"The Historic Centre of Macao" includes the oldest western architectural heritage on Chinese soil today. Together with Macao's traditional Chinese architecture, it stands witness to the successful coexistence of East-West cultural pluralism and to East-West architectural traditions.**



"The Historic Centre of Macao" illustrates a complete picture of a lasting western settlement on Chinese territory. The broad variety and consolidation of heritage on the peninsula gives a comprehensive view of the historic port city. The group of buildings and original streetscapes defined in the nomination clearly depict the multicultural dimension of Macao's historic roots, where the primary urban fabric illustrates a unique

fusion of western and Chinese spatial organizational concepts, architectural styles, aesthetic ideals, artistic workmanship and technological interchange.

Typical urban concepts were incorporated in Macao from earlier Portuguese settlements belonging to the old Estado da India (Goa and Malacca), and are clearly visible in the urban fabric of protected zones, especially with reference to the notion of the "*Rua Direita*"

("straight street") linking the harbour to the old citadel. Macao's cityscape and architectural legacy reflects the character of the old Portuguese-Chinese trade port, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Overall, the spontaneous, organic nature of the Portuguese urban fabric is intertwined with traditional Chinese spatial organizational concepts, including principles of *feng-shui* and Chinese urban concepts based on traditional hierarchical scales.







"The Historic Centre of Macao" includes the first examples of mannerist and baroque architecture in China - St. Joseph's Seminary Church and St. Paul's façade for example, which are mentioned in UNESCO's *Atlas mundial de la arquitectura barroca*. Expressions of neo-classicism can be traced in the architecture of monuments such as the Sir Robert Ho Tung Library, Dom Pedro V Theatre, "Leal Senado" Building and the Holy House of Mercy. The mix of western canonic architectural traditions was further enriched by an outstanding fusion of eastern regional cultures, presenting an overall vernacular



architecture that is specific to Macao. Examples include the integration of thematic sculptural motifs by artisans from Japan, the Philippines and China on the predominantly mannerist façade of the Ruins of St. Paul's, Chinese representations of biblical themes in frescoes at Guia Chapel and the Mughal influence on the neo-classical architecture of the Moorish Barracks illustrated in the incorporation of the pointed arches. Apart from products of mixed eastern and western architectural traditions, exemplary models of regional Chinese architecture are also present: A-Ma Temple is typical of traditional temples in the South China region; the Mandarin House is a prototype mansion of the late Qing period whilst Lou Kau Mansion exemplifies the characteristics of *xiguan* domestic architecture.



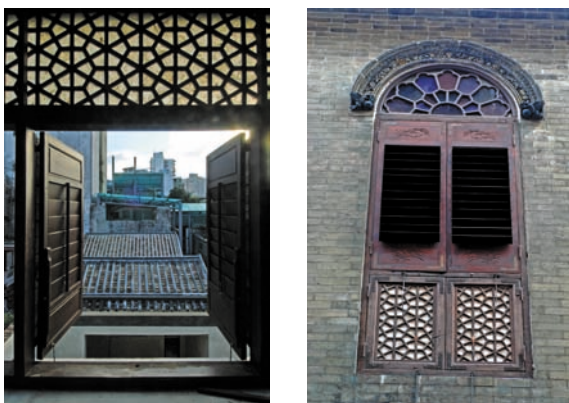


In the historic genre of the most enduring western settlement in the Far East, Macao possesses many "firsts" in China, in terms of European architecture and facilities. The churches of St. Lawrence, St. Augustine and St. Dominic are among the earliest Catholic structures still in service today; St. Joseph's Seminary and Church is one of the oldest missionary training compounds in China and the oldest to remain in operation to this day; the old façade of the Ruins of St. Paul's outdates other church ruins in China; western-style fortresses here also stand amongst the earliest to be constructed on Chinese territory. Moreover, Macao also has the first Protestant cemetery to be opened on Chinese soil. The first western-style theatre (Dom Pedro V Theatre) and the first western-style lighthouse (Guia Lighthouse) in China, are both still in operation today.

