

Kathmandu Valley (Nepal)

No 121 rev

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: Nepal

Name of property: Kathmandu Valley

Location: Kathmandu Valley

Date received by
the World Heritage Centre:

25 May 1979
(original nomination)
30 January 2006
(revision of boundaries)

Included in the Tentative List: Yes

Category of property:

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*. It is a serial nomination consisting of seven ensembles or areas within the territory of the Kathmandu Valley.

Brief description:

At the crossroads of the great civilizations of Asia, seven ensembles, including Hindu and Buddhist monuments, as well as the three residential and palace areas of the royal cities of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, and their surroundings. They illustrate Nepalese art at its height. Among the principal monuments are pilgrimage centres, temples, shrines, bathing sites and gardens – all sites of veneration for both religious groups.

2. ACTIONS

Background:

The property was originally inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979 on the basis of criteria iii, iv and vi. The redefinition of the boundaries has been suggested and discussed during World Heritage Committee meetings as early as in 1992. The current proposal is based on the following Committee decisions:

At its 27th session (Paris, 2003), the World Heritage Committee decided “*to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and simultaneously recommend that the State Party legally redefine the core and support zones of all Monument Zones, accompanied with management mechanisms to adequately conserve the remaining World Heritage value of the property in the long-term. Corrective measures should continue to address the illegal activities in the future core and support zones*” (paragraph 4 of decision 27 COM 7B.52). At the same time, the Committee requested the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in consultation with the State Party to organize a mission to assess the remaining World Heritage value of the property and its state of conservation (paragraph 5 of decision 27 COM 7B.52).

At its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004), the World Heritage Committee requested “*the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2005, a report on the state of conservation of the property including that of the monumental ensembles and the vernacular fabric within the property, together with proposals for redefining the boundaries of the property, for examination by the Committee at its 29th session in 2005*” (paragraph 6 of decision 28 COM 15A.25).

At its 29th session (Durban, 2005), the World Heritage Committee (decision 29 COM 7A.24):

“4. congratulates the State Party for the work achieved on the redefinition of the boundaries, and:

- a) requests the State Party, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to submit new legally redefined core and buffer zones for the seven Monuments Zones, as well as new criteria;
- b) encourages it to request formally, before 1 February 2006, a “minor modification” to the boundaries of the property and a modification of the name of the property according to the procedures established in the *Operational Guidelines* (paragraphs 163, 164 and 167), for examination (paragraphs 163, 164 and 167), for examination by the Committee at its 30th session (Vilnius, 2006);

5. Further encourages the State Party to complete the categorized inventories in the seven Monument Zones and implement swiftly the two-year action plan developed by the High Level Governmental Committee;

6. Requests the State Party, in close consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to:

- a) establish an integrated and comprehensive management plan for the entire property;
- b) develop appropriate and realistic building regulations to control change of the built stock around the main monuments within the World Heritage property; and
- c) identify the monitoring measures necessary to assess the effectiveness of the management plan and legislation, and to indicate the means and resources by which such plan and legislation will be implemented and enforced».

On 30 January 2006 the State Party submitted a request for a minor modification together with supplementary documentation.

Date of the Technical Evaluation Mission:

For modifications to criteria (see paragraph 4a of decision 29 COM 7A.24), the request has to be submitted as if it were a new nomination. However, the State Party has only submitted a request for “minor modification” of the boundaries under the same criteria as those which justified the inscription in 1979.

In the cases of requests to change the name of a property or even for “minor modifications” to the boundaries, there are no technical evaluation missions; the deadlines do not permit time to organise them (*Operational Guidelines* 163-164, 167). ICOMOS based this evaluation on the numerous

existing reports, in particular the report of the ICOMOS-WHC joint mission, 15-19 March 2005, and on the expert mission, 7-11 August 2005, who has advised on the preparation of the management plan at the request of the World Heritage Centre.

Questions addressed in this evaluation:

An assessment of the OUV and of the boundaries was addressed by the 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission. The current evaluation compares and assesses the proposals made during the 2005 mission and the request submitted by the State Party in 2006. Three main questions are addressed:

- The validity of the criteria justifying the Outstanding Universal Value;
- The assessment of the seven ensembles and the new boundaries proposed by the State Party;
- The modification of the name for this serial nomination.

ICOMOS draws to the attention of the World Heritage Committee the fact that the State of Conservation report for this property is presented to the World Heritage Committee under another agenda item.

Dates of request for additional information and of receipt from State Party: Not applicable.

Literature: Master Plan for the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage in the Kathmandu Valley, UNESCO-UNDP, 1977 (E. Sekler, team leader and editor).

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 10 April 2006

3. THE PROPERTY

Description

The Kathmandu Valley is a high valley in the foothills of the Himalayas, covering an area around 25km by 19km. The existing World Heritage property consists of seven ensembles within this valley. The buildings are mostly made of fired brick with mud mortar and timber structures. The roofs are covered with small overlapping terracotta tiles, often decorated with gilded brass. The windows, doorways and roof struts have rich decorative carvings. The Buddhist stupas have simple but powerful forms with massive whitewashed hemispheres supporting gilded cubes with the all-seeing eternal Buddha eyes.

The current proposal consists of “minor” modifications for the definitions of the boundaries. The names of three ensembles are also proposed to be changed as indicated below. The original nomination did not include buffer zones, which are now defined for each ensemble.

The proposed seven ensembles are the following: `

1. *Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square* (former: Kathmandu Darbar Square) is the most extensive of the three royal palace squares in the valley, containing sixty important historic buildings, mainly dating from the 17th to 18th centuries. The principal temple, Taleju Bhawani Temple, was built starting in 1576. Due to strong pressures from urbanization and resulting changes in the urban fabric, the 1979 core zone (14.72ha) is proposed to be reduced to 5.09ha. All the listed historic buildings are within the new

core zone. The original core zone is proposed to remain as buffer zone. This proposal corresponds to the recommendation of the ICOMOS-WHC mission in 2005.

