

Istanbul skyscrapers to be demolished to protect the city's skyline

22 August 2014 |

News: the Turkish government has approved an order to demolish a series of new skyscrapers in the Zeytinburnu area of Istanbul to protect the historic views of key buildings including the Hagia Sofia. Three skyscrapers in the [Onalti Dokuz development](#) in the west of Istanbul will be demolished or partially demolished, after the Turkish government's Council of State rejected appeals against a court ruling demanding their removal from the city's skyline. The



residential towers, designed by Alpar Architecture for developer Astay Gayrimenkul, were designed to form the centrepiece for a 12-hectare development site and vary in height from 36 to 27 storeys.



But the decision to allow their construction proved controversial, with critics and campaigners expressing dismay at the impact of the towers on the city's silhouette, including views of the Hagia Sophia, Topkapi Palace and the Blue Mosque.

The project coincided with the timing of an ultimatum from world heritage body [Unesco](#), who threatened to strip the city of its [World Heritage Site status](#) and add it to its list of endangered sites after repeated warnings about the city's approach to site management and the planning of major new construction projects.

According to Turkish newspaper [Todays Zaman](#), two legal cases were launched against the development – one seeking cancellation of the permits for the construction of the building and another to shut down the construction and destroy parts of the buildings that had already been completed. In December last year, an Istanbul administrative court [ordered the destruction](#) of storeys on the Onalti Dokuz towers that were visible above the city's historic skyline. Both the developer and the Istanbul and Zeytinburnu municipalities appealed against the decision, but the Council of State has now rejected their applications. It is not clear who will have to foot the bill for the demolition.

1. What is the Hagia Sophia? What is its historical significance? (look it up on Wikipedia as a quick reference)

2. Why would the country go to such great lengths to preserve its skyline? Do you believe they made the right decision? Why or why not?

3. Is there any landmark in the US that should have the same level of protection at the Hagia Sophia?