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## Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple (India) No 1570

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### Official name as proposed by the State Party

The Glorious Kakatiya Temples and Gateways - Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple, Palampet, Jayashankar Bhupalpally District, Telangana State, India

### Location

Palampet  
Mulugu District  
Telangana State  
India

### Brief description

The temple of Rudreshwara, popularly known as Ramappa Temple, is located in the village of Palampet approximately 200km north-east of Hyderabad, in the State of Telangana. Rudreshwara is the main Shiva temple in a larger walled temple complex which includes smaller temples and *Mandapa* structures, all constructed during the Kakatiyan period (1123–1323 CE) under its chieftains Rudradeva and Recherla Rudra. The temple is built of sandstone with decorated beams and pillars of carved granite and dolerite with a distinctive and pyramidal *Vimana* (horizontally stepped tower) made of lightweight porous bricks, so-called 'floating bricks', which reduced the weight of the roof structures. The temple's sculptures of high artistic quality illustrate regional dance customs and Kakatiyan culture.

### Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a nomination of a *site*.

## 1 Basic data

### Included in the Tentative List

15 April 2014

### Background

This is a new nomination.

### Consultations and Technical Evaluation Mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 23 to 27 September 2019.

### Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 24 September 2019 requesting further information about the selection process of the property, in particular the decision to abandon the initially planned serial nomination as proposed on the Tentative List, the importance of the historic irrigation system, the comparative analysis, and a number of planning documents, including the integrated management plan, the tourism development plan and the land acquisition plan.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2019, summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report, including: on the name of the property; the definition of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value in the context of its artistic quality and its wider geographical context; protection and management arrangements, including the establishment of a special development area; the integrated conservation and management plan; tourism development plans; as well as methodological approaches to conservation.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 24 October 2019 and on 28 February 2020, and has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

12 March 2020

## 2 Description of the property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report only provides a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

### Description and history

Rudreshwara Temple, also known as Ramappa Temple, is a temple complex which was built during the Kakatiyan dynasty (1123–1323 CE). It is the feudal chief Recherla Rudra who started the its construction in 1213 CE, which remains documented in a 204-line inscription on a polished basalt pillar. The construction of the temple is said to have taken around 40 years to complete.

Recherla Rudra was an important general, who had supported the King Ganapatideva since his early years, granting him security when he was in danger and reinstating him into power. He subsequently became very powerful and influential as well as responsible for Ghanpur, a military garrison roughly 10 kilometres away from Palampet and Ramappa Temple.

The temple complex of Rudreshwara is located south-east of the village of Palampet in the foothills of a forested area and amidst agricultural fields, close to the shores of the Ramappa Cheruvu, a Kakatiya-built water reservoir.

This setting was selected following the ideology and practice sanctioned in *dharmic* texts that temples are to be constructed to form an integral part of a natural setting, including hills, forests, catchment areas, streams, lakes, springs and agricultural lands. In line with these stipulations, the landscape in the vicinity of Rudreshwara Temple forms a triad of (1) temple, (2) spring, stream and water tanks, and (3) village and the farmers' agricultural production. It is also consciously embedded in its wider surroundings including hills, a forest reserve and agricultural fields. The ideology of *Saptasantanas* lists the construction of temples as one of seven deeds to attain merit, with the other six relating to notions such as the digging of tanks or creation of gardens. The temple surroundings also contain multiple other smaller temples built by the local merchants and chieftains.

Within this wider temple landscape, Rudreshwara Temple lies at the centre of a walled temple complex, which contains additional structures including the much smaller Kateshwara Temple, the former Kameshwara Temple, now referred to as Kalyana Mandapa due to the absence of the *Garbhagriha* (the innermost sanctuary) and other structures. All the structures in the complex are oriented on an east-west axis and face the east, towards the rising sun.

Rudreshwara Temple, dedicated to Shiva, is designed on a stellate plan, which was first introduced by Chalukyan architects and later adopted by the Kakatiya architects articulating it into their own style. Built on a bordered and compacted sand bed (sand box) – described as a Kakatiya innovation for earthquake resilience – the temple is constructed of sandstone with sculpted granite and dolerite pillars and lightweight porous bricks, so-called 'floating bricks', for the highest structures of the *Vimana*. The latter is presented as another noteworthy technological feature of this temple's masterful construction.

The storeyed pyramidal *Vimana* (a tower above the *sanctum sanctorum* in a Hindu Temple) of the *Vesara* order, the decorative carvings in sandstone on granite and dolerite pillars, as well as the bracket figures of maidens carrying the porticos, are the most distinctive features of this temple. The *Vimana*'s structure is based on a square plan and perfectly pyramidal with five storeys. The sculpted pillars illustrate geometrical and floral ornamentation but also reliefs with references to ritual dances of Shiva. This dance, a cosmic dance understood to be the basis of harmony between matter and energy, was particularly popular as a pre-war dance during the Kakatiya period. Noteworthy are also the 38 bracket figures installed along the exterior of the *Sabha Mandapa*. These dolerite brackets are the most multi-dimensional components illustrating *Gaja-Vyalas* (animal-headed creatures) and twelve *Madanikas* (maidens).

Rudreshwara Temple is a product of the Kakatiya dynasty and its Telugu language groups, most specifically, the Recherla as commanders of this outermost region of the Kakatiyan Empire. Building on the architectural traditions

of the earlier Kalyana Chalukyas dynasty, the Kakatiyas developed further their capacity for sculptural expression and bracket figures as illustrated by the Rudreshwara Temple. After a short-lived golden age, the Tuglaq Invasion in 1325-1351 AD and the later Bahmani Dynasty, left the temple in an even more isolated location. Over the centuries the temple complex was affected by lack of maintenance which resulted in losses of elements, vegetation growth and roots which at times have destroyed walls. From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, maintenance activities have been taken up again, with the temple complex falling under the responsibility of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). At present, the temple continues to be used as a site of pilgrimage and rituals in the authentic tradition of *Shaiva-Agama*. The temple attracts large crowds of ritual visitors, especially during festivals, and features as a local and regional tourism destination.