2. *Patan Durbar Square* (former: Patan Darbar Square) in the town of Patan is an example of Malla architecture within the urban context. The palace of Malla kings was built from 1668 to 1734. The complex separates the palace gardens from the public square, which has four important temples, two stone sikharas, a free-standing bell, stone platforms, pillars and smaller shrines. Due to demolition of traditional buildings and the construction of tall reinforced concrete buildings, the 1979 core zone (12.73ha) is proposed to be reduced to 5.30ha. It contains 19 listed historic buildings. The proposed buffer zone includes the originally nominated core zone as well as an area to the south-west, including several interesting historic structures: Jya Bahal Bahil, I Bahal Bahil, Nhayakan Bahil, the temple of Kumbeshwar, and the 15th century Kwa Bahal. The ICOMOS-WHC mission did not agree with this proposal to reduce the core zone, but recommended that the State Party undertake further detailed assessment of the urban fabric and potential for rectification of the illegal building constructions, and if not possible, consider the reduction of the core zone due to the partial loss of OUV.

3. *Bhaktapur Durbar Square* (former: Bhadgaon Darbar Square) has a coherent complex formed of the royal palace and two principal temples. The palace was built in several stages from the 13th to 18th centuries. There are twelve individual monuments in this area. The entire historic city of Bhaktapur is reported by State Party to be relatively well preserved. Nevertheless, in order to focus on the ensemble of listed monuments, the 1979 core zone (14.23ha) is proposed to be reduced to 3.61ha, containing now two areas, respecting the bipolarity of the city, and including: the Pujari Math (18th century, restored in 1972), the Dattatraya Temple (15th century), and the Bhimsen Temple (17th century). The proposed buffer zone is also smaller than recommended by the ICOMOS-WHC Mission in 2005. It encloses the two core zones and the traditional trade route from Taumandi Square to Dattatraya Square. The ICOMOS-WHC mission in 2005 considered that the original core zone of Bhaktapur was acceptable and that there was no need to reduce it as proposed by the State Party.

4. *Swayambhunath* is situated on a hill top, two miles west of Kathmandu town, the oldest of the Buddhist monuments in the valley. This is a large *stupa* in the form of a flattened hemisphere and on a circular base. The present stupa has undergone several renovations and changes, in the 14th, 17th and early 20th centuries. It is surrounded by numerous other temples and shrines. A very minor change is proposed to the core zone; the 1979 core zone (32.13ha) is proposed to be extended to 32.63ha, including a small area in the east to encompass the entrance square at the foot of the main stairs leading up to the stupa. The core zone is proposed to be surrounded by a buffer zone which did not exist in the past. The buffer zone contains traditional buildings, some haphazard constructions, as well as a large green area towards the north-east (occupied by the army). The ICOMOS-WHC mission in 2005 agrees with these definitions of the core and buffer zones.

5. *Bauddhanath* is the largest *stupa* in Nepal and it is located on the plain, about 8km west of Kathmandu town.

On top of the dome is a square tower, covered with gilded brass sheets on which are painted faces of the all-seeing eternal Buddha. The origins of the *stupa* date to the 5th century. It has been subject to numerous renovations over time. It is surrounded by a circular street with two to three storey houses. The 1979 core zone was a circle of 500m diameter (78.54ha). The religious importance of the stupa has attracted Buddhists from Nepal and Tibet to settle down in the vicinity, resulting in the construction of numerous monastic ensembles in the area since the original inscription. The core zone is proposed to be limited to the principal monument (1.27ha), while the immediate surroundings are enclosed within the buffer zone. The ICOMOS-WHC mission of 2005 agrees with the proposed core and buffer zones.

6. *Pashupati monument zone* has an extended Hindu temple precinct, which is the largest and most important in the Kathmandu Valley. The temple dates back to the Lichchhavi period, and it has been subject to renovations in the 17th and 19th centuries. This is a pilgrimage centre, and extends on both sides of the sacred Bagmati River, the major religious feature of the site. There are numerous temples, shikharas, shrines, and ghats for ritual bathing and cremation, as well as houses and other urban fabric. The 1979 core zone is 78.38ha, which is proposed to be extended to 83.55ha, in order to include the Bhandarkhal gardens in the west, and the area along the Ring Road to the south. The proposed buffer zone encompasses a strip of land of varying depth around the core zone. The ICOMOS-WHC mission of 2005 considers the core and buffer zones as proposed by the State Party as acceptable, even though some value has been lost due to demolition of buildings within the core zone.

7. *Changu Narayan monument zone* is built on the top of hill in the eastern part of the Valley. It is believed to be the earliest settlement in the valley. The temple complex of Changu Narayan, built in 1702, is located in the centre of a large square courtyard surrounded by brick buildings of two to three stories. There are fourteen important monuments in the central area of the site. There has been little transformation in this area since 1979. However, the 1979 core zone (45.13ha) is proposed to be realigned in order to coincide with the gazetted area, thus becoming slightly smaller at 35.92ha. The State Party is not proposing any buffer zone, considering that the core zone encompasses large areas of natural setting, which function as a buffer. The ICOMOS-WHC mission of 2005 considers the proposed core zone as acceptable. The mission also agrees with the State Party that no buffer zone is needed in this case.

History

The Kathmandu Valley has been the politically and culturally dominating part of Nepal. Its legendary and documented histories are so interrelated that these are difficult to separate. A political establishment of the area is dated to the beginning of the Christian era, the Kirati period. This was followed by the Kichchhavi Dynasty from the 3rd to 9th centuries. Patan is believed to have expanded into a consolidated town by the end of the 7th century. The town of Kathmandu was established by a later Lichchhavi king. After the 9th century, there is a dark period until 14th century and the arrival of the Mallas,

which is an important period for the flourishing of Nepalese art and architecture. These developed into a growing spiritual orientation towards Tantrism, making it difficult to separate purely Buddhist from purely Hindu art. From the middle of the 13th century, the city of Bhadgaon (Bhaktapur) prospered and became a major training centre. The valley was divided into three rival kingdoms, competing between themselves and bringing the artistic expressions to the highest point by the mid 18th century. In 1769 the valley was conquered and united by a leader coming from the outside, Prithvi Narayan Shah. He made Kathmandu his royal city, and the Hanuman Dhoka Palace his residence. In 1833 and 1934, two catastrophic earthquakes brought destruction, and some of the monuments had to be rebuilt using much of the original elements and decoration.

