

**Samarra Archaeological City  
State of Conservation Report  
World Heritage Commission of Iraq  
Jan . 2014**

**1- World Heritage Committee Decision**

**Thirty-seventh Session Phnom Penh, Cambodia 16 - 27 June 2013  
Samarra Archaeological City (Iraq) (C 276 rev)  
Decision; 37 COM 7A.25  
The World Heritage Committee,**

**1-Having examined Document WHC-17/37.COM/7A.**

**2-Recalling Decision 36 COM 7A 22 ,adopted at its 36<sup>th</sup> session  
(Saint Petersburg ,2012)**

**3- Urges the state party to pursue its efforts in implementation the  
recommendations of the 2011 reactive monitoring mission and to prioritize  
the implementation of the following action:**

**a-Develop baseline documentation ,including missing architectural plans and  
topographic surveys, carried out a detailed conservation condition survey ,**

**b- Undertake identified preventive conservation actions to ensure the  
stability of the built fabric**

**c- Identify regulatory measures to ensure the protection of the property and  
establish protocols for the approval of public works in the vicinity of the  
site including the development of heritage and environmental impact  
assessments,**

**d-Initiate the planning process for the development of the Management Plan  
for the property, including comprehensive conservation plan,**

**e- Establish a site management unit with adequate staff to implement priority conservation measures as well as maintenance and monitoring actions;**

**4-Encourges the State Party to submit an International Assistance Request to facilitate the implementation of the above ;**

**5- Reiterates its request to the State Party to develop, in consultation with the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies, a proposal for corrective measures and for the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, together with a proposed time frame for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 38<sup>th</sup> session in 2014.**

**6- Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre ,by 1 February 2014 an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 38<sup>th</sup> session in 2014.**

**7- Decides to retain Samarra Archaeological City( Iraq) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

## **2-Corrective Measures ,Within Concept**

**As mentioned in operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention ( Paragraphs ,183,184) .**

**When considering the inscription of a property on the list of world heritage in danger, the committee shall develop, and adopt ,as far as possible ,in consultation with the state party concerned, a program for corrective measures.**

**The committee may further decide to send a mission of qualified observers from the relevant advisory bodies or other organizations to visit the property, evaluate the nature and extent of the threats and propose the measures to be taken.**

**In this context World Heritage Committee sent the last mission directed by Dr. Mahmood Bandakir in June 2011.**

He proposed for state party (Iraq) some of corrective measures in the field of management ,protection and preservation, and we began to implement these corrective measures in the great mosque. So our project now completely compatible with WHC requirements, and inspired by Venice charter ,1964, as it mentioned in preamble;

( It is essential that the principles guiding the preservation and restoration of ancient building should be agreed and be laid down on an international basis ,with each country being responsible for applying the plan within the framework; of its own culture and traditions)

So our department put this plan to be achieves within timeframe and available financial resources, after consulting World Heritage Centre, and its advisory body ,ICOMOS.

### **3- Report Outline**

1-	State Party	Iraq	
2-	Name of the World Heritage Property	Samarra Archaeological City	
3-	Geographical coordinates to the nearest second	N 34 20 27 .562 E 43 49 24.75	
4-	Date of Inscription on the World Heritage List /in danger	2007	
5-	Organization responsible for the preparation of the report	State Board of Antiquities and Heritage/World Heritage Commission of Iraq	
6-	Date of the report	28/1/2014	
8-	Criteria	(ii)(iii)(iv)	

	<b>Rev.</b>	<b>C276</b>	
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**Table 1 General Background of the Site**

#### **4-Site History Outline :**

**Samarra is located on the east bank of the middle Tigris in Iraq, 125 km north of Baghdad was the capital of the Abbasid caliphs.**

**Samarra expand to an occupied area of 42 km, one of the largest cities of ancient time, Samarra is now one of the largest archaeological site in the world ,and one of the great Islamic cities.**

**From the outstanding universal value of the city, we can say that Samarra and its importance lies in its being the only Islamic capital surviving still preserving its**

**architecture and planning after the loss of the features of all Islamic capitals including the round city of Baghdad.**

**The city still preserving its great mosque, Al-Malwyya mosque and Abu Daluf mosque with their unique minaret in their shapes, design and construction, which influenced the world at that time in their architecture and arts.**

**From the invention of the city we have distinguished glazed ceramics known as a luster ware, we can comparing this with Chinese porcelain.**

**Samarra Archaeological City has preserved its original plan and monuments, consequently we find that Samarra archaeological city is the unique and distinguished example of what was built as the capital of a large empire.**

From its outstanding universal value the city inscribed in the world heritage list in danger during the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the world heritage committee in New Zealand.

This property fulfilled three criteria of cultural property.

## **5- Introduction;**

The State Board of Antiquities and Heritage of Iraq has turned to UNESCