The Historic Center of Macao

The "Historic Center of Macao" represents a group of 22 buildings and 8 squares in the old districts of Macao linked together by adjacent squares and streets. This architectural ensemble illustrates characteristics typical of coastal cities and traditional settlements of Chinese and Portuguese origin.

Buildings

1. *Templo de A-Má (Templo da Barra)*
2. *Largo do Pagode da Barra*
3. *Edifício da Direcção dos Serviços de Assuntos Marítimos e de Água (Antigo Quartel dos Mouros)*
4. *Largo e Beco do Lilau*
5. *Casa do Mandarim*
6. *Igreja de S. Lourenço e adro*
7. *Igreja do Seminário de S. José, adro e escadaria*
8. *Largo de St.º Agostinho*
9. *Edifício do Teatro D. Pedro V*
10. *Edifício da Biblioteca Sir Robert Ho Tung*
11. *Igreja de St.º Agostinho*
12. *Edifício Sede do Instituto para os Assuntos Municipais (Edifício do Antigo Leal Senado)*
13. *Largo do Senado*
14. *Sam Kai Vui Kun (Templo de Kuan Tai)*
15. *Edifício Sede da Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Macau*
16. *Igreja da Sé Catedral*
17. *Largo da Sé*
18. *Casa de Lou Kau*
19. *Igreja de S. Domingos*
20. *Largo de S. Domingos*
21. *Largo da Companhia de Jesus*
22. *Ruínas do Colégio de S. Paulo (antiga Igreja da Madre de Deus, adro e escadaria)*

Squares

I. *Templo de Na Tcha (junto às Ruínas do Colégio de S. Paulo)*
II. *Antigas Muralhas da Cidade (Troço na Calçada de S. Francisco Xavier)*
III. *Fortaleza de N.ª Sr.ª do Monte*
IV. *Igreja de St.º António e adro*
V. *Praça de Luís de Camões*
VI. *Edifício Sede da Fundação Oriente (Antiga Casa do Jardim da Gruta de Camões)*
VII. *Cemitério Protestante*
VIII. *Fortaleza de N.ª Sr.ª da Guia, Capela de N.ª Sr.ª das Neves e Farol*

Mong Há Hill Park
Montanha Russa Garden
Avenida do Almirante Lacerda
Avenida do General Mesquita
Avenida da Baía da Praia Grande
Avenida do Dr. Sun Yat Sen
Avenida da Amizade
Avenida do Dr. Rodrigo Rodrigues
Avenida da Praia Grande
Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida
Avenida de Sidónio Pais
Avenida Marginal Flor de Lótus
Avenida Lou Lim Ioc
Avenida do Lamas
Avenida do Coronel Mesquita
Avenida do Infante D. Henrique
Avenida Horta e Costa
Avenida Rotunda de Carlos Eugénio
Avenida Sidónio Pais
Avenida do Dr. Lin Yue Hong
Avenida Doutor Mário Soares
Avenida Pereira do Lago Sai Van
Avenida do Dr. Mário Soares
Avenida Dr. Sun Yat Sen
Avenida Lou Lim Ioc
Avenida Marginal Sérgio
Avenida do Lilau
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Outstanding Universal Value of the Historic Center of Macao

The protection and management of cultural heritage should be based on the cultural value of each element of that heritage, particularly in respect to the 'Outstanding Universal Value' that might be represented, as defined by the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO. The Outstanding Universal Value of the Historic Center of Macao was described in summary as follows:

Macao, a prosperous port of strategic importance in the development of international trade, became a Portuguese settlement in the mid-16th century, and returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1999.

The Historic Center of Macao consists of a group of buildings, public spaces and streets, which correspond to the main structure of the old port city. With its historic streets, residential, religious and public buildings, of both Portuguese and Chinese backgrounds, the Historic Center of Macao provides a unique testimony to the meeting of different aesthetic, cultural, religious, architectural and technological influences from East and West. It bears witness to the first and most enduring encounter between China and the West, based on the vibrancy of old international trade routes.

As a gateway between China and the West, Macao played a strategic role in the first stages of world trade. People of various nationalities settled in Macao, as a result of the city becoming a principal centre in a vast maritime trading network, bringing with them different cultural thoughts, professional skills, and traditions. Catholic missionaries from various congregations also came to Macao, in view of the value of the city as a gateway to access China, bringing with them western arts, humanities and scientific achievements alongside their missionary work. They were pioneers in many first-of-their-kind projects in China, including China's first western-style theater, the first western-model university, the first hospital, churches and fortresses, with many of these structures still maintaining their original functions.