Protection and Management

Legal provision:

The principal legal framework consists of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (1956), the Town Planning Implementation Act (1972), and the Guthi Samsthan Act (1976). The latest amendment to the 1956 law was passed in 1988, but further amendments are required. New bylaws are required specific to the individual monuments ensembles. The State Party expects to have the drafts ready for discussion by May 2006.

The legal protection of the properties varies depending on the character of the areas and the authorities responsible of each nominated area. Building construction and land use are generally subject to municipal and Department of Archaeology by-laws. However, the legal framework is currently under revision as mentioned above.

The updating and further development of an inventory of the traditional building stock has been initiated by the State Party identifying several categories according to the assessed value of the buildings within the core zone.

Management structure:

The principal management authority regarding the principal listed monuments is the Department of Archaeology.

A territorial land-use master plan was prepared on the whole Kathmandu Valley by a team of UNESCO and UNDP in 1977. This master plan identified the tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage in the valley, and provided the guidelines for conservation and development.

An international expert appointed by the World Heritage Centre is advising on the preparation of the management system and plan, as well as conservation guidelines. A final report is expected to be ready in May 2006.

Resources:

Not indicated.

Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value by the State Party (summary)

At the time of the 1979 inscription, the justification of the Kathmandu Valley referred to its two thousand years of history, its embracing two major religions, the Hindu and the Buddhist, and its location in one of the most dramatic natural environments possible, the Himalayan mountains. All seven ensembles *“have the roots of their history buried deep in the early legends of the Kathmandu valley. As Buddhism and Hinduism developed and changed over the centuries throughout Asia, Nepal profited from its unique position between Tibet, China and India. Both religions prospered in Nepal from AD 5th century, but their strongest creative contribution can be dated to the era from 1500 to 1800 A.D.”* The resources that form together the Kathmandu Valley and were nominated meet three criteria. *“Firstly, they are unique and extremely rare; secondly, they represent a unique artistic and aesthetic achievement and are masterpieces of the creative genius; and thirdly, they are characteristic examples of a significant traditional style of architecture that has become vulnerable to irreversible socio-cultural and economic change. The Kathmandu Valley is the centre of a dynamic and developing country, but also a country deeply rooted in its great cultural heritage and committed to the noble task of preserving it for the benefit of all mankind.”*

The property was originally inscribed on the basis of criteria: iii, iv and vi.

The State Party has submitted a draft statement of significance, part of the Conservation report by the State Party, 2005:

“The heritage of the Kathmandu valley is a unique testimony to the cultural traditions of the people who settled in this remote Himalayan valley over the past 2 millennia. The multi-ethnic inhabitants of the valley, referred to as the Newars, have created a highly evolved cultural identity which is a unique fusion of mingled religious and socio-cultural influences from the surrounding regions. The coexistence and amalgamation of Hinduism and Buddhism with animist rituals and Tantrism is unique. Furthermore, the socio-cultural development of the Newars allowed incorporating the diversity thereby creating an urban society with highly developed craftsmanship and social structures. The seven ensembles of the Kathmandu Valley, namely the three Durbar Squares of Hanuman Dhoka, Patan and Bhaktapur, the Buddhist Stupas of Swayambhu and Baudhanath, and the Hindu temple complexes of Pashupati and Changu Narayan, reflect a fusion of these cultural traditions which entered the Kathmandu Valley reaching their apogee between 1500-1800 AD. During this period the Kathmandu Valley boasted the creation of a unique craftsmanship and style of architecture with one of the most highly developed applications of bricks, timber and bronze in the world. Moreover, the seven ensembles are culturally and religiously significant to not only of the local community but to the region. The three Durbar Squares with their palaces, temples and public spaces, constituted the core of the former royal cities of Kathmandu Valley, and are still the center of daily life and the setting for century-old festivals. The importance of the religious centers is manifested in the community's daily rituals and major religious events, which have uniquely

survived within this region. This uniqueness is for example expressed in the culture of the Kumari, the living goddess.”

The 2005 State of Conservation report also indicates that the existing criteria be retained, that is iii, iv and vi.

The current request for “minor modification” by the State Party (2006) does not include any new statement of significance. It is assumed that the State Party submits the request for “minor modification” under the existing criteria iii, iv and vi.

4. EVALUATION

Outstanding universal value

Kathmandu Valley was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979 under criteria: iii, iv and vi. Efforts were made to protect the landscape as a whole but the property inscribed on the World Heritage List only consisted of seven zones or ensembles.

Kathmandu Valley was one of the early nominations to the World Heritage List. At the time the nomination files were less substantial than today and there were no formal evaluations of the properties by the Advisory Bodies. However, the outstanding universal value was justified in the nomination file and has been assessed by ICOMOS in its numerous reports.

The outstanding universal value of the property is related to the artistic and aesthetic achievements in the religious monuments and royal cities, and to the traditional Nepalese architecture, which has become vulnerable due to irreversible change. This assessment has not changed over the years and criteria iii, iv and vi remain the relevant criteria.

Whether the OUV has been maintained according to those criteria in the seven ensembles is analysed in the following sections.

Conservation

Since the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979, various sites have been subject to change, resulting from demolition of existing traditional-type buildings and the construction of new in reinforced concrete. Many of those new buildings are not finished as some taxes are only paid after completion of a building. Such changes have occurred particularly in the surroundings of the listed monuments, while the principal monuments have not been directly affected.

The state of conservation of Kathmandu Valley has been regularly an item in the agenda of the World Heritage Committee meetings ever since 1992 and the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2003. State of conservation reports have been prepared, of which the latest from 15-19 March 2005 by ICOMOS and World Heritage Centre. The State Party provided a State of Conservation Report in December 2005.

Generally speaking, the state of conservation of the main monuments has not deteriorated. Nevertheless, in several cases their surroundings have been altered losing much of their integrity.