### Boundaries

The nominated property has an area of 5.93 ha, and a buffer zone of 66.27 ha. The boundary of the nominated property corresponds to the area under the custodianship of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and is physically marked by a fence. It contains the temples and the complex's outer wall and the immediate and small section of the landscaped garden surrounding it, which hosts some small visitor facilities.

The buffer zone is made up of the prohibited area and the regulated area, each drawn at 100m and 200m distance, respectively, from the boundary of the nominated property. Thus both areas together extend to 300 metres in every direction from the nominated property's boundary. The buffer zone encompasses mostly cultivated lands and forest in addition to three small-scale Kakatiya temples, the visitor parking spaces, and some commercial facilities at the entrance to the temple complex.

These buffer zone measurements were set to correspond with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (AMASR Act) adopted by the Parliament of India in 1958, which stipulates that, for a distance of 100 meters from an ancient monument recognized by this Act, no construction is permissible and that for a further distance of 200 meters any change would need to be authorized by the ASI.

ICOMOS observes that the Rudreshwara temple complex is an integral part of a wider setting, which is historically shaped by Kakatiya *dharmic* tradition and composed of irrigation systems and water reservoirs which determined the exact location and enabled the functional use of the temple. ICOMOS notes the additional information provided by the State Party, which states that the temple was consciously located in a very specific location and set of natural features, surrounded by a water reservoir, channels and agricultural lands, which contributed to the merits of the temple establishment and were functionally linked to its

operation and economic basis. In ICOMOS' view, this larger environment of the temple, in particular the water storage and distribution system but also the forest reserve, agricultural fields and smaller temples, cannot be separated from the complex and contribute to the testimony of Kakatiya architectural and infrastructural development around Palampet. However, in the present nomination, these features are located outside the property boundary and buffer zone.

ICOMOS notes with appreciation that the State Party intends to establish a special development zone outside the buffer zone aimed at preventing inappropriate developments in a larger area. However, based on the additional information provided in response to ICOMOS' Interim Report, ICOMOS considers that important features are located in the buffer zone and also beyond it, in the area now intended to be designated as a special development zone. ICOMOS therefore considers that the State Party should consider a significant property boundary extension in order to ensure that all important features of the potential Outstanding Universal Value are subject to adequate legal protection and management, and that subsequently an extended buffer zone needs to be defined around the revised boundary delineation.

#### **State of conservation**

The main temple of the complex, the Rudreshwara Temple, is considered to be in a satisfactory state of conservation and has been frequently conserved and maintained since 1914 by the ASI and with the guidance of the Kakatiya Heritage Trust (KHT). Prior to these conservation initiatives the temple was overgrown with vegetation and damaged by growing roots, which were removed. However, it never collapsed even though local differential settlement caused misalignments to some elements. During the first large conservation campaign in 1931, decorations and ornaments that had fallen off but were traceable were reattached in their original positions.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the contemporary state of conservation is a product of continuous conservation activities since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, during which all elements of the temple complex, apart from the Kameshwara Temple, have been conserved to different degrees. At present, the Kameshwara Temple is undergoing conservation by means of anastylosis. It presently appears unassembled whereby, apart from large stone slabs which are in their original locations, all other elements have been dismantled. They have been numbered and documented and are now awaiting reassembly by anastylosis. This will happen once the load-bearing calculations for the reassembled structure have been approved. ICOMOS requested clarification on the reasons why a complete disassembly of the temple had been considered the preferred conservation methodology. The State Party responded that the disassembling of Kameshwara Temple was started by

the ASI in 2011 under the previous state government of Andhra Pradesh and following geotechnical studies. At present no specific timeframe for the reassembly of Kameshwara Temple is offered, whilst ICOMOS notes that its current condition negatively affects the legibility of important features of the property.

ICOMOS recommends that the revised comprehensive conservation and management plan committed by the State Party to be completed by December 2021, establishes a clear timeframe and methodology for the completion of its conservation. There are also three smaller temples within the complex, which have not been fully investigated and documented.

The Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple demonstrates a floor settlement challenge, which was caused by sand leaking out of the foundations. However, as this did not cause any risk to the building structure, the temple was conserved in a condition illustrating the settlement adjustments as a reference to the wisdom of the sand-box construction. Smaller additions to the historic structure include new pillars added to support the roof corners on the western side and sandstone replacements in the parapet, used in locations where originally floating bricks would have been placed. These two changes affect the perception of the temple's homogenous Kakatiya workmanship and design and should be replaced by more appropriate methods and materials in future conservation initiatives.

None of the other structures inside the nominated property boundaries, which have not been specifically referred to above, require urgent conservation actions, as all seem to be in a quite stable condition. However, several of the smaller Kakatiya temples, located in the buffer zone, seem at risk of collapsing. The state of conservation of the important elements not currently included in the boundaries, such as the Kakatiya water distribution system from Ramappa Lake, in particular the Voger Channel, have also not been considered. ICOMOS recommends that in the course of further documentation regarding the boundary extension, these and other essential elements in the enlarged property should be included in the revised comprehensive conservation and management plan.

#### **Factors affecting the property**

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are the permeability of the sand-box and with it the slow continuous loss of the sand within it; inappropriate visitor behaviour and seasonal overcrowding; and potentially future development of visitor infrastructure.

The sand-box system of the foundations of Rudreshwara Temple was an ingenious design to ensure earthquake resistance of the temple structures. However, over the centuries, the box itself became porous and the sand within it leaks slowly but steadily.

The ASI is aware of this problem and possible solutions are being considered.

