

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/AS/1568_AddInf_1

Charenton-le-Pont, 28 September 2017

H. E. Mr Ahmad Jalali
Permanent Delegation of the Islamic
Republic of Iran to UNESCO
Maison de l'UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris CEDEX 15

World Heritage List 2018

Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region (Iran)

Dear Sir,

ICOMOS is currently assessing the nomination of "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region" as a World Heritage site and an ICOMOS evaluation mission has visited the property to consider matters related to protection, management and conservation, as well as issues related to integrity and authenticity.

In order to help with our overall evaluation process, we would be grateful to receive further information to augment what has already been submitted in the nomination dossier.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points and kindly provide additional information:

Serial approach

Could the State Party kindly provide information on the rationale, methodology and criteria (here not referring to the nomination criteria), which guided the selection of the component sites presented in this nomination?

Could the State Party kindly outline the contribution of each site component, to the overall Outstanding Universal Value in a substantial, scientific and discernible way, as outlined in paragraph 137b of the *Operational Guidelines*?

Risks and factors affecting the property

All site components are located within seismically active areas and have experienced previous earthquakes, at times with devastating impacts. The nomination dossier states on p. 281 that with recent conservation works the likeliness of earthquake damages has significantly decreased.

ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could provide further information about the way conservation techniques have been applied, which ones are specifically adapted to the seismic risks of the area as well as how property documentation and risk preparedness plans address the possible impact of a major earthquake.

Protection

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive updated information about the institution or authority that has formally adopted the development restriction for the buffer zones and landscape zones, which are indicated in the nomination dossier.

Management

The management structure is characterized by the twofold structure of SALF bases in Firuzabad/Savestan and Bisharpur as stated in the nomination dossier p.318.

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive further information about these structures in order to understand better how the cooperation between them and, in particular between the individuals listed responsible for the same tasks functions in practice.

Monitoring

The presentation of a "monitoring system" is briefly described in the nominations dossier.

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive further information on whether previous monitoring exercises have taken place.

ICOMOS is grateful for the assistance that the State Party will provide along the evaluation process.

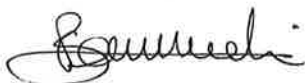
We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation process.

We would be grateful if you could provide ICOMOS and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre with the above information **by Friday 3 November 2017 at the latest.**

Please note that the State Party shall submit two copies of the additional information to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre so that it can be formally registered as part of the nomination.

We thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Yours faithfully,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO)
UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Islamic Republic of Iran
Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization
ICHHTO

“Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region”

for inscription on the World Heritage List

(Additional Information)



UNESCO
World Heritage Convention

2017

In the name of God



Evaluation of the nomination of the “*Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region*”

(Islamic Republic of Iran) for inscription on the World Heritage List

This report is submitted in response to the ICOMOS letter of GB/AS/1568-AddInf-1, dated 28 September 2017 on the additional information for the nomination of *Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region*. The Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization is grateful to ICOMOS for its devotion to conservation and preservation of historic monuments and sites. The objective of this detailed report is to clarify the issues raised by ICOMOS in the aforementioned letter.

Additional information for clarification on:

- *Serial approach*
- *Risks and Factors affecting the property*
- *Protection*
- *Management*
- *Monitoring*

1- Serial approach

Could the State Party kindly provide information on the rationale, methodology and criteria (here not referring to the nomination criteria), which guided the selection of the component sites presented in this nomination?

Could the State Party kindly outline the contribution of each site component, to the overall Outstanding Universal Value in the substantial, scientific and discernible way, as outlined in paragraph 137b of the Operational Guidelines?

For clarifying, the question will be explained in the parts of (1-a) and (1-b) in details:

1-a: Rationale, methodology and criteria which guided the selection of the component sites presented in this nomination:

The rationale which guided the selection of the component sites is based on a methodology which takes into account their historical characteristics and at the same time considers their association with the regional landscape. It intends to present the effort demonstrate how the Sassanid dynasty approached the establishment of towns in different environmental contexts , construction of monumental buildings with different functions over the centuries, stressing a diachronic perspective which from the early Sassanid period (Firuzabad) reaches into the late Sassanid and subsequent early Islamic period (Sarvestan).

The criteria upon which the components were selected are as follows:

The first criterion is geographical, that is to say that the three sites all belong to the ancient region of Fars, cradle of the Persian civilization, including both its eastern (Firuzabad),

central (Sarvestan) and western (Bishapur) areas.