Assessment of the seven areas

1. Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square (former Kathamandu Darbar Square)

The recent changes in the urban fabric have concerned particularly the area outside the *Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square* (former *Kathamandu Darbar Square*), which has undergone the most serious social and urban transformation. Large parts of the originally inscribed ensemble have been altered, losing their authenticity but the principal monuments have still retained their authenticity; the immediate surroundings of the Durbar Square still retain partial integrity.

The 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission reported: “The Outstanding Universal Value of the urban fabric beyond the Durbar Square has been significantly lost. The proposed core zone by the State Party was considered as acceptable, with a few modifications by the mission, for examination by the World Heritage Committee. The OUV and authenticity of the Monuments in and around the Durbar Square was assessed to have remained.” The mission agreed with the reduction as proposed by the State Party.

ICOMOS agrees with the reduction of the core zone, and the definition of the buffer zone as proposed by the State Party.

2. Patan Durbar Square (former: Patan Darbar Square)

In the case of *Patan*, the nominated area has been subject to relatively minor changes, retaining its authenticity and overall integrity. There has been some loss of traditional fabric and the illegal construction of buildings of excessive height but the ICOMOS-WHC mission reports that it would be possible to implement corrective measures by rectification of the illegal height and preventing further demolition of traditional buildings.

The 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission recommended further detailed assessment of remaining lost values and ways of rectifying the urban fabric and only if this were not possible to consider a reduction of the core zone.

The current proposals are for a major reduction of the core zone from 12.73ha to 5.3ha. ICOMOS considers it necessary to undertake a further detailed assessment of the historic area of Patan, and the possibility of rectification of illegal building constructions in order to retain a larger core zone.

3. Bhaktapur Durbar Square (former: Bhadgaon Darbar Square)

The original core zone of the historic centre of *Bhaktapur* has been subject only to minor changes, retaining its authenticity and integrity.

The 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission reports that WH values remain despite some erosion in the urban fabric of the main-street elevation and that the same values continue beyond the boundaries of the core zone.

ICOMOS recommends that the original core zone should not be reduced and that a buffer should be defined for it.

4. In *Swayambhunath*, the Sacred Hill area in the core zone, especially in the vicinity of the main Buddhist

monuments, has not been subject to adverse changes. The ensemble consists of large green areas. While there are new constructions scattered in this area, the overall integrity has been retained.

The 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission reports that WH values remain within the Sacred Hill, which forms the innermost part of the core zone, and that no particular WH values are identified outside the ring road.

ICOMOS agrees with the proposed core zone and that there is no need for buffer zone in this case.

5. In *Bauddhanath*, the area beyond the Stupa has undergone major social and urban transformations since the inscription in 1979. There has been a significant loss of OUV as well as authenticity and integrity in the area beyond the Stupa. However, but the stupa itself has still retained its authenticity and its religious value. The significant loss of integrity in the immediate surroundings of the Stupa results in an altered context.

The 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission reports that WH values beyond the stupa have significantly eroded in the surrounding urban fabric. The mission considers that the OUV of the Stupa remains but that there is strong requirement for the protection of the surrounding milieu. The mission notes: “The majority of buildings surrounding the Stupa comprises of recently-built reinforced concrete structures of heavily hybridized styles with excessive height, used for commercial purposes.” However, there still remain also some traditional buildings.

ICOMOS agrees with the reduction of the core zone and the definition of the buffer zone.

6. In *Pashupati*, a large number of buildings has been destroyed in order to facilitate pilgrim and visitor access to the Sacred Complex, which however remains intact. Large parts of the originally inscribed ensembles have lost their authenticity but not the principal monuments. Although some valuable buildings have been lost, the core area still retains its integrity especially in the streetscapes of the Deopatan residential area, which would require a more inclusive inventory and protection.

The 2005 COMOS-WHC mission reports that WH values remain in the core zone despite major demolition activity and that the new residential area, which is included in the western part of the core zone, has no WH significance. The mission considers the core zone boundary proposed by the State Party as acceptable even though some value has been lost due to demolition of buildings within the core zone. The mission also agrees with the proposed buffer zone.

ICOMOS agrees with the proposed core and buffer zones.

7. The monument ensemble of *Changu Narayan* is located in the rural context and has had only a negligible level of transformation, thus retaining its authenticity and integrity and has not been subject to major changes.

The 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission reports that the WH values remain intact. The mission notes that the core zone as proposed by the State Party corresponds to the gazetted area, and is acceptable. The mission also considers acceptable not to propose any buffer zone for this area.

ICOMOS agrees with the proposed core zone and that no buffer zone is needed.

Risk analysis

In recent years, the main risk for the inscribed property has been the uncontrolled urban development, affecting particularly the surroundings of the main monuments.

The region of Kathmandu valley is subject to heavy monsoon rains as well as earthquakes.

These risks are still real threats to the survival of the property.

Conclusions on Authenticity and Integrity

Authenticity:

Referring to the 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission (the most recent mission) and the State of Conservation report of 2005, ICOMOS considers that four of the seven ensembles inscribed on the World Heritage List have retained their authenticity in the principal monuments as well as in most of the traditional urban fabric.

In the cases of Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Changu Narayan, and Patan Durbar Square, the authenticity of the ensembles has not been affected, even though there are some illegal constructions, especially in Patan. In Swayambhu, the authenticity of the principal monument zone is intact, but there are some new constructions in the western part of the core zone.

In the cases of Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square, Pashupatinath and Bauddhanath, large parts of the originally inscribed ensembles have been altered, losing their authenticity. Nevertheless, the 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission concludes that the principal monumental ensembles have still retained their authenticity.

Integrity:

ICOMOS considers that a reduction of the property from 275, 86 ha to 167,27 ha (a 40 % reduction) is not a “minor modification” of the boundaries but a significant modification.

A redefinition of the boundaries is justified in some cases because of the social and urban transformation that has affected parts of the core zones and thus its values. This is particularly the case of 3 ensembles (Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square, in Bauddhanath and Pashupati). However the six suggested reductions do not all correspond to the boundaries suggested by the 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission. Without a further evaluation mission and the most recent information about the inventories the World Heritage Committee requested (paragraph 5 of decision 29 COM 7A.24), it is not possible to assess whether the suggested boundaries are the most appropriate ones.

