
Choirokoitia (Cyprus) No 848

1 Basic data

State Party
Cyprus

Name of property
Choirokoitia

Location
District of Larnaca

Inscription
1998

Brief description
The Neolithic settlement of Choirokoitia, occupied from the 7th to the 4th millennium BC, is one of the most important prehistoric sites in the eastern Mediterranean. Its remains and the finds from the excavations there have thrown much light on the evolution of human society in this key region. Only part of the site has been excavated, and so it forms an exceptional archaeological reserve for future study.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
14 March 2012

2 Issues raised

Background
The World Heritage property inscribed in 1998 included the archaeological remains excavated from 1977 to 1998 of the Aceramic Neolithic settlement of Choirokoitia, dating from the 8th Century BC. The settlement exposed at that time extended along the south-western slope of a peninsular bounded on the north, east and south-east by the Maroni River. It is characterised by circular dwellings constructed of stone, mud brick and rammed earth, and was protected on the west by successive walls with a complex defensive gateway.

Recent excavations to the north of the World Heritage property boundary have exposed parts of a wall following a parallel course to the Maroni riverbed, constituting the northern boundary of the settlement. This confirms that the original settlement was expanded to the north. The new evidence enriches knowledge of the social organization of the settlement as the construction of the extended wall at such length expresses a collective effort that implies a strongly structured social organization.

The previous request by the State Party for a boundary modification to cover the new excavations was referred back because it did not include the full extent of the site indicated on the plan provided with the proposal, which covered the greater part of the peninsular surrounded on the north, east and south-east by the Maroni river.

The World Heritage Committee adopted the following decision (UNESCO headquarters, 2011):

Decision 35COM 8B.53:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Documents WHC-11/35.COM/8B.Add and WHC-11/35.COM/INF.8B1.Add,*
2. *Refers the examination of the proposed minor modification to the boundary of Choirokoitia, Cyprus, back to the State Party in order to allow it to:*

- a) Extend the boundary of the World Heritage property in order to enclose all of the State-owned property of the peninsular bounded by the Maroni river,*
- b) Identify the full extent of the site through field survey and geophysics, and strategic excavation if necessary, as prescribed by paragraph 100 of the Operational Guidelines and amend the boundary of the World Heritage property accordingly,*
- c) Enlarge the buffer zone to the north, east and south and complete negotiations on the final extent of the Controlled Zone.*

Modification

This new boundary modification proposal is in accordance with Decision 35COM 8B.53. Electromagnetic survey and excavations on the entire peninsula have clarified the limits of settlement. Excavations have shown that the enclosure wall followed a parallel course to the Maroni river bed. It is now proposed to extend the original property area of c.1.5ha to cover the full area of the peninsular by an additional c.4.7ha. This includes all the State-owned property protected according to the Antiquities Law as listed Ancient Monuments of the First Schedule.

In addition, the Controlled Zone has been extended to the north, east and south, enabling creation of a larger buffer zone around the site to protect both the Neolithic settlement and the surrounding natural landscape, which constitutes an integral part of the site. This has been agreed with the Department of Town Planning and Housing of the Ministry of Interior, the Larnaca District Administration and the Choirokoitia Community. The original Controlled Zone to the west of the site is privately-owned land protected by the Antiquities Law as Ancient Monuments of the Second Schedule. The additional area of the Controlled Zone as now proposed is protected by the Antiquities Law Section II, Article 11, which allows for the establishment of Controlled Areas around antiquities sites and controls the height and architectural style of any building proposed for erection

within them. The boundaries are shown on the map provided with the request.

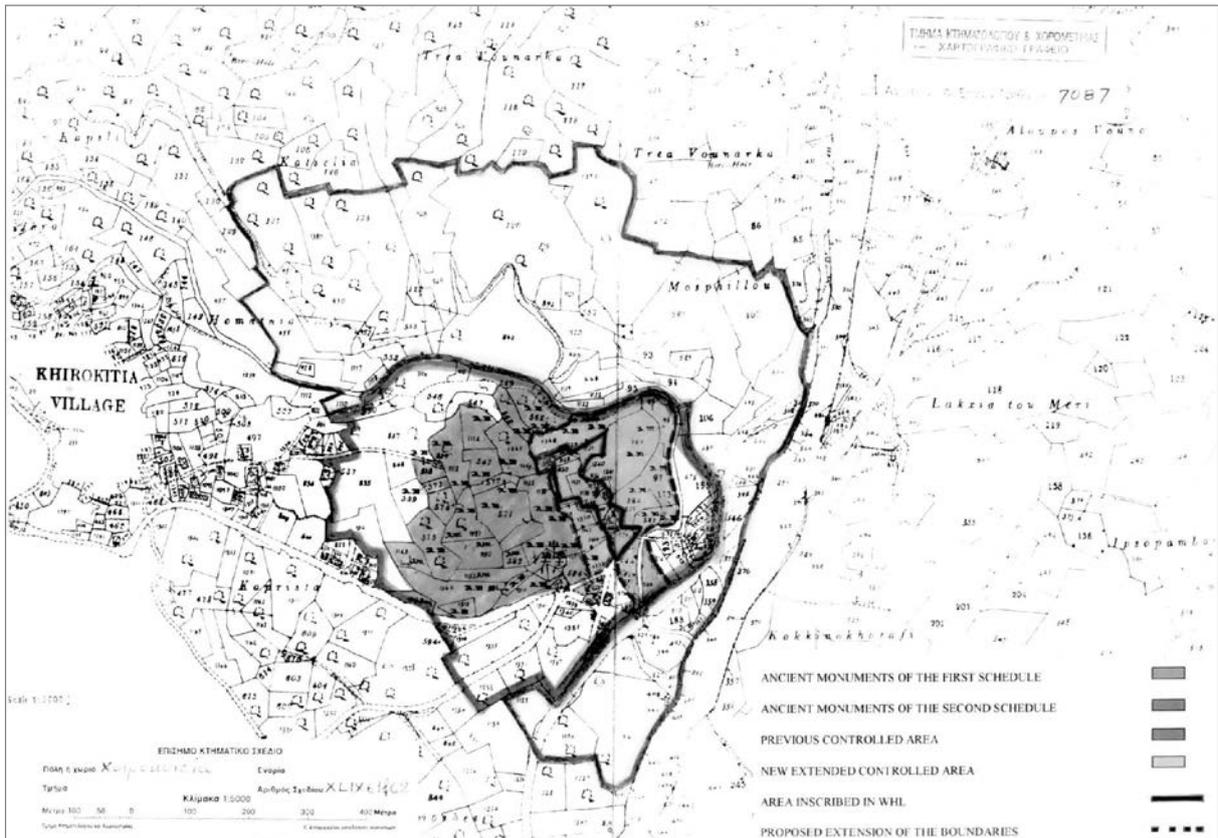
A Management Plan is being prepared for the whole property which aims to ensure the effective management of the site for future generations and to create a framework for future actions. Proposed actions include the improvement of the facilities of the site, new visitors' routes, proposals for shelters, a visitor centre, the development of an emergency evacuation plan, landscaping of the site and the development of educational programmes and activities.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed property boundary modification is necessary in order to fully encompass the Outstanding Universal Value of the site as stated in the original inscription Decision 22COM VIII.B.1. The extension of the Controlled Zone is also welcomed as being in accordance with Decision 35COM 8B.53.

3 ICOMOS Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modifications to the boundary and to the buffer zone of Choirokoitia, Cyprus, be **approved**.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property