The nominated property and in particular its surrounding wider area are vulnerable to potential negative visual impacts of visitor facilities and commercial development that could change the character of the wider setting when seen from the property. This wider temple setting has preserved a unique ensemble of Kakatiya created elements related to Rudreshwara Temple, including the water reservoir, water channels, the Vana Gutta forest reserve, agricultural lands and several smaller temples, which illustrate a completely undisturbed visual relationship to each other as well as a complete integration of the Kakatiya temple complex into its surrounding context. ICOMOS considers that this authenticity and integrity in visual terms constitutes a strong information source as to the legibility of the temple features and needs to be preserved in light of the State Party's intention to promote this area for cultural tourism.

Therefore, ICOMOS considers that the State Party should ensure that all the mentioned features that support the understanding of the temple ensemble as a much larger complex and setting, be incorporated into the revised nominated property and buffer zone, in order to provide these areas with adequate protection, which will mitigate the risks related to development pressures.

Particularly, the areas to the south-west, south and south-east of the temple contain features which originated during the temple's construction in the Kakatiya era. Potential future visitor facilities or accommodation structures could have negative visual impacts on the values of the nominated property. ICOMOS acknowledges that the special development zone proposed by the State Party, as well as the proposed "view zones", aims at reducing the risk of inappropriate developments and is proposed to cover the most important areas where the important features are located. This special development area aims at organising different spatial planning systems, divided into heritage zone, public infrastructure zone, residential zone, agriculture zone and forest zone, and at incorporating the regulations.

However, ICOMOS considers that following the redefinition of the boundaries, the stipulations of the special development zone would need to be reviewed in terms of their ability to protect the extended temple complex.

The nominated property is also affected by inappropriate visitor behaviour (including vandalism and theft) and seasonal festive overcrowding. In the integrated conservation and management plan submitted in February 2020, the State Party describes in more detail the festivals which occur in Rudreshwara Temple as well as its strategies for management of visitor flows. Both of these aspects need to be further monitored and results as well as future strategies need to be considered in the

revised comprehensive conservation and management plan committed to be finalized in December 2021. In this context a risk preparedness plan should also be developed for all potential natural and anthropogenic disasters and risks which might occur.

### 3 Proposed justification for inscription

#### Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The Rudreshwara Temple is a singular testimony of the highest level of creative, artistic and engineering expression of the Kakatiya Period. The nominated property is also a testimony of a flourishing agriculture-based society on land devoid of perennial water sources in the 12<sup>th</sup> century;
- The Kakatiyas developed the temple in a superior style of temple architecture. The sculptures of the temple, especially its bracket figures, are unique sculptures carved out of the hard dolerite stone and express dynamic movement in their forms; neither humans nor animals appear static or sedentary;
- Rudreshwara Temple illustrates examples of engineering ingenuity, including the invention of floating bricks (light porous bricks) to reduce the load on the foundations, and sand-box foundations, which made the temple an earthquake resistant structure;
- The temple complex of Ramappa displays an interchange of human values over a period of 180 years in the Telugu language-speaking region of Deccan India, documenting the transmission of Kalyana Chalukyas and Hoysalas cultural and architectural traditions to the Vijayanagara Empires.

In its Interim Report, ICOMOS suggested to the State Party the need to consider changing the name of the nominated property as the current one is related to the previous serial nomination project proposed on the Indian Tentative List. The State Party replied suggesting a revised name for the property, namely: "The Glorious Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple at Palampet (Mulugu District), Telangana State, India". ICOMOS takes note of this proposal; however, the name appears very long with location details that are not necessary to the understanding of the property. ICOMOS suggests shortening the future name of the property and invites the State Party to consider how a nomination including the wider temple complex could be best reflected in a revised name.

#### Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis is presented in two main parts: firstly, a comparison with other Kakatiya temples, followed by a broader comparison of temples with similar features and in comparable historical periods. The latter is divided into a comparison within India and a comparison in an international context. The

comparison with other Kakatiya temples and gateways names just two examples, the Swayambhu Temple in Warangal Fort, and the Thousand Pillars (Rudreshwara) Temple in Hanumakonda. Unfortunately, comparison with these two examples is limited to very general considerations in terms of their integrity and authenticity.

ICOMOS in its request for additional information sent on 24 September 2019 asked to augment the comparative analysis with other testimonies of the Kakatiya dynasty including, but not limited to, the two temple complexes named above. The State Party submitted a brief addition to the comparison of the two temples at Hanumakonda and Warangal describing their inferiority when compared to Rudreshwara Temple at Palampet. No other Kakatiya testimonies were mentioned; however, the State Party informed that the Department of Heritage Telangana (DHT) and the Kakatiya Heritage Trust (KHT) are currently undertaking a comparison of Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple and other Kakatiya temples and that progress on this will be updated at a later stage as the research is still in a preparatory stage. ICOMOS considers that such comparative material remains essential to illustrate the temple complex's potential exceptional features in artistic terms.

The national and international comparison of temple structures of a similar historical timeframe is focused exclusively on World Heritage properties and considers four World Heritage properties in India, as well as the Longmen Grottoes, China (2000, (i), (ii) and (iii)) and the Temple Zone of Sambor Prei Kuk, Archaeological Site of Ancient Ishanapura, Cambodia (2017, (ii), (iii) and (vi)).

ICOMOS considers that while the international comparison could have been far more extensive, also considering sites not yet inscribed on the World Heritage List, the key shortfall of the comparative analysis presented is the lack of comparison of temples within the Kakatiya or larger Chalukya or Deccan empires. ICOMOS considers that despite the additional information submitted by the State Party, the comparative analysis lacks comparisons related to the floating bricks, the sand-box technique for foundation construction, the sculptural art and the layout of the temple construction. These elements, which are presented as being important aspects of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, would have benefitted from further exploration in terms of comparators.