On the basis of the available information, ICOMOS concludes that the new core and buffer zones are acceptable as proposed by the State Party and agreed with the ICOMOS-WHC mission for the ensembles of: Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square, Swayambhunath, Pashupati, Changu Narayan and Bauddhanath.

Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that more investigation is needed for the definition of the core and buffer zones of the ensembles of: Patan Durbar Square and Bhaktapur Durbar Square in order to reflect the integrity of what remains.

Conclusions on the outstanding universal value

As mentioned before, the outstanding universal value of the property resides not only in the monuments but also in the traditional architecture surrounding the monuments.

Four of the inscribed ensembles have not been severely altered, and are considered to have retained their authenticity, integrity and values with only minor alterations. These are the ensembles of Patan, Bhaktapur Swayambhu and Changu Narayan. Taking into account the importance of traditional urban fabric for the significance of these areas, ICOMOS considers that every means be adopted to protect and preserve their authenticity, integrity and values.

In Hanuman Dhoka, Bauddhanath, and Pashupati, much of the integrity of the originally nominated ensembles has been lost. However, the 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission has considered that the value of the essential central parts of the ensembles has still been retained.

The proposed boundaries are a substantial reduction in 2006 and do not exactly correspond to the boundaries suggested by the 2005 ICOMOS-WHC mission. To assess whether the suggested boundaries are the most appropriate ones to safeguard the ensembles and their values, an evaluation mission is necessary.

Evaluation of criteria:

The property has been inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria iii, iv and vi. The State Party has proposed to retain the same criteria:

Criterion iii: The seven ensembles represent an exceptional testimony to the traditional civilisation of Kathmandu Valley in Nepal. The coexistence and amalgamation of Hinduism and Buddhism with animist rituals and Tantrism is considered unique. ICOMOS considers that this criterion could continue to be valid for some of the original areas and revised areas.

Criterion iv: The application of this criterion is considered for the seven ensembles in turn.

The urban ensembles and royal palaces of Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square, Bhaktapur Durbar Square, and Patan Durbar Square are presented as eminent examples of successive and complementary stages in the history of the major royal residences of Nepal, including their palaces, temples and the urban fabric.

1. In the case of *Hanuman Dhoka*, regrettably there have been severe losses in the urban fabric, and only the palace structures of the Durbar Square remain intact.

2. In the case of *Patan*, there have been some alterations, but the quality of the remaining traditional fabric justifies corrective measures and more effort of preservation so as to maintain its outstanding universal value. As a whole, ICOMOS considers that this criterion is still relevant for Patan.

3. In the case of *Bhaktapur*, where the traditional residential fabric has best retained its integrity, this criterion is well justified for the whole ensemble.

The Buddhist stupas of 4. *Swayambhu* and 5. *Bauddhanath* and the Hindu temples of 6. *Pashupati* and 7. *Changu Narayan* represent the cross fertilisation of artistic and

spiritual traditions and influences, which give the special character and outstanding universal significance to Nepalese architecture. While regretting the loss particularly of the built context of Baudhanath Stupa, ICOMOS considers that this criterion could still be relevant for these religious ensembles depending on the how the boundaries are defined.

Criterion vi: The selected Nepalese monuments illustrate the Nepalese civilisation, founded on religious components resulting from a complex exchange of influences at the crossroads of India, Tibet and China. ICOMOS considers that this criterion could continue to be valid depending on how the boundaries are delineated.

Modification of the name of the property

The State Party requests to change the name of the property from “Kathmandu Valley” to “Seven Monument Ensembles of the Kathmandu Valley”. ICOMOS agrees that the name has to be changed as the Valley as a whole has never been inscribed on the World Heritage List. However, as the outstanding universal value is linked in part to the traditional architecture, ICOMOS considers that the proposed name focuses too much on the monumental aspect. It therefore suggests that the name be “Seven historic ensembles of the Kathmandu Valley”.

Protection and Management

At its 29th Session, the Committee also requested “the State Party in close consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to:

“a) establish an integrated and comprehensive management plan for the entire property;
b) develop appropriate and realistic building regulations to control change of the built stock around the main monuments within the World Heritage property; and
c) identify the monitoring measures necessary to assess the effectiveness of the management plan and legislation, and to indicate the means and resources by which such plan and legislation will be implemented and enforced” (paragraph 6 of decision 29 COM 7A.24).

The World Heritage Centre has sent an expert who has advised the State Party on the preparation of the management plan. ICOMOS takes note of the progress made to establish new bylaws, the management plan and monitoring measures. ICOMOS considers that once those measures have been established, they need to be checked in relation to the seven areas with the new proposed boundaries.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation with respect to the criteria (paragraph 4a of decision 29 COM 7A.24)

ICOMOS considers that criteria iii, iv and vi could remain valid for some of the original areas and reduced areas that still reflect the agreed outstanding universal value.

Recommendations with respect to the “minor modification of the boundaries” (paragraph 4b of decision 29 COM 7A.24).

Having examined the request by the State Party for a “minor modification” of the boundaries of the seven ensembles in the Kathmandu Valley, and taking into account the numerous reports, in particular the ICOMOS-WHC mission report (2005), the State of Conservation Report by the State Party (2005), and the report of the expert on the preparation of the new management plan, ICOMOS recommends the following:

- With due recognition of the efforts by the State Party to respond to the request of the Committee at its 29th Session in Durban, and agreeing in principle with the idea of changes to the boundaries of the nominated areas, ICOMOS nevertheless recommends that the proposal should not be approved at this stage: the modification to the boundaries is sufficiently important to affect the outstanding universal value of some of the inscribed ensembles (OG, 164-165). For those ensembles, and for the sake of safeguarding the property and its OUV, ICOMOS considers that a mission is required to check whether the proposed boundaries adequately reflect the remaining OUV.

- Further considering that it is not possible to give an overall judgement about the proposed modification without more information about the implementation of the legal framework and management of the site, ICOMOS recommends that State Party continue the established programme for safeguarding the property, particularly in the following:

1. Verify the redefinition of the core and buffer zones to exclude areas where significant amounts of traditional fabric have been lost, but also retaining the areas where corrective measures can help to keep the integrity of the ensemble;
2. Put in place legal protection of the revised core and buffer zones, to include land-use control of the buffer zone;
3. Prepare a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value to re-affirm the values identified at the time of the original inscription and which meet the criteria;
4. Complete and effectively implement an integrated Management Plan to conserve WH values;
5. Put in place corrective measures to address illegal building activities;
6. Prepare conservation guidelines;
7. Compile guidance for house owners on managing change in their properties.

- Considering the work that has to be done on the legal framework and management of all ensembles and their impact on the boundaries, ICOMOS considers that the decision on the boundaries should be taken for the seven ensembles all together.

- Taking note of the cultural interest that the inscribed property represents within the Kathmandu Valley and the Nepalese culture, and considering that the currently available reference material is rather fragmented, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party prepare a new

and complete nomination document in order to bring together all the necessary information required for the full assessment of outstanding universal value and the proper definition of the property in question, its protection and management.

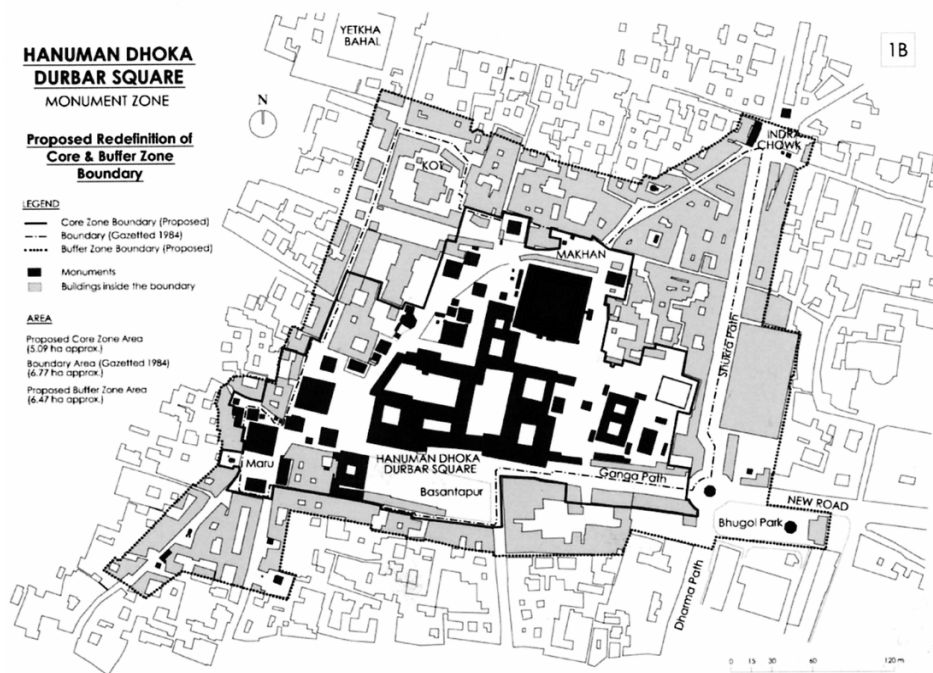
Recommendation with respect to the modification of the name (paragraph 4b of decision 29 COM 7A.24)

- Taking into account that the Valley as such has never been inscribed on the World Heritage List and that the outstanding universal value is intrinsically linked to the monuments and the surrounding traditional architecture, ICOMOS suggests that the name be “Seven historic ensembles of the Kathmandu Valley”.

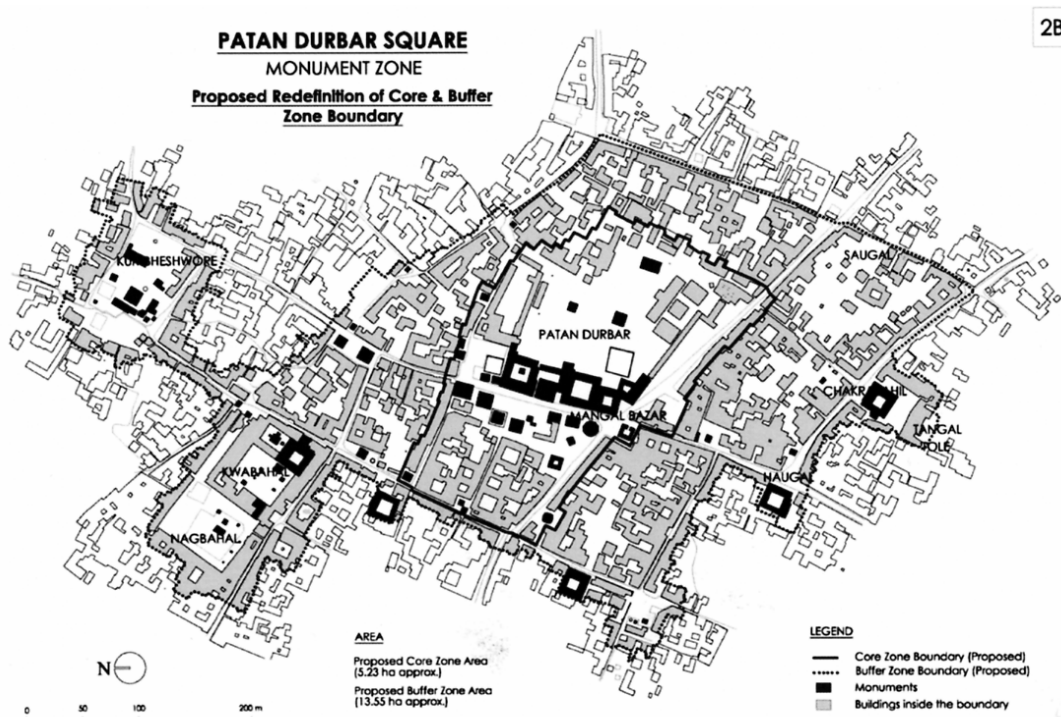
General conclusion

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed “minor modification” of the core zones and the definition of the buffer zones to the World Heritage property of Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, not be approved at this stage, and that the action plan for the establishment of appropriate requirements for the safeguarding of the property be continued and completed, and that a full nomination document be compiled for the re-nomination of the property, based on an agreed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, the management plan and appropriate legal protection .

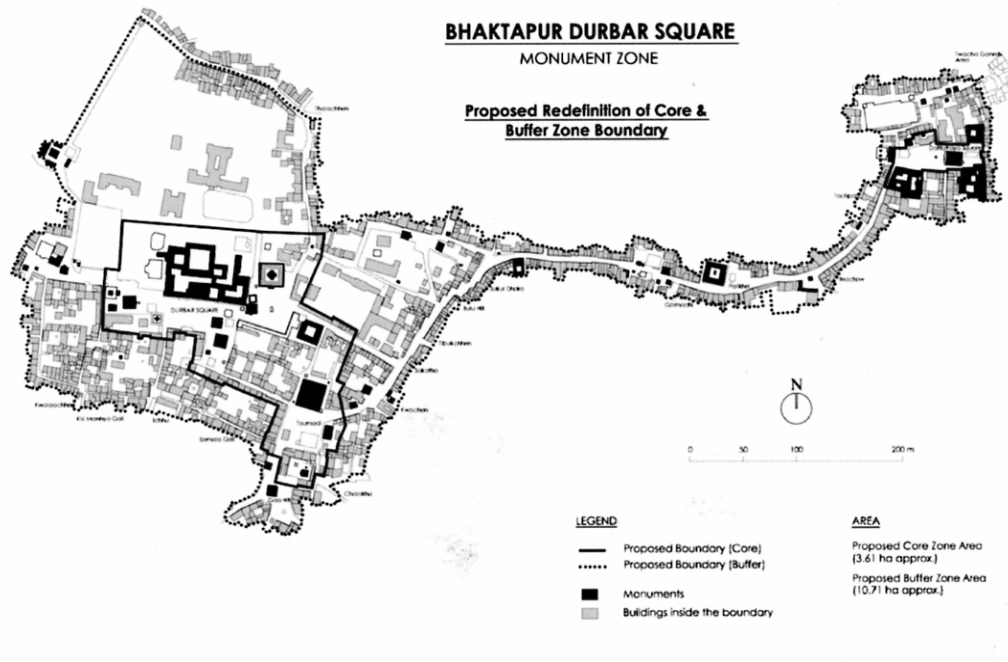
ICOMOS, April 2006



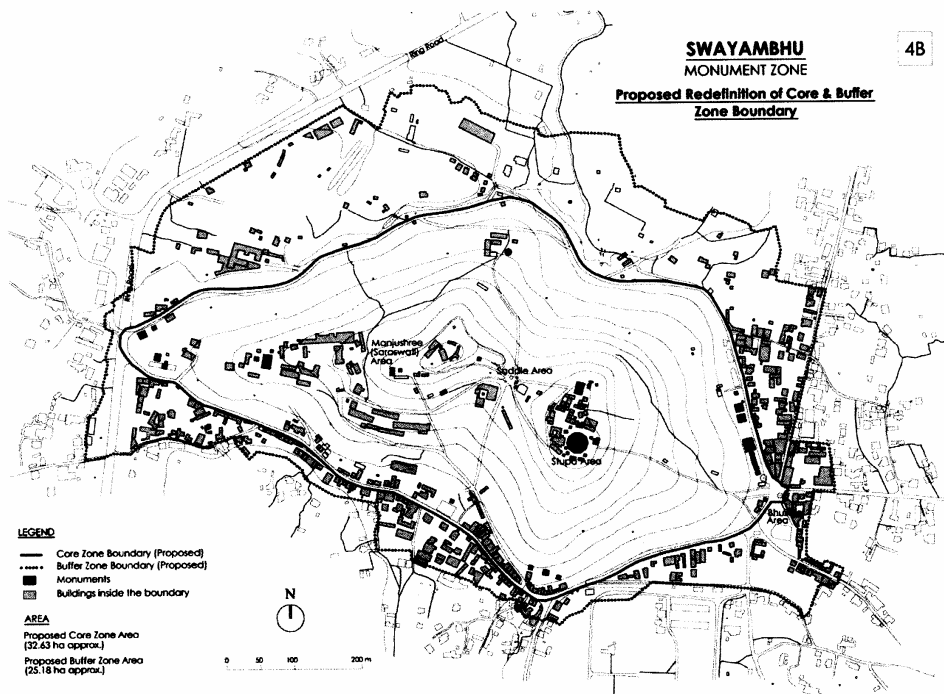
Map showing the revised boundaries of Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square



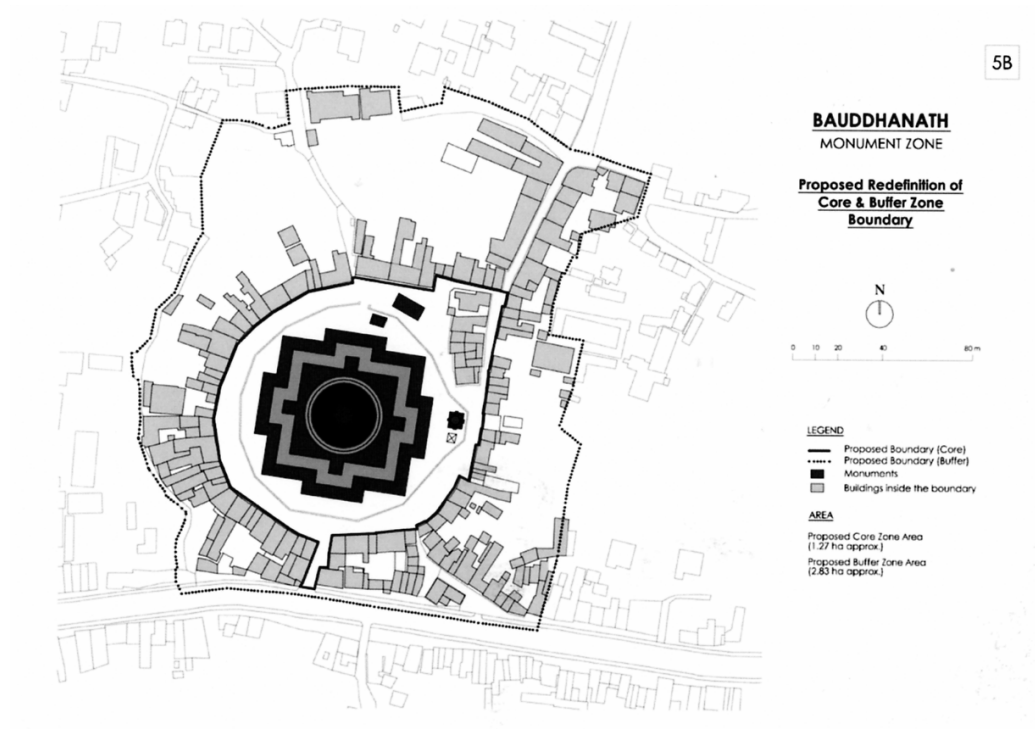
Map showing the revised boundaries of Patan Durbar Square