At the same time, Macao also keeps alive the memory of building traditions that have now largely disappeared:

- technologies that were created for specific purposes that have now been replaced by modern developments, such as the production of the local material called *chunambo* (a mixture of compacted soil, sand, straw, rice and oyster shell powder), of which the old military structures of Macao were constructed;
- craft elements born out of Macao's multicultural environment include curved mirror glass incrustations in window and door decorative arches, as seen in the Lou Kau Mansion and Mandarin's House;
- the application of thin sheets of mother-of-pearl in windows in traditional Chinese





residences, a technique originally derived from India;

- techniques such as installing perforated wooden ceilings in churches, as well as in traditional Chinese residences, to cope with the adverse effects of the local climate, similar to techniques found in Latin America;
- construction techniques, such as those described in old Jesuit works, structural detailing and decoration of the interior of the old Church of Mater Dei, for example, the transfer of Chinese technology to build churches, with massive wooden pillars placed on top of granite foundations, a technique that is also found in old temples in Macao;
- the use of Chinese grey bricks and other local materials, in the context of

traditional workmanship practices specifically related to Macao, are displayed in the various monuments that compose the urban route presented in both Chinese and western designed buildings;

- the use of glazed ceramics in Macao is an adaptation to the local tropical climate, and this technique was perfected by local Chinese artisans to produce construction materials that could withstand the adverse effects of the seasons and coastal weather;
- the use of dark-red glazed roof tiles is found in churches and similar techniques are applied to the polychromatic decorations of local Chinese temples as well. It is important to note that the art of glazed ceramics and the production



of glazed tiles found its way to Portugal through Macao;

- the famous Portuguese blue-and-white ceramics are actually rooted in traditional Chinese colour pigments, craftsmanship procedures and expert formulas, which later inspired distinct designs and decorative patterns, while using the same basic production guidelines learned from China, through Macao.

“The Historic Centre of Macao” comprises a broad diversity of building types constructed during an important timeframe in the history of mankind, namely the first lasting encounter between eastern and western civilizations. The architecture presented embodies a clear interchange of cultural values reflected in the introduction of foreign building styles and also in the architectural detailing of such buildings.

The symbiosis of cultural exchange permeates the society, with influences not only on architecture but also on the urban development of the city, whose aesthetics are still visible in streetscapes today. As such, “The Historic Centre of Macao” meets Criterion **ii** for the inclusion of cultural properties on the World Heritage List.





**"The Historic Centre of Macao" is solid testimony of the city's missionary role in the Far East while also reflecting the dissemination of Chinese folk beliefs to the western world.**

Portugal possessed the Royal Patronage for missionary work in the Far East, and so European missionaries heading to China were restricted to getting there via Lisbon and Macao. When Pope Gregory XIII made Macao a diocese with ecclesiastic jurisdiction over Japan, China and Annam (old Vietnam), the conditions were laid for evangelical efforts to flourish. From that point on, Macao became the prime platform for missionary work in China, with different religious denominations such as the Jesuits, the Augustinians, the Dominicans and the Franciscans setting up

bases and schools in Macao. The ruins of St. Paul's College on the slopes of Mount Hill adjacent to the old church façade are reminiscent of the efforts of the early missionaries; the grandeur of St. Joseph's Seminary and Church reflect the glorious achievements of the Jesuits in Macao. Many of the churches started by these early missionaries are still open for public worship today. These include the churches of St. Lawrence, St. Joseph, St. Augustine, St. Dominic and St. Anthony.