The second is topographical, so that the sites selected covers the Sassanid towns and monuments within different topographical context in order to provide a comprehensive representation of the Sassanid landscape in various environmental conditions.

The third is architectural, and provides the elements for illustrating the Sassanid presence in the landscape of Fars through urbanism (Firuzabad, Bishapur), civil architecture (Firuzabad, Bishapur) and religious architecture (Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan).

These three sites will show the evolution of Sassanid architecture. That is, the creation of architectural novel architectural elements such as dome, squinch, domed room with portico (*Ayvan*), the creation of huge cross-vaulted and also the evolution of traditional lime and gypsum construction materials in the beginning of Sassanid era (Qaleh Dokhtar, Ardashir palace), middle of this period (Bishapur) and at the end of Sassanid and the beginning of Islam (Sarvestan) are evident in these three sites. Ignoring any of these three sites will lead to an incomplete explanation of Sassanid urban and architectural concepts.

The fourth criterion is chronological, that is: the three selected sites correspond to the various stages of the Sassanid kingdom, from the very beginning (Firuzabad) to a more mature age (Bishapur), until the very late and post-Sassanid period (Sarvestan).

The fifth is cultural, Firuzabad illustrates a purely Sassanid culture, Bishapur shows the importance of the cultural contacts with the Roman Empire and Sarvestan illustrates the long-durée strength of Sassanid culture into the early Islamic age.

1-b: Outline the contribution of each site component to the Overall Outstanding Universal value in a substantial, scientific and discernible way as outlined in paragraph 137b of Operational Guidelines:

Each site component of the nominated property contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region as a whole in a substantial, scientific and discernible way.

The most important factor behind the contribution of each site to the overall Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property is that: each demonstrates architectural and historical features and significance of a particular determine period of the Sassanid Empire, while when combined together the whole, as one entity, clearly manifest, the overall OUV of the site.

To this end, it is to be considered that OUV cannot be represented in just a single component because is distributed in proportion with the area of the Sassanid Empire in Fars and thus complements each other, and together can display the gradual evolution.

As regards the contributions of the geographical aspects, Firuzabad illustrates the serial property in eastern Fars, Sarvestan in central Fars and Bishapur in western Fars: in this way the geographical attribute of the serial property is easily comprehended and communicated.

The topographical aspect of the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region is

covered by the contribution of the three component sites. Firuzabad and Bishapur, in their different geographical areas, both bring evidence of a topographical context including a new town founded by a king in a plain and several associated architectural and art monuments in the surrounding hills: at Firuzabad one of Ardashir I's palaces is built on a high rocky spur, the other in the plain near a small lake, and two rock reliefs are carved in the nearby valley facing a river; at Bishapur a palace is built on a hillock high on the plain and six rock reliefs are carved in the nearby valley facing a river; at Sarvestan, the existing main building looks isolated in a plain but the archaeological evidence shows the original presence of surrounding structures. Thus Firuzabad and Bishapur show the same topographical relationship between town and king's palace, which can therefore be considered as typical of the Sassanid culture at least in the early period. Also the interesting relationship between Sassanid rock reliefs and water, which illustrate the religious and ideological attitude of the Sassanid dynasty, is clearly to be witnessed at both sites, bringing an important element for the connection of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region with environment, which appears as easily understood and communicated.

The architectural aspect of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region is illustrated by the contribution of the three sites: Firuzabad contributes in urbanism (Ardashir Khureh), civil architecture (Qaleh Dokhtar and Ardashir I's palace) and religious architecture (Takht-e Neshin); Bishapur contributes in urbanism (town), civil architecture (Qaleh Dokhtar, Monument of Shapur I), religious architecture (in the so-called Shapur's palace); Sarvestan in religious architecture (function of Zoroastrian fire temple). Thus the architectural aspect of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region is easily understood and communicated through the contribution of these sites.

As regards to the chronological and historical value of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region, as a testimony of one of the most important empires of the ancient world, Firuzabad represent the evidence of the creation of the Empire under Ardashir I, until the beginning of the Islamic period; Bishapur illustrates the consolidation of the kingdom under Shapur I, who through his victories over the Roman Empire could acquire Roman specialized craftsmanship for his urban and artistic projects; Sarvestan finally throws light on the still important role of Zoroastrian religion during the final phases of the Sassanid kingdom and at the beginning of the Islamic period. Thus the chronological and historical aspects of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region is easily comprehended and communicated though the contribution of these sites.