ICOMOS considers that further comparison with other Kakatiya or larger Chalukya or Deccan empires' temple complexes is needed to evaluate whether Ramappa Temple can be seen as being the finest surviving 'Kakatiya' temple or an exceptional testimony of the Kakatiya era, when compared to other temples of the Kakatiya Dynasty within its regional expansion. An augmented comparative analysis would be further strengthened by considering not only the walled temple complex alone, but the temple complex within its wider

setting which includes important other elements testifying to the Kakatiya Dynasty.

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ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis does not justify consideration of this nominated property for World Heritage Listing at this stage.

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#### **Criteria under which inscription is proposed**

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii) and (iii).

*Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Rudreshwara Temple is a masterpiece of Kakatiyan temple architecture expressed through the use of engineering innovations such as floating bricks, sand-box foundations, selection of specific materials and ingenuity in stone sculpting.

ICOMOS considers that lightweight bricks and sand-box foundations are not unique to Rudreshwara Temple and that the exceptional character of these in terms of their characteristics or state of conservation has not been supported by a comprehensive comparative analysis.

The Ramappa Temple needs to be understood in relation to its architectural tradition. However, the temple cannot be said to be as inventive or as complex as its Kalyana Chalukya predecessors for which the staggered, five-projection, four-storey composition was essentially standard by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The stone sculptures however, in particular the bracket figures, can be seen as impressive in terms of artistic capacity and craftsmanship and might stand out in a regional context of Kakatiya artistic production. However, in ICOMOS' view, it is difficult to understand how sculptures of a single temple could stand out for the entire artistic production of the Kakatiya dynasty or even the wider Deccan Empire context. Further comparative analysis would be needed to compare these with artistic works not only of Kakatiya origin but also of the Chalukya or Deccan empires to consider whether Ramappa indeed offers something exceptional at a regional scale. ICOMOS, in its Interim Report, inquired further about the artistic tradition and production, to which the State Party responded with further information on iconographic content, such as that the sculptures of the temple represent both regional dance customs and Puranic texts, but did not provide additional information on the artistic tradition. This however would be necessary to support the claim that a single temple could best represent the artistic mastery of an empire which left behind a number of exceptional architectural and engineering works.

ICOMOS therefore considers that criterion (i) has not been justified at this stage.

Criterion (ii): *exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Rudreshwara Temple displays the interchange of human values over a period of 180 years, namely from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE, which influenced the development of architectural and artistic tradition in the Telugu language-speaking region of Deccan in India. The Kakatiyas built upon traditions from the Kalyana Chalukyas and Hoysalas empires and transmitted them to the Vijayanagara Empire in a more refined and improved form of technology, sculpture, and architecture.

ICOMOS considers that most architectural traditions are formed in a specific era and transmit from previous to subsequent eras, or deliberately break with earlier traditions. It appears therefore natural that the Kakatiya architectural and artistic expressions are rooted in previous traditions of the same geo-cultural region and have influenced later ones. What has not been demonstrated is in what way the Rudreshwara Temple can be said to be outstanding in terms of illustrating an interchange of human values over time or within the same geo-cultural area. ICOMOS notes that the interchange in and between human societies and cultures is commonplace and that the justification of this criterion requires that the interchange of values/influence is substantial and important in its impact on the recipient culture. The transfer of a minor cultural aspect, or the transfer of a value which had little impact, cannot be said to be an outstanding value of the nominated property.

Therefore, ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) has not been justified.

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Rudreshwara Temple is the best surviving example of Kakatiyan traditions of art, architecture and technology. The efforts of Kakatiyan craftsmen to interpret and integrate motifs of regional dance customs and Kakatiyan cultural traditions into sculptural and textual representations, stands out as an exceptional testimony of popular cultural art forms in Kakatiyan times.

ICOMOS notes that Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple was created as a harmonious ensemble of the natural environment, architecture, sculpture, ritual and dance; five elements, which complemented each other in defining the temple's ritual space. ICOMOS considers that therefore the walled temple complex currently proposed is one element of this larger Kakatiya ensemble at Palampet. While it indeed reflects Kakatiya

cultural traditions, such as the detailed and delicate sculptures which represent both ritual dances and local customs as well as having an architectural function, thereby connecting the different elements, the integration of the temple into its environmental surroundings preserves a unique Kakatiya temple setting and requires that Ramappa Temple is approached within this larger context.

ICOMOS considers that the Rudreshwara Temple has strong potential to be recognized as an exceptional testimony of the Kakatiyan Dynasty and its artistic, architectural and engineering achievements. However, ICOMOS considers the testimony of the temple is not complete at the boundary walls of the inner temple complex but requires the representation of its whole establishment context, including the natural setting of forest reserve, agricultural fields, water distribution system and the smaller temples which complement its immediate surroundings. Only in such a wider context can the property of Rudreshwara Temple do full justice to the testimony of Kakatiyan cultural, architectural and artistic creations. ICOMOS therefore considers that, while having potential to be justified, the potential attributes of criterion (iii) have not been included in the property at this stage.

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ICOMOS considers that criterion (iii) demonstrates strong potential to be met once the related attributes are fully included in the property. However, ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) has not been met and that criterion (i) would require further comparative support to demonstrate its potential.

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## **Integrity and authenticity**

### **Integrity**

Integrity for an exceptional temple testimony of the Kakatiya Dynasty would be expressed through inclusion of all the significant architectural and artistic achievements of the temple complex, which remains well preserved and hence provides legible testimony to this political era and cultural tradition up to today. While the Rudreshwara Temple could have the potential to be considered as an exceptional testimony to the Kakatiya Dynasty, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property could only be fully appreciated in its entirety of features, which would include the relationship between the central temple complex and its wider setting, in particular the natural features, the artificial Kakatiya-built reservoir and irrigation systems, and the several smaller temples within the immediate surrounding landscape. For this reason, the larger setting of the site as well as important vistas and sight-lines in the surrounding landscape remain essential to the understanding and completeness of the property but are presently vulnerable in the lack of adequate landscape protection schemes outside the buffer zone.