Macao's unique multicultural identity can be perceived in the history of the peaceful coexistence between the Chinese and Western communities, as well as in the harmonious urban environments of the city and the various contrasting architectural styles that can be found here. The fusion of different cultures also exists in individual building designs, such as the incorporation of Chinese characters as decorative elements on the baroque-mannerist church façade of the Ruins of St. Paul's. On the other hand, it's also possible to recognize typical European port city characteristics in the structure of the urban fabric corresponding to the oldest district, including public squares, narrow meandering streets, mixed within a compact urban fabric. At the same time, the urban structure also absorbed some characteristics from other Portuguese settlements, including for example the urban concept of "Rua Direita" (straight street) that links the port area to the heart of the old city.

Visual connections between heritage properties and the seascape are attributes that also reflect Macao's origins as a strategic trade port city; the centuries-old Inner Harbor, which is still functioning today adds to that testimony. The cultural exchanges that lasted throughout the centuries brought influences from foreign cultures that not only were imprinted on the immovable cultural heritage, but also permeated the lifestyles of local people, influencing religious customs, education, medicinal practices, the establishment of charitable institutions, language, gastronomy, etc. As such, the core value of the Historic Center of Macao includes its urban and architectural structures, as well as the traditions that are part of people's daily lives, altogether shaped by centuries of cultural exchange.

The "Historic Center of Macao" presents a group of 22 buildings and 8 squares located in the old districts of Macao, including its connecting public spaces and streets. This architectural ensemble illustrates characteristics that are typical of coastal cities and traditional mercantile settlements of Chinese and Portuguese origin.

澳門 世界遺產
MACAO
WORLD HERITAGE

A-Ma Temple (Barra Temple)

Built before 1605, the A-Ma Temple (Barra Temple) is the oldest temple in Macao, as well as the oldest and best-preserved original structure among Macao's cultural relics. The complex consists of the Prayer Hall, the Zhengjiao Chanlin Buddhist pavilion, the Hall of Benevolence and the Hall of Guanyin. The name of this temple is intimately associated with the origins of the name of the city, having been the first place where the Portuguese sailors arrived, around 1553-1557. The original designation "Amagao", which means "Bay of A-Ma", later transformed into the name of the city "Macao".

Barra Square

Barra Square is the public space located in front of A-Ma Temple, characterized for its charm and functioning as an introduction space to the temple. Originally the area of Barra Square was in direct contact with the riverfront. Later, the area integrated a new road, Rua de S. Tiago da Barra, which runs through the square. This road was previously open to traffic, but is now exclusively dedicated for pedestrian use only.

Building of the Marine and Water Bureau (Old Moorish Barracks)

Built in 1874, it was designed by Barão do Cercal and was formerly known as the "Moorish barracks", originally serving to accommodate a regiment from India. It was later used as the headquarters of the Maritime Police and the Macao Port Authority. At present, the building houses the Marine and Water Bureau.

Largo and Beco do Lilau

Lilau spring was one of Macao's natural water sources and this area corresponds to one of the earliest Portuguese residential districts in Macao. There is a popular Portuguese saying associated with this area that says: "One who drinks water from Lilau, never again forgets Macao: either gets married in Macao, or returns to Macao".

Mandarin's House

Built before 1869, this traditional residence was the home of the prominent modern Chinese thinker Zheng Guanying. Following a traditional Chinese style, the Mandarin's House also presents some fusion of Chinese and Western features. Chinese construction techniques can be found especially in the structure of the roofs, beams, in the various forms of windows in the main courtyard and in the design of Tanglong sliding-doors, while western influences are recognized in some of the ceilings, frames of doors and window, cornices and exterior decorative plasters. In 2018, the Mandarin's House was designated as a "World Heritage Youth Education Base", by the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (Suzhou).

St. Lawrence's Church and forecourt

Established in the mid-16th century, St. Lawrence's Church is one of the three oldest churches in Macao. The present building is the result of construction works executed in 1846. This church is known among the local Chinese community as "Fong Son Tong", which means "Hall of Soothing Winds". The church is located in an area that was once considered as a high-end residential district, which is reflected by the architectural beauty of the church, with baroque elements on a neoclassic structure.

St. Joseph's Seminary and Church, forecourt and staircase

St. Joseph's Seminary was established by the Jesuits, in 1728. For more than 200 years, the seminary sustained the academic preparation of a large number of missionaries that went on missions in China and Southeast Asia. Adjacent to the seminary, St. Joseph's Church was built in 1758 and presents a predominant Baroque architectural style. The church is popularly known among the local community as "Small St. Paul".

St. Augustine's Square

St. Augustine's Square is a quaint public area that presents an environment of tranquillity and elegance, where various cultural and religious buildings are located, including St. Augustine's Church, Dom Pedro V Theater, St. Joseph's Seminary and Church and Sir Robert Ho Tung Library. The wave-pattern of the cobble-stone pavement also adds a strong European character to the site.