The cultural aspect of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region is illustrated by the different characteristics of each of the components Firuzabad illustrates an original, purely Sassanid culture in eastern Fars stimulated by the multiple activities of the founder of the dynasty, Ardashir I, extending from town planning to architecture and art; Bishapur shows the importance of the cultural contacts with the Roman empire under the long and powerful kingdom of Shapur I, which consolidated the empire and saw a flourishing period of fertile cultural and economical exchanges with Rome, despite many wars; Sarvestan, finally, illustrates the long-durée strength of Sassanid culture into the early Islamic age.

2- Risks and factors affecting the property

All site components are located within seismically active areas and have experienced previous earthquakes, at times with devastating impacts. The nomination dossier states on p.281 that with recent conservation works the likeliness of earthquake damages has significantly decreased.

ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could provide further information about the way conservation techniques have been applied , which ones are specifically adapted to the seismic risks of the area as well as how property documentation and risk preparedness plans address the possible impact of a major earthquake.

According to the conditions and the forms of the property in each site, different scheduling and executive actions will be taken to decrease the effects of earthquake. In the case of Bishapur and Ardashir khureh (Shahre Gur), both considered as huge spaces, as the height of properties are not so much and regarding their location in the site, earthquake will not be so risky.

In Case of Qaleh dokhtar, engineering studies and strengthening structures have been done by a French – Swiss group and a project was suggested too. However, as there were some probable risks in implementing the new interventions in the project, it was not executed. As a switch plan, it was decided to continue the project by utilizing the traditional knowledge and skilled professionals. Consequently the parts of buttress were repaired and the bed/ground surrounding the building was stabilized.

Documentation of Castel/Qaleh has been done through laser scanning and photogrammetry in different periods. The monitoring of the site has been implemented systematically according to the different plans through past years and is being currently implemented.

Currently, a group of skilled engineers specialized in the field of historical monuments are studying in this site to find a solution to strengthen the building against earthquake. A short summery of their activities will be mentioned below. The technical committee of the site and the technical council of the Cultural Heritage Organization, which consists of experienced and skilled members and experts, constantly observe the results of the studies and consult with the group of experts. Reaching to the final conclusion, the plan will be presented to both the technical committee and technical council for ratification and then the process of implementation will be discussed. The similar procedure is being done for Sarvestan palace as well.

Programmes:

Phase 1: Assigning/designating the objectives and main plans and strategies of the project by project manager.

Phase 2: Site Topography and topography of the structure area in proper scale for analyzing the bed of the structure

Phase 3: Assigning/designating geological characteristics of the site and deeper layers of the earth to proper depth (Geo Technique and stone mechanic experiments), and Preparing programme of infield studies and laboratory experiments for recognizing the earth's behavior

Phase 4: preparing programme of material resistance experiments using applied materials in Qaleh Dokhtar structure (stone and mortar mechanic experiment),

Phase 5: studying and surveying faults of the region and vulnerability of the site against tremors.

Phase 6: Analysis of the ground and pathology.

Phase 7: studying the consolidation/reinforcement of the ground as well as the structure.

Phase 8: comprehensive three dimensional modeling of the structures in their current state along with the surrounding preserving belt and studying the function of the belt

Phase 9: Providing final plan regarding strengthening the structure against natural threats including earthquakes

3- Protection

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive update information about the institution or authority that has formally adapted the development restriction for the buffer zones and landscape zone, which are indicated in the nomination dossier.

In Iran, Iranian cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism organization (ICHHTO) as the representative of Islamic republic of Iran, is fully authorized for conservation of the monuments as well as preservation of Core zone and Buffer zone of the historical-cultural properties. This includes protection and preservation of these properties against any development. Also, there are some regulations and laws ratified by the Parliament in order to preserve the buffer zones of these properties. These laws and regulations as a guideline have been considered in Master, detailed and pilot plans and proclaimed to all relevant organizations to be implemented.

In the Iranian cultural heritage, handicrafts and truism organization (ICHHTO) Security guard has been established for physical monitoring and controlling the developments.

Also, regarding development of rural areas, housing foundation is collaborating with SALF base. These plans primarily should be approved by the ICHHTO and then they are allowed to be ratified by the housing foundation. In the case of any contrary, the veto right is reserved for ICHHTO.

For the urban areas, master and detailed plans are prepared by the ministry of road and urban development in collaboration with municipalities. These plans should be approved by the ICHHTO too. And without this approval, the high council of architecture and urban development which ICHHTO is an active member of it, would not ratify the acts.