ICOMOS also considers that there is a high visual and functional integrity of the wider surroundings of the temple complex, which retain not only authenticity in setting but also a significant relationship with both purpose-built and natural elements, which enhance and maintain the atmosphere of temple ceremonies that continue to be performed in the temple complex to the present day. ICOMOS considers that these elements surrounding the temple should be considered as attributes and would need to be included within the property boundaries to demonstrate the temple's integrity in its historic, *dharmic* and functional wider setting.

ICOMOS notes that some of these elements are presently located in the buffer zone, including a triple shrine temple situated by the side of the canal from Ramappa Lake, which, in spite of its small size, illustrates significant architectural qualities; and another shrine located on the Kakatiya channel to the north, parallel to the boundary of the nominated area. The latter is a single shrine temple, with a square Mandapa and a small pavilion, and is a good representative of Kakatiya-style architecture, but the building is at risk of collapse as it has settled to one side. In addition, another Shiva temple is situated on the opposite side of the road.

ICOMOS also notes that several other important features are located even outside the buffer zone and therefore lack legal protection as heritage structures, despite the efforts of the State Party to establish a special development zone providing landscape protection to these areas. These features include the earthen bund of about 600m length connecting *Vana Gutta* and *Varala Gutta* to the Lake's north, which created the Ramappa Lake water reservoir; the Temple of Trikuteshwara swamy and another two temples found on the north-western end of the bund; the Sivalayam on the eastern end of the bund; the water distribution and irrigation system extending north from the bund, including the Voger Channel, which provides water to the inner temple complex; as well as sections of the neighbouring forest reserve and surrounding agricultural lands including the earthen bunds sub-dividing these.

ICOMOS considers that for the nominated property to demonstrate integrity in terms of completeness, these features and attributes would need to be integrated into the property boundaries as they form an essential context for the temple's meaning and function.

In terms of integrity as intactness, ICOMOS considers that the Ramappa Temple retains the capacity to communicate Kakatiya artistic, architectural and technological production, despite several past conservation measures. However, the Kameshwara Temple, which is at present disassembled and awaiting anastylosis, does not at present illustrate a condition of intactness that would allow the Kakatiya designs and craftsmanship to be legible. ICOMOS considers that this temple, together with the elements and attributes listed above, should be considered for a comprehensive

conservation survey as some of these are in need of a structured conservation programme.

#### Authenticity

The Rudreshwara Temple complex combines features which suggest the exploration of authenticity in form, design, craftsmanship, material, setting, function and use, traditional management system and associated intangible cultural heritage in relation to traditional dance, and integration in its wider natural and architectural context. Despite several past conservation activities which may have restored single elements to designs not fully appropriate – such as a plain parapet in lieu of a chain of decorated elements– the authenticity in design, form and material as well as craftsmanship is acceptable. The disassembled Kameshwara Temple however cannot presently be said to demonstrate authenticity in form, design or craftsmanship and ICOMOS recommends that a detailed conservation programme is established within the revised integrated conservation and management plan, committed to be available in December 2021.

The wider Rudreshwara Temple complex remains in function and use, which not only applies to the temple itself for which ritual use has been reinstated but also for the larger complex including the irrigation channels and cultivated land. This is an important aspect of not only its authenticity but also its value. ICOMOS considers that the setting of the temple complex is of remarkable authenticity in setting, traditional management mechanisms as well as use and function. The Kakatiya wider area which surrounds the temple complex is likewise an important contribution in terms of attributes and authenticity, which needs to be carefully managed and conserved.

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ICOMOS considers that, with the exception of the Kameshwara Temple, the conditions of authenticity of the nominated property are acceptable. The conditions of integrity have not been met.

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#### Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

The Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple at Palampet has the potential to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value as an exceptional architectural, artistic and technological testimony to the Kakatiya Dynasty and its cultural traditions. Therefore, it demonstrates potential to justify criterion (iii) in a revised nomination approach including a larger territory, as several attributes of this potential Outstanding Universal Value are presently located outside the property boundary, with some even outside the buffer zone. The wider setting of the inner temple complex, composed of related Kakatiya architectural and engineering structures in the nominated property's surroundings, are features which contribute to the temple's legibility in terms of its natural, *dharmic* and functional context and therefore add an important representation to this testimony. ICOMOS considers that a thorough survey of these Kakatiya

remains is essential in the process of extending the boundaries to capture the full representation of the temple complex. As a result, ICOMOS considers that although the conditions of authenticity are in general acceptable for the setting, the nominated property does not meet the conditions of integrity at this stage.

### Features

The nominated property partly illustrates Kakatiyan architectural, artistic and technological traditions through its architectural structures within the walled temple compound and its wider setting. The walled temple complex, namely the Rudreshwara Temple (as the main building of the complex), is a single shrine temple comprising the central Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple and other secondary *mandapas*, shrines and temples. The sculptures, especially the bracket figures at the Rudreshwara Temple, are fine artistic representations of Kakatiya dance customs and cultural traditions. These features testify to Kakatiya customs and temple rituals as well as construction technology, materials and other sculptural elements illustrating artistic capacities in terms of workmanship.

Additional features not presently included in the nominated property are situated in the surrounding landscape and include a number of smaller shrines and temples as well as a sophisticated Kakatiya water distribution and irrigation system, composed of an earthen bund creating a large water reservoir, irrigation channels and forest reserves, as well as cultivated land. These features constitute not only an important setting but contain features illustrating an exceptional testimony of the Kakatiya Dynasty, in terms of the historic and functional context of the temple, in line with *dharmic* texts.