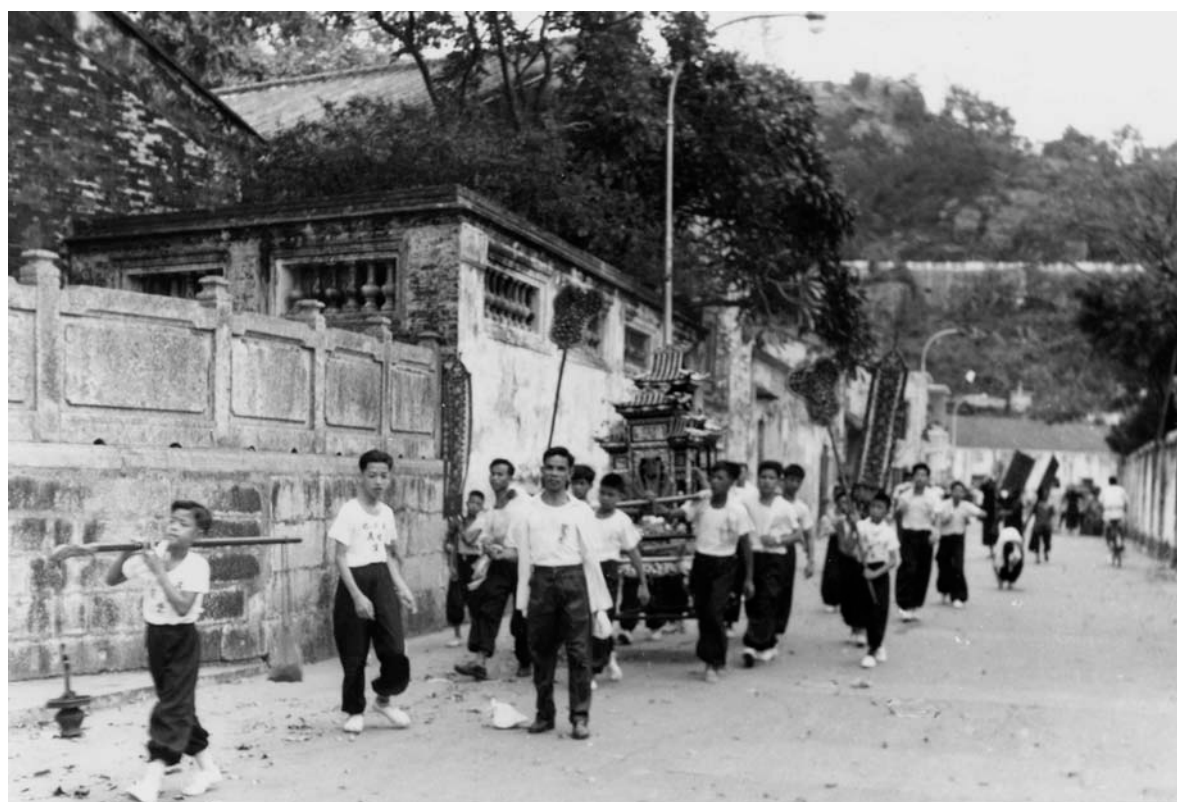
Protestant missionaries came to China in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Pioneer Robert Morrison used Macao as the base for his evangelical work and committed his entire life to sharing his faith with the Chinese. His body was buried in the Protestant Cemetery, included in the nomination. Choi-Kou, a



disciple of Robert Morrison was the first Chinese convert. A school named in his honour lies within the buffer zone and is still in operation today.

