

United Nations Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization

Date received : 13.6.1978
Identification n° 35
Original : English

Convention concerning the Protection of the
World Cultural and Natural Heritage

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

Nomination submitted by Ghana

Asante Traditional Buildings/Houses

1. Specify Location

a) Country

Ghana

b) State, Province
or Region

Ashanti Region

c) Name of Property

Asante Traditional Buildings/houses

d) Exact location on map
and indication of
geographical co-ordi-
nates

Between latitude 6°30'N to 7°30'N
Between longitude 3°30'W to 0°

2. Juridical data

a) Owner

The State (Ghana Government)

b) Legal Status

These traditional buildings were acquired by the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board and scheduled as National Monument between 1960 and 1970. The Board therefore has acquired the rights to preserve and maintain these buildings. The buildings which houses the shrine is accessible to the general public. It is illegal for any person to interfere, tamper or alter the structure of any of the buildings without the written consent and authority of the Board.

c) Responsible
administration

Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, Barnes Road
P.O. Box 3343
Accra - Ghana

3. Identification

a) Description and
inventory

Cultural Heritage

Groups of Asante Traditional Buildings which because of their unique architecture are of outstanding value from the point of view of Art and Science. These buildings are at Abirim, Abetifi, Adwenease, Akokoanbong, Asawasi, Asenemanso, Bodwease, Besease, Darkwa-Gyakye, Kentekrono, Patakro, Saamang and Obomeng. In the early history of the people of the Asante written by Rattray, mention is made of these traditional buildings their structure and use and of the traditional designs found on the walls. These patterns are similar to those stamped on "Adinkra" cloth, almost all of which symbolize proverbial sayings. These buildings are being used as shrine houses and Mausoleums.

The plans are in a form of a rectangular open court yard enclosed by four covered rectangular spaces each with a specific function. Two of these spaces are elevated above the ground level of the courtyard, and they function as platform for singers and drummers of the shrine. One of the two platforms which is the courtyard level is a kitchen, and the other is the shrine room.

Identification (cont'd)

These houses we built in "Pise-de-ferre" with all the surface rendered water proof. The rooms are pitched with thatch covering. The original construction method is wattle and daub construction.

b) Maps and/or plans

c) Photographic and/or cinematographic documentation

d) History

Though the exact date cannot be established some of these houses have stood for about 150 years. Built to traditional plans and constructed with local materials in the early part of 19th century, these buildings were used as houses, local chief's palaces, and fetish houses. At the moment they are being used mainly as fetish houses.

e) Bibliography

- Ashanti fetish houses by Swithenbank M. Ghana Universities Press 1969
 - Folk Museum Koforidua by G.J. Nach Dometay (Thesis presented to Faculty of Architecture, 1974)
 - R.S. Rattray, Ashanti, London, 1923
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4. State of presentation/conservation
a) Diagnosis

The present conditions are only fairly satisfactory.

b) Agent responsible for preservation/conservation

Monuments Division
Museums and Monuments Board
P.O. Box 3343
Accra

c) History of preservation/conservation

Restoration works started in 1960 and is still been contained. They are being constantly maintained by the Monuments Division of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board from Government's subvention.

An extensive research into the building materials - thatch, wood and mud construction - for permanent preservation is required. At the moment constant maintenance is required.

d) Means for preservation/conservation

The above monuments have been established as "National Monuments" under the Law of Ghana (NLC Decree 387 of 1969). At the moment the technical advice and management is being provided by Monuments Division of Ghana Museums and Monuments Board.

The only financial resource which is limited is provided by Ghana Government through Government subvention.

e) Management plans

5. Justification for inclusion in the World Heritage List
a) Cultural Property

These group of buildings represent a unique artistic and aesthetic achievement. The decorative motifs executed on the walls show adaptations of traditional "Adinkra" symbols which are not only unique but very rare in the world. The building are a characteristic exemple of a type of traditional architecture which is not only unique and has become vulnerable under the impact of socio-economic developments but also associated with the ideas and believes of the people of Ashanti.

Signed on behalf of State Party _____

Full name : Kwasi Addai MYLES

Title : Assistant Director, Ghana Museums and Monuments Board

Date : 25 May 1978