



Dar es Salaam Historic Center

Tanzania

Situated within a large, protected harbor, Dar es Salaam sits on flat land along the northern bank of an estuary. Sultan Majid of Zanzibar established the town in 1862, and for the past 150 years its dynamic and vivid history, combined with its privileged location, has created a built environment that reflects the diversity of powers that have occupied the city. Dar was once the traditional home of the Zaramo, the ethnic group most closely tied to the city's development, but its morphology has also been largely shaped by decades of Omani, German, and British colonial administration. The old German street plan, implemented by the German East Africa Company, stills defines the basic urban framework of Dar.

The older city center is still characterized by a thriving street life and attracts artists from all over Africa for its art and music events. Increasingly rapid urban development since the 1990s has hastened the demolition of many of Dar's most significant monuments and historic structures. Through inclusion on the Watch, WMF hopes to raise awareness and facilitate capacity-building for the decision-makers and residents of the city to steward Dar's future. In order to maintain the integrity of the city's central historic area, it will be necessary to create an integrated master plan that focuses on conserving landmark buildings and traditional community spaces. With its rich architectural heritage, the city also has the potential to create a robust tourist industry that could sustain and improve the economic livelihoods of many in the local community.