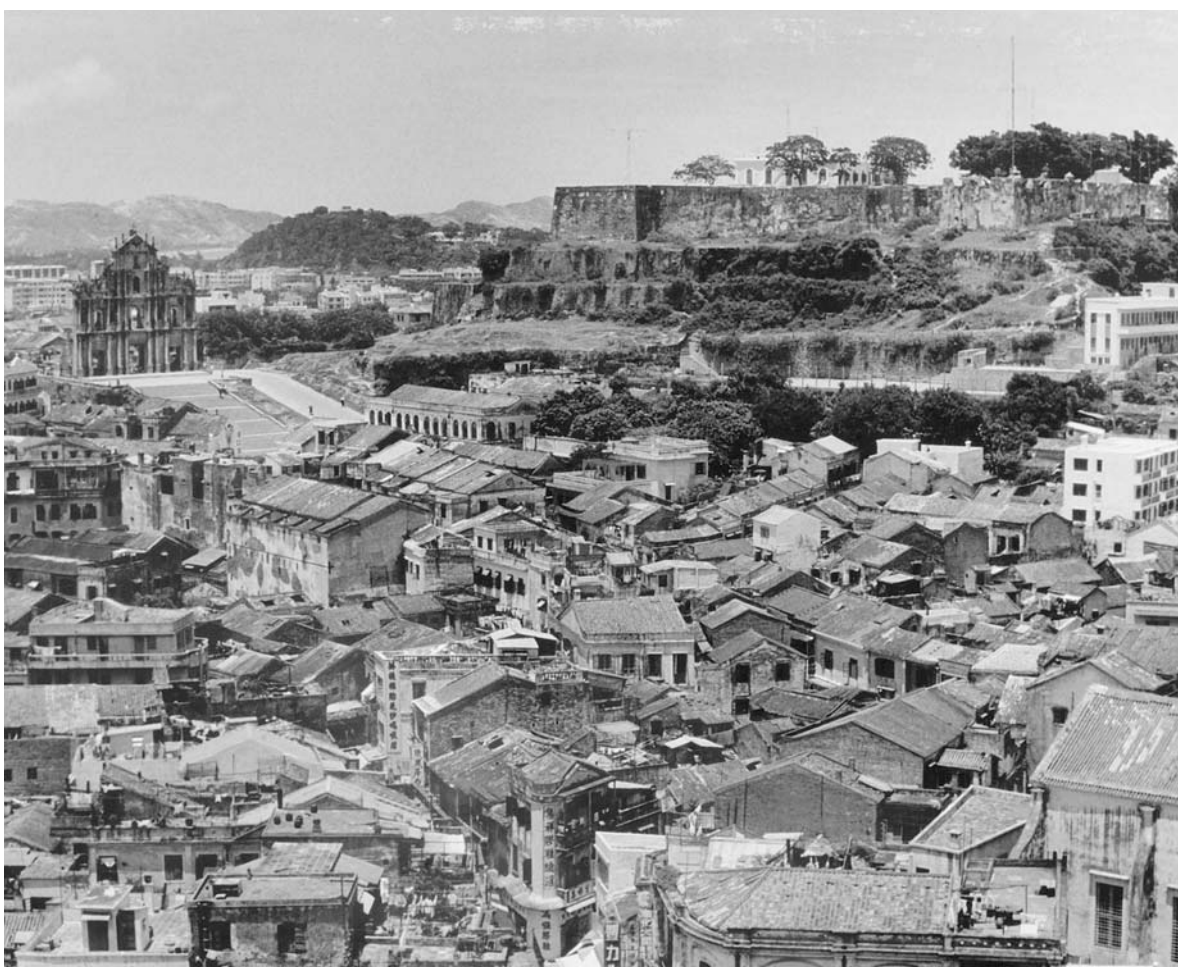
Local worship of the goddess A-Ma has survived for centuries from the city's very beginnings until the present. Despite the strong influence of western religious beliefs, prevalent in Macao during its years as a European settlement, A-Ma culture has not only survived but also remained popular among locals even today.

With living examples of religious traditions dating back to the city's origins and development, "The Historic Centre of Macao" meets Criterion **iii** for the inclusion of cultural properties on the World Heritage List.



**"The Historic Centre of Macao" is the product of East-West cultural exchange, constituting the most unique blend of cultural heritage existing in China's historic cities.**

The physical appearance of the historic centre is a highly visual representation of this dynamic coexistence, with traditionally Chinese precincts and architectural styles set alongside and often merged into zones of a clearly southern European influence. The sequencing of squares throughout the city centre is a spontaneous result of the closely-knit urban experience of two distinct communities developing side-by-side. The



architecture of certain buildings also reflects the blending of cultures, with the crossing-over of motifs, techniques and styles between East and West.