Dom Pedro V Theater

The construction of Dom Pedro V Theater was initiated in 1860, and the neoclassical elements of the frontispiece were later added in 1873. This building was the first western-style theater built in China, becoming a popular place for plays and music performances, as well as the organization of celebrations by the Portuguese and Macanese communities.

Sir Robert Ho Tung Library

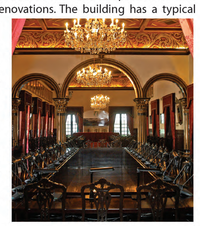
The building was originally constructed before 1894 to serve as the residence of D. Carolina Cunha. Later, a Hong Kong businessman, Sir Robert Ho Tung, purchased the property in 1918, using it as his retreat in Macao. According to his will, after his death the building was donated to the Macao Government for conversion into a public library, which was opened to the public in 1958.

St. Augustine's Church

St. Augustine's Church was originally built by Spanish Augustinian priests, in 1591. The original structure was made of wood and is thought to have been covered in palm leaves. When the wind blew, the palm leaves resembled a dragon's beards, reason why the church became known as "Dragon Beard Temple" among the local Chinese community.

Headquarters of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (Old Leal Senado Building)

The old Leal Senado Building was first built in 1784 and adopted its current appearance in 1876, after various renovations. The building has a typical southern Europe architectural style and maintains the essence of its original functions, serving nowadays as the headquarters of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM). There is an elaborate old library located on the first floor, which was put into use in 1929. Its design was inspired in the library of Mafra Convent, in Portugal, presenting sophisticated woodwork carvings. The collection of books in this library includes rare editions dating from the 17th century to the 1950s.



Senado Square

Senado Square remains the center of the city since its origins. The buildings facing the square date back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the 1990s, the square was re-designed and paved with black-and-white cobblestone in a wavy pattern. This type of pavement complements well the colorful surrounding historical buildings, giving the ensemble a typical southern European atmosphere.

Sam Kai Vui Kun (Kuan Tai Temple)

Built in the 18th century, this temple is located in the old Chinese Bazaar area. The main altar of the temple is inscribed with the Chinese characters "Weng Neng Se" , as well as a couplet that reads: "To live in a land of happiness and enjoy years of peace" . The temple receives a large number of devotees that go to the site to worship Kuan Tai and the god of Fortune.

Holy House of Mercy

The Holy House of Mercy was founded in 1569 by the first Bishop of Macao, Belchior Carneiro, being responsible for charitable and social welfare services to the local community. This institution founded in Macao China's first western-style hospital, S. Rafael Hospital, also establishing nurseries, a leprosy center, an elderly home, orphanages and other community centers. The building of the Holy House of Mercy was rebuilt in the mid-18th century, and the current structure with its neoclassical style dates back to 1905.

Cathedral

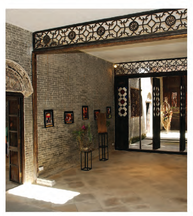
The Cathedral was built around 1622. Its main altar is large and has a sober design, while the interior space is dominated by stained glass windows. Under the altar are buried the remains of former bishops and disciples dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries. The present appearance of the Cathedral is the result of reconstruction works that took place in 1937.

Cathedral Square

Cathedral Square serves as an introduction space to the nearby Cathedral church. The square is dominated by a cross that was reconstructed based on historical records of the area. The headquarters of the Diocese of Macau is also located here. The square presents a characteristic Portuguese-style cobblestone pavement that enhances the religious and cultural atmosphere of this public space.

Lou Kau Mansion

Located at no. 7 of Travessa da Sé, the Lou Kau Mansion was one of the residences of Lou Kau, a prominent Macao merchant. Based on an inscription that can be found in one of the paintings inside the mansion, the house was built around 1889. his traditional two-story Chinese style mansion was constructed mainly of Chinese grey bricks, being an exquisite architectural example of the style of residences dating from the late Qing dynasty in southern Guangdong province.



St. Dominic's Church

Established in 1587 by three Spanish Dominican priests who came from Acapulco in Mexico. Initially constructed of wooden planks, this church became known among the local Chinese community as "Temple of Wooden Planks" . This church is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. The church presents an elegant neoclassic style, with decorative elements and the main altar inspired in baroque style.

St. Dominic's Square

This public space adopted the name of the nearby St. Dominic's Church. The configuration of this area is the result of the alignment of the surrounding buildings and streets. The public area in front of the church connects directly to Senado Square, forming a consistent and characteristic urban environment that is, still today, one of the most recognizable urban landmarks of the city center.

Company of Jesus Square

Company of Jesus Square is located at the bottom of the staircase of the Ruins of St. Paul's, adjacent to Travessa de S. Paulo, and fronted by residential buildings that also have some commerce. The square is paved with small granite blocks that accompany the natural inclination of the terrain. The name of this square records the important role that the Society of Jesus had in Macao.