ICOMOS considers that while Rudreshwara Temple has potential to demonstrate an Outstanding Universal Value as an exceptional testimony of the cultural traditions of the Kakatiya Dynasty, none of the cultural criteria have been demonstrated at this stage. Whilst in ICOMOS' view the wider temple complex might potentially be an adequate selection of an exceptional Kakatiya testimony in comparative terms, the boundaries do not presently include the essential features and attributes of this wider temple complex, which was created in this specific location complementing the surrounding natural features and engineering works in line with *dharmic* texts and thus creating an integral temple complex linked by spiritual tradition and functional use. Therefore, while the conditions of authenticity are satisfactory, the conditions of integrity cannot be fully met in terms of completeness due to the missing features and attributes as well as a general vulnerability of the temple's setting as a result of a lack of protection mechanisms.

## 4 Conservation measures and monitoring

### Conservation measures

The history of study and conservation of Ramappa Temple began in 1914. The first conservation works were small repairs, followed by wider interventions in 1931. Several further conservation initiatives have been undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India, since it was formally given responsibility for the property in 1948.

These works included conservation and reconsolidation of the temples and the Nandi Mandapa, surface cleaning of sculptures, and, more recently, the ongoing documentation and disassembly works in preparation for the anastylosis of Kameshwara Temple, as well as conservation works at the Prakara wall. These conservation measures are currently focused on the eastern wall, which is formed of two parallel stone walls, an internal cavity filled with packed sand and a top cover of stone slabs decorated with stone merlons. The next step will be the conservation of the walls at other points and correction of the previous work that used small blocks of stone and cement.

While the conservation results seem largely appropriate, with the exception of the plain parapet in lieu of a chain of decorated elements and the disassembled Kameshwara Temple, ICOMOS considers it important to integrate all ongoing and planned conservation measures in a comprehensive conservation plan. With its response to the Interim Report the State Party submitted a draft integrated conservation and management plan, which it foresees to be finalized by December 2021. However, this draft does not yet contain the comprehensive and programmed approach to conservation which ICOMOS considers desirable to be completed within the envisaged timeframe.

This integrated conservation and management plan should also consider the state of conservation and activities needed for all other valuable structures in the wider setting around the currently nominated property. Some of the smaller temples and shrines in the buffer zone and beyond are at immediate risk of collapse and require urgent consideration in the overall programmed conservation approach of this Kakatiya heritage.

### Monitoring

The nomination dossier describes that monitoring at the site is frequently undertaken based on annual plans. The key indicators presented relate to vegetation growth, change of surface colour, the dolerite and sandstone surfaces as well as the enlargement of cracks in floors and beams. The monitoring is coordinated and supervised by the ASI, Hyderabad Circle, and the monitoring records are stored with the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad.



Unfortunately, no details are provided as to how the monitoring is implemented. ICOMOS therefore considers that further information on existing monitoring programmes and their implementation are needed in order to assess their appropriateness and effectiveness.

In terms of the indicators presented, ICOMOS considers that the themes covered are appropriate for considering the progress in decay of the structures although more specific indicators would need to be elaborated, based on a clear understanding of the identified attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. ICOMOS further recommends consideration of additional aspects such as visitor numbers, demands and proposals for visitor infrastructure, cases of vandalism as well as permeability of the sand-box, within the monitoring programmes. Streamlining of the monitoring system with the Periodic Reporting questionnaire would also be useful.

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ICOMOS considers that present conservation activities are globally appropriate but that the integrated conservation and management plan should consider a comprehensive and programmed approach to conservation, and should consider the state of conservation of the structures and features located in the wider setting of the nominated property. Monitoring programmes should be further elaborated, namely by expanding the monitoring indicators in relation to the nominated property's identified attributes and key factors affecting their state of conservation.

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## **5 Protection and management**

### **Documentation**

The Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple was identified as a protected monument in 1914 and was initially documented at that time. During the late 1980s, research was conducted to appreciate the construction technology of Kakatiyan temples, which also covered the temple complex at Palampet. The documentation of the temple structures in the complex, including that of Kameshwara Temple before its complete disassembly, as well as of different conservation works carried out over the years, appears sufficient.

However, ICOMOS notes with concern that elements of the larger temple complex, such as the Kakatiyan heritage features surrounding the property within its wider setting, have not enjoyed the same level of documentation. ICOMOS therefore recommends documenting these features in greater detail to anticipate their legal protection and future inclusion in the property.

### **Legal protection**

The nominated property is protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (AMASR) of 1958, the AMASR (Amendment and Validation) Act of 2010, and the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property within its boundaries enjoys adequate protection at the highest national level, and that the proposed buffer zone is equally well protected. ICOMOS notes that several features that could demonstrate potential Outstanding Universal Value of the property are located outside its boundaries and even outside the buffer zone. ICOMOS appreciates the plans to establish a special development zone, which were communicated in the additional information received in response to ICOMOS' Interim Report. While this zone appears to cover the most relevant areas, ICOMOS notes that heritage features need to be covered as such by legal protection, which might require more legal scrutiny than a development zone can offer, ideally legal protection as monuments at the highest national/federal level.

### **Management system**

The nominated property is managed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), namely its Hyderabad Circle and under its Warangal sub-Circle. The Warangal sub-Circle is headed by a Conservation Assistant who has three staff members under him to manage the temple complex along with others in the sub-circle's territories. The Hyderabad Circle and Warangal Circle jointly carry out regular maintenance works, including removal of vegetation on roofs, walls and other parts of the structures. They also commission day-to-day cleaning within the complex which includes sweeping and garbage removal.

Given the distance to the office of the site manager in Hyderabad and the sub-circle in Warangal, day-to-day management activities strongly depend on the two guides who are permanently posted at the site as staff of Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation, as well as on local communities living around the temple complex and the priests performing the ceremonies at the temple. ICOMOS considers that the local communities should be considered for the daily management of the nominated property, and integrated into the management system.