The urban structure and architectural styles in Macao reflect this cultural coexistence, marking the permanence or passage of different peoples and interests through the peninsula. The location of substantial Chinese residences such as Lou Kau Mansion set in such close proximity to the Cathedral, or the Mandarin's House sitting on Lilau Square, indicates an awareness of the "other" that extends to acceptance. Other examples include Senado Square which has remained the city's main public square for both Chinese locals and western settlers. Surrounding the square lies a mixture of building typologies of different cultural origins, such as the Sam Kai Vui Kun (Kuan Tai Temple), which represented the views of the Chinese business community in much the same way as a "Chamber of Commerce", the



Holy House of Mercy run by a charitable organization from Portugal and St. Dominic's Church located at the heart of the old Chinese Bazaar district. Behind the grand façade of the Ruins of St. Paul's lies the miniature Na Tcha Temple, again reflecting the harmonious coexistence of different religious and cultural groups.

On a macro level, the mix of religious orders from the western world again reveals the harmonious coexistence of different denominations, including both Catholics and Protestants. Similarly, worship at A-Ma temple encompasses different streams of Chinese religious beliefs such as Taoism, Buddhism and local folklore.

The mutual respect and embodiment of such immense diversities of culture in Macao is exemplified intensively within "The Historic Centre of Macao" presented for inclusion on the World Heritage List, and has therefore met Criterion **iv** of the assessment.



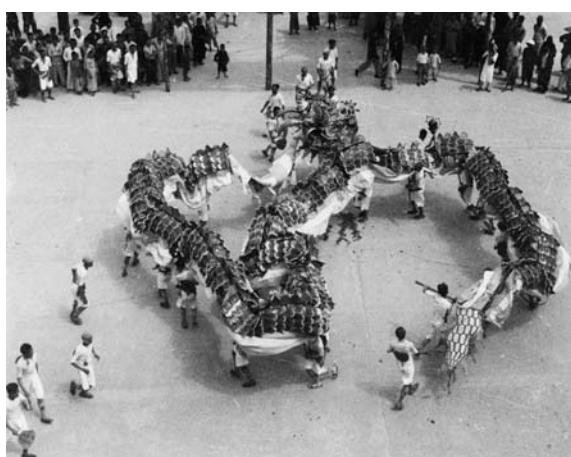
**"The Historic Centre of Macao" presents a complete social infrastructure that has encompassed and sustained the living traditions of different cultures.**

Compared with many other cultural properties across the world, "The Historic Centre of Macao" is small in scale, yet within these boundaries it embodies different cultures, religions and living traditions. The multi-cultural identity of the city is apparent, with the spirit of East-West pluralism particularly visible in the heritage presented.

The succession of piazzas in this historic centre is closely knit, following the urban evolution of the city. Relating to the maritime discovery of Macao, the route through the historic city centre commences at A-Ma Bay



on the southern tip of the peninsula where Barra Square is located. It passes through the first western residential settlement (Lilau Square), the urban compound for social gatherings (St. Augustine's Square), the commercial, religious and political hub (Senado Square and St. Dominic's Square) and ends at the Company of Jesus Square and Camões Square. Such cohesive preservation of the original urban fabric is highly unusual among similar historic trade ports cities in Asia, many of which have already lost their heritage to modern constructions.





Most significantly, "The Historic Centre of Macao" still plays an intrinsic role in the everyday life of the residents who are still actively involved in their cultural practices. The cultural activities attached to the architecture and urban spaces give the nomination additional value: intangible qualities have remained inherent to the tangible heritage of the city. Annual festivals of different religious groups attract thousands of worshippers to the temples and churches; rituals include street processions commemorating the Passion of Christ, Our Lady of Fátima and the Chinese deity Na Tcha.

"The Historic Centre of Macao" is tangibly associated with living traditions, beliefs and literary works of outstanding universal significance, hence meets Criterion **vi** for the inclusion of cultural properties on the World Heritage List.