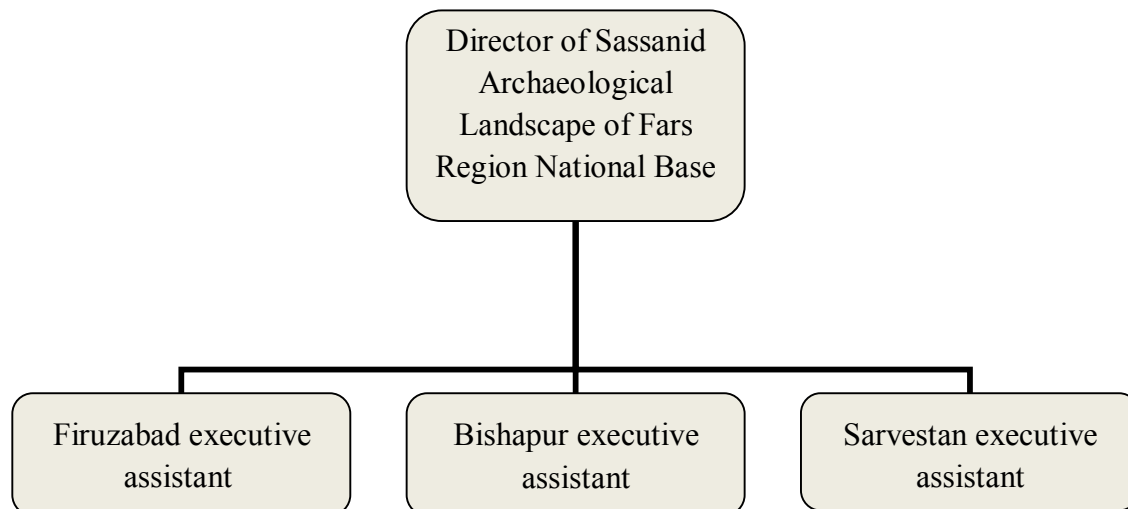
Regarding the urban plans which municipalities are in charge of them, the inquiries will be done from cultural heritage organization as well.

4- Management

The management structure is characterized by the twofold structure of SALF bases in Firuzabad/ Sarvestan and Bishapur as state in the nomination dossier p.318.

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive further information about these structures in order to understand better how the cooperation between them and, in particular between the individuals listed responsible for the same tasks functions in practice.

The important Historical- cultural properties (sites), inscribed on the national list, are managed as base, by a director, his/her executive assistant, and a team of experts in the form of research, executive, legal groups. As illustrated in the chart below, the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars, is managed unitedly under supervision of Director of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars region National Base. The base has a technical committee and a strategic committee; all the strategic and technical decisions are implemented after adoption in the mentioned committees. For better implementation of the programs, the director has assigned assistants in the three components of the base. Local experts are working in various fields in the 3 mentioned sites.



5- Monitoring

The presentation of a “monitoring system” is briefly described in the nominations dossier.

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive further information on whether previous monitoring exercises have taken place.

The monitoring system includes different parts as below:

1. Physical Monitoring:

Done through 2 ways, A) by Security Guards who are connected to Justice Ministry, police and site, equipped with required equipment. These guards are present in 3 sites of (Firuzabad, Bishapur and Sarvestan) day and night. (B) Electronic security: through electronic equipment including security cameras connected to the central system monitored and reported by responsible guard.

2. Structural Monitoring:

A) By Photography and Photogrammetry

B) By field research and visiting

C) Through testing instruments including Chalk indicators, testing temperature...

This part is implemented by the trained experts of the site in intervals according to the chart presented in pages 320-323 of the nomination dossier.

3. Social, Economic, Cultural and tourism Monitoring:

This part includes tourists, employees and inhabitants of the surrounding villages of the site, implemented in coordination of related organizations and experts of the site. The data including Population conditions, economic statistics, cultural, educational, hygienic issues as well as related infrastructures are collected from related organizations, analyzed and used for better management of the site. The qualitative and quantitative statistics of tourists are systematically recorded by the trained experts at the site.

4. Traffic Monitoring:

This monitoring is implemented by road and urban development ministry and the reports are receiving by the base periodically.

5- Climatic and geographical Monitoring:

This monitoring is implemented through various climatic measurement stations, including metrology and geographical stations like geology and seismography. The data are collected from the related stations, analyzed by the trained experts, and the results and conclusions are used for proper management of the site.

It is evident that in case of requiring other information, the monitoring team would prepare the needed data and information via related sections.