The management of Rudreshwara Temple is co-funded by the ASI, which provides resources for maintenance of the physical components, and the Endowments Department of Telangana State, which funds the cultural aspects and continuing temple rituals. In addition, in the context of important festivals, the funds for such events are managed by the Kakatiya Heritage Trust.

A first site management plan was submitted with the additional information provided by the State Party at the request of ICOMOS on 24 October 2019. This plan, prepared by the ASI, is a preliminary planning document designed for a period of five years. It is based on the objectives to study and analyse the challenges in conservation, visitor management and risks, and to draw up an integrated management plan providing a more concrete response to the issues analysed. It was not indicated in the documentation provided when this site management plan was prepared, nor whether it has been formally adopted or not, nor when it will be under

implementation. However, it is observable on site that some activities outlined in the management plan have already been completed.

In the State Party's response to the ICOMOS Interim Report in February 2020, a draft integrated conservation and management plan was submitted. This draft document, compiled by the Department of Heritage Telangana, includes a number of chapters which specifically address management implications on issues already raised by ICOMOS in its letters in relation to conservation. It includes a process plan and schedule for the revision and finalization of the draft integrated conservation and management plan by December 2021. Subsequent to these considerations the plan includes both national and Telangana heritage legislative documents and the previously submitted ASI management plan.

Whilst the introductory section of this draft integrated conservation and management plan refers to risk management and disaster response as well as visitor management, ICOMOS considers that these themes should be further developed in terms of objectives, policies and processes. Risk management would mostly relate to the risks of extreme weather events, earthquakes, and crowds during festive occasions, as well as the overall protection of the setting around the site to preserve its pristine character and prevent visual disturbances. Likewise, the assessment criteria and mechanisms for the consideration of appropriateness of future visitor infrastructure in the property's wider setting should be defined more explicitly. ICOMOS considers that the draft integrated conservation and management plan should consider the wider setting of the nomination, that is to say the water distribution system but also the forest reserve, agricultural fields and smaller temples, in addition to the wider temple complex itself, before its finalisation.

#### **Visitor management**

The Rudreshwara Temple is used for performing religious ceremonies, rituals, and traditional events during festivals, with parades that are direct interpretations of its historical functions. The development and construction of a new information centre and office for the guides of the site has been completed. ICOMOS noted that several tourism infrastructures have been established, or are in the process of being established, around the nominated property. Further information was requested in the Interim Report, and the State Party replied that Ramappa Temple is a visitor destination gaining popularity which therefore requires adequate visitor infrastructure for better visitor experience and regional economic growth. A master plan is being prepared to demarcate the location of key visitor infrastructures. In addition, the draft integrated conservation and management plan provides further detailed information on the anticipated developments, which include parking facilities, a tourism/visitor village, private hotels, the Ramappa Lakefront development and road

infrastructure developments around the temple. The information provided in the draft document includes the location of a shopping arcade, a tourism village and the Ramappa Lakefront development, but not those of the private hotels already mentioned. All these are scheduled to be completely developed by the end of 2021, which raises concerns as the integrated conservation and management plan is scheduled to be completed after this date. Smaller new infrastructures like toilet facilities and water purifiers have already been completed.

ICOMOS considers that the tourism development plans are mostly appropriate and at a considerable distance from the property. The tourism village is in a location that does not suggest any negative impacts to the property including to important features located outside the property boundaries. The only development in a location with very strong heritage features is the Ramappa Lakefront development, planned for restaurants and a children's amusement park. As this is situated in a key location of the larger Kakatiya temple setting, ICOMOS considers that this development would need to be reconsidered with an extremely cautious approach and that Heritage Impact Assessments should be undertaken before any such plans are approved or even implemented. The shopping arcade to the north of the temple is likewise in a sensitive location and its appropriateness will depend on design, height and volume of the structure.

At present about 200,000 persons visit the temple annually, which includes pilgrims who come to participate in ceremonies during festivals. For the increase in visitor numbers anticipated after potential inclusion of the nominated property on the World Heritage List, the State Party prepared a visitor flow system as part of the tourism development plan. An overview document with maps was provided with the additional information the State Party submitted at the request of ICOMOS on 24 October 2019. This plan foresees new access roads and gates from the east, which was the original entrance to the temple. Here visitors will be dropped to enter the temple complex and exit at the opposite rear gateway, which is the present entrance. An exclusion zone for commercial services was created on either side and shops are only allowed around the parking lot. Here also more visitor sanitary facilities will be provided.

#### **Community involvement**

The community members, including both inhabitants and religious representatives and priests, have been informed about the nomination and its potential consequences. There is hope among the local community for World Heritage recognition with an expectation that it will foster local development and increase community revenues which will help increase the quality of life. The priests were apprehensive of stricter regulations, which would prevent them from living within the nominated property. ICOMOS considers that the management approach would benefit from

stronger integration of the local and religious communities to ensure full compatibility of protection status and respect of the use of the property as a temple.

#### **Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Protection and Management of nominated property**

The protection of the nominated property is satisfactory; however, significant features of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are located outside the boundary and even outside the buffer zone and do not enjoy adequate legal protection. Whilst ASI, from its Hyderabad Circle and Warangal sub-Circle respectively, holds the main authority for managing the nominated property, ICOMOS recommends involving the local community and the priests as partners and stakeholders in the overall management system, particularly in relation to day-to-day maintenance.

The draft integrated conservation and management plan submitted anticipates the finalization of a comprehensive integrated management plan by December 2021. As the present site management plan is focused on a site analysis and on the development of an integrated management plan, it cannot be considered an effective management document but rather a tool driving the preparation of more concrete management strategies. Whilst awaiting the completion of the integrated conservation and management plan, ICOMOS suggests to cautiously re-evaluate the anticipated Ramappa Lakefront development, including through Heritage Impact Assessments, before any projects are approved or even implemented in this sensitive location.