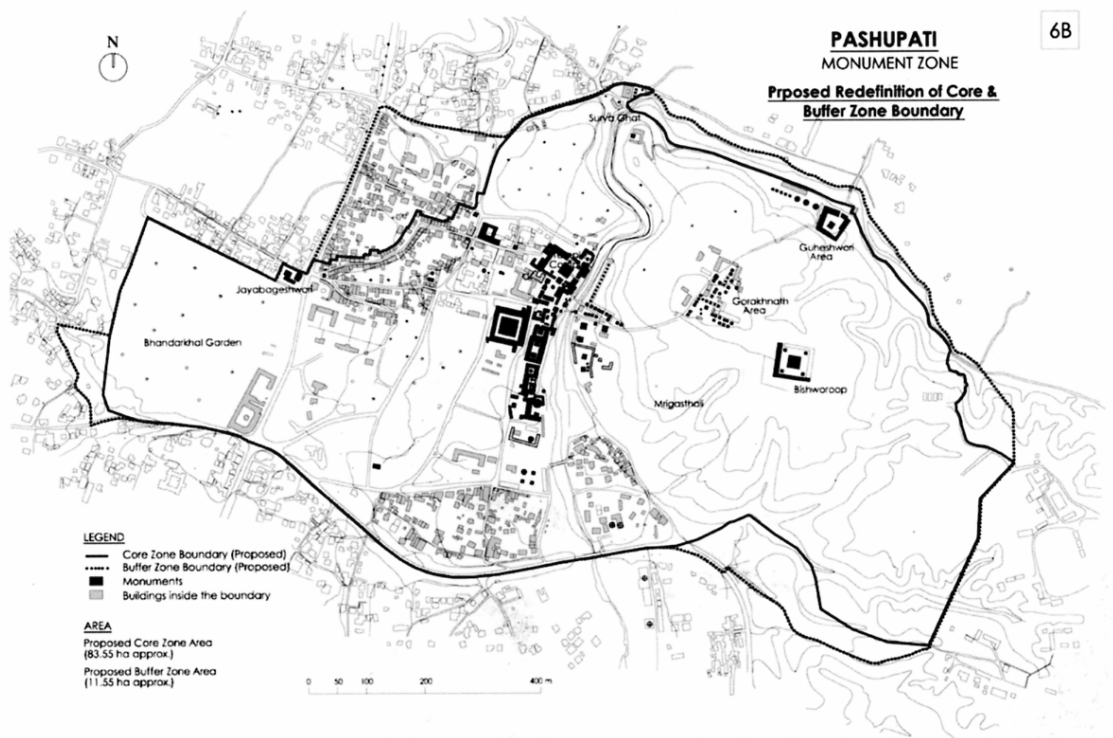
Map showing the revised boundaries of Bhaktapur Durbar Square



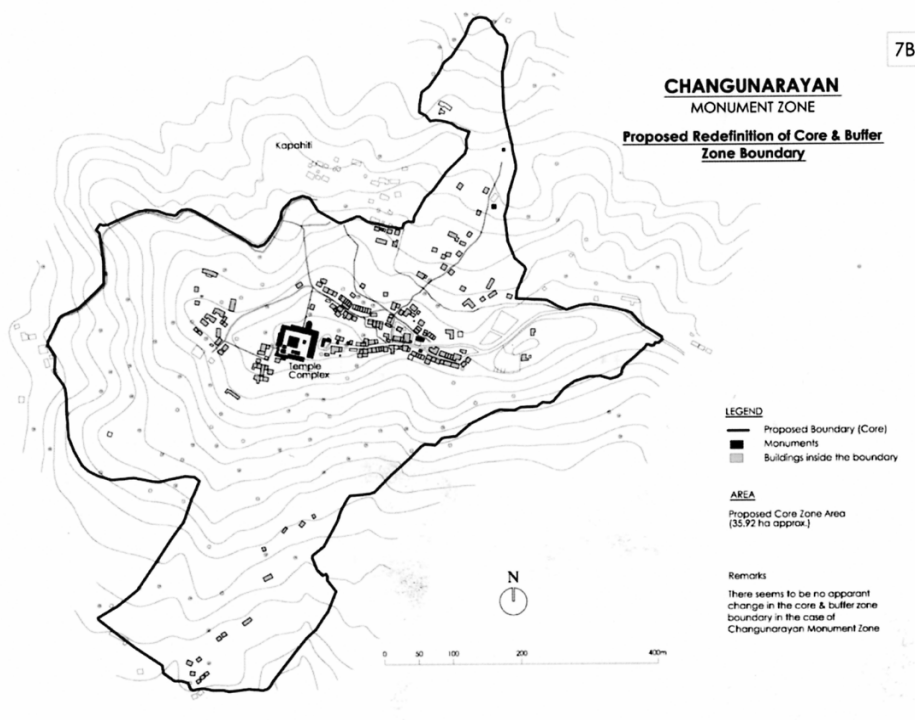
Map showing the revised boundaries of Swayambhu



Map showing the revised boundaries of Bauddhanath



Map showing the revised boundaries of Pashupati



Map showing the revised boundaries of Changunarayan