Ruins of St. Paul's College (Old Church of Mater Dei, forecourt and staircase)

The designation of Ruins of St. Paul's corresponds to the archaeological remains of the old Church of Mater Dei and the old St. Paul's College. The college was founded in 1594 and functioned as the first western-style institution of higher education in the Far East. In 1835, the Jesuit complex was destroyed by a fire, with only the main façade of the church left standing.

Na Tcha Temple (Near the Ruins of St. Paul's)

Na Tcha Temple is located on the left side of the Ruins of St. Paul's, next to a segment of the city's old defence walls. It was built in 1888 and rebuilt in 1901. This temple is an important symbol of the endurance of Macao's Chinese beliefs and traditions, as well as an important landmark representing Macao's religious freedom throughout the centuries, noting that this temple is located right next to the remains of the old Church of Mater Dei and the old St. Paul's College. Every year, there is a procession dedicated to Na Tcha departing from this temple, which constitutes an important item of the intangible cultural heritage of the city.

Old City Walls (Section on Calçada de S. Francisco Xavier)

Defensive city walls built by the Portuguese in Macao can be traced back to 1569. A study of old Macao maps indicates that there were defensive walls in the north, east and south of the city, while the area of the Inner Harbor was mostly protected by fortresses. At the time, Macao had a strong military resources to protect it from possible invasion by other foreign nations. This segment of the Old City Walls that can be found in the area of Calçada de S. Francisco Xavier is part of the city's defensive structure from that time.

Mount Fortress

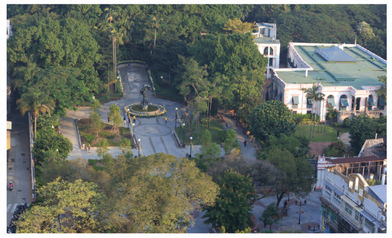
The construction of the Mount Fortress began in 1617 and was completed in 1626. The fortress occupies an area of around 8,000 square meters and has a trapezoid shape, being located at the core of Macao's old military defense system. The range of this fortress enabled it to protect both the eastern and western coastal areas.

St. Anthony's Church and Forecourt

Built between 1558 and 1560, this is one of the three oldest churches in Macao. Like most early churches in Macao, many perished in fires, and St. Anthony's Church also had to be reconstructed throughout its history because of such incidents. The church that we see today is the result of the reconstruction works that took place in 1930. In the past, this church was particularly popular for the celebration of marriage ceremonies, reason why it is also known among the local Chinese community as "Church of Flowers".

Camões Square

The public space in front of Camões Garden is designated as Camões Square. It is said that Camões completed his masterpiece "Os Lusíadas" here, reason why it was consecrated a memorial grotto in his honor inside the garden that bears his name. This square is located at the crossroads of Calçada do Botelho, Rua de Santo António and Rua de Coelho do Amaral.

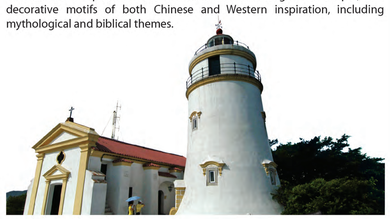


Headquarters of the Orient Foundation (Old Garden House of Camões Garden)

The Casa Garden was originally built in 1770 to serve as the residence of a rich Portuguese merchant, Manuel Perreira. This old luxurious house has a garden with a special layout. The building served as the headquarters of a local delegation of the British East India Company. More recently, in the 1960s, the building housed the collection of the so-called Camões Museum. Nowadays, it serves as the headquarters of the Macao delegation of the Orient Foundation.

Protestant Cemetery

From 1821 onwards, this site served as a burial ground for the local delegation of the British East India Company. The site includes tombs of many famous people, including Robert Morrison, George Chinnery and Anders Ljungstedt. Inside the cemetery, it's possible to find the Morrison Chapel, where the wife of Robert Morrison is buried.

Guia Fortress, Guia Chapel and Guia Lighthouse

Guia Fortress already existed in 1622, and was reconstructed around 1637-1638. This ensemble stands at the top of Guia Hill, which corresponds to the highest point of the Macau Peninsula. The fortress, as well as the lighthouse and the chapel that can be found here, serving as good examples, respectively, about Macao's military, maritime and missionary past. The Guia Lighthouse was inaugurated on the 21st September 1865, being the oldest lighthouse constructed in South China coast. The official geographic coordinates of Macao are measured from a point that is marked with a cross on the pavement, inside the Guia Fortress. In 1996, fresco paintings were found under the plaster of the interior walls and ceiling of the Chapel, with decorative motifs of both Chinese and Western inspiration, including mythological and biblical themes.