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ICOMOS considers that the integrated management plan, announced for December 2021, should be finalized and integrate a programmed conservation plan for the property in its wider context and geographical extension as well as dedicated sections for risk preparedness and disaster response and visitor management.

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## **6 Conclusion**

Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple is a temple complex which was built during the Kakatiyan Dynasty. Focusing only on the main temple, ICOMOS considers that this nomination, as currently presented, does not meet the requirements for Outstanding Universal Value at this stage. Rudreshwara Temple is the centre of a larger Kakatiya temple ensemble, which illustrates various facets of Kakatiya cultural traditions and architectural, engineering and artistic production. Given the survival of its large lake and picturesque scenery, strengthening the comparative analysis in terms of comparison with the Kakatiya Dynasty and other dynasties in South India to see whether the Ramappa complex could be considered as an outstanding example of the way Kakatiya temples were developed as part of large landscape complexes with water tanks and towns,

would be needed. When reflecting on the Kakatiyan Dynasty's achievements, the inner walled temple complex alone does not provide a complete picture. A large number of important features of this larger comprehensive temple complex are located outside the property boundaries and even outside the buffer zone. The justification for inscription lacks specific elements of the narrative and value concepts, as well as integrity, in terms of completeness, and therefore cannot be demonstrated at this stage.

ICOMOS considers that Rudreshwara Temple cannot be understood merely within its walled inner temple precinct but needs to be represented in its wider temple context, embedded in its natural surroundings based on principles and deeds outlined in historic *dharmic* texts. In light of the conscious choice of the temple location in relation to the hills and a forest reserve, and its creation along with the Ramappa Lake bund, which initiated the former water stream's function as a water reservoir, as well as the water channels and agricultural lands that traditionally sustained the larger temple economy and function, these elements cannot be separated from the inner temple complex. The Kakatiyan architectural and engineering structures in the temple's wider setting, including several smaller temples, need to be thoroughly appraised and integrated within the property boundaries to fully encompass this important Kakatiya testimony.

Whilst the nominated property enjoys adequate protection, important features are presently located outside the property boundaries and are not covered by adequate legal protection. Conservation efforts seem largely satisfactory, although a programmed approach to conservation of the features in the wider temple setting is urgently needed, as is a precise plan for the reassembly of Kameshwara Temple.

The draft integrated conservation and site management plan presented is a tool which guides an analytical process towards the compilation and finalization of the integrated conservation and management plan, announced for December 2021. Before its finalization most projects of the tourism development plan are supposed to have been finalized. ICOMOS therefore recommends to carefully re-evaluate these, in particular the Ramappa Lakefront development in terms of its potential negative impact on the property features located at this critical location in the vicinity of the Ramappa Lake bund. ICOMOS recommends that Heritage Impact Assessments are undertaken before any approval is granted to these development projects.

As the official site manager is situated in Hyderabad, ICOMOS recommends that the site management authorities cooperate even closer with the local community and priests and recognise these as both stakeholders and partners in the overall management system. ICOMOS further recommends that risk preparedness and disaster management, also in terms of protection of the visual setting and response to visitor challenges, are further developed in the revised

integrated conservation and management plan and that the monitoring indicators are further elaborated and, where appropriate, streamlined with the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

ICOMOS considers that the title of the nomination should be reconsidered, in light of the new nomination strategy, and which should avoid the geographical details as presented in the current proposal.

## 7 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of The Glorious Kakatiya Temples and Gateways - Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple, Palampet, Jayashankar Bhupalpally District, Telangana State, India, to the World Heritage List be **deferred** in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to:

- Redefine the nomination approach to include the wider context of Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple and accordingly enlarge the property boundaries and buffer zone to include the architectural and engineering structures as well as natural features which form the historic *dharmic* context as well as the economic and functional basis of the temple;
- Develop the comparative analysis in line with the selected nomination approach to compare the property with all other testimonies of the Kakatiya Dynasty and other dynasties in Deccan India to support its revised approach as a representation of the way Kakatiya temples were developed as part of large landscape complexes with water tanks and towns, and which fully portrays the architectural, artistic and engineering testimony of this productive dynasty;
- Revise the justification for inscription based on the most appropriate criteria and amend the title to match the revised focus of the nomination;
- Provide adequate legal protection to the wider complex of Rudreshwara Temple and expand the programmed conservation approach to cover the additional architectural and engineering features, including Ramappa Lake bund, the water distribution and irrigation channels, and the smaller temples in the wider temple setting;
- Following the redefinition of boundaries, review the stipulations of the proposed special development zone in terms of their ability to protect the visual integrity of the extended temple complex;

- Finalize the integrated conservation and management plan as well as update the tourism development plan, to integrate risk preparedness strategies, visitor management at festive events with overcrowding, and cautious assessment criteria for approving any additional visitor infrastructure in and around the property;
- Undertake Heritage Impact Assessments for any projects located near the property, in particular the development projects near the Ramappa Lake;
- Provide a schedule and detailed methodology for the reassembly and conservation of Kameshwara Temple;
- Expand the monitoring system to include more detailed indicators on factors affecting key attributes of the nominated property, namely the stability of the structures and leakages in the sand-box as well as visitor number and behaviour related indicators and tourism-related developments in the wider surroundings of the property.

Any revised nomination should be visited by a mission to the site.

### Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Launching conservation initiatives to revise the previous unsatisfactory conservation results on a parapet and canopy by more appropriate methods and materials,
- b) Involving more closely as partners and stakeholders, local priests and community members into the management system of the property,
- c) Re-evaluating critically the need for disassembly and anastylosis in the conservation of mandapas and temples, including smaller structures outside the property that would need to be subjected to conservation measures in the near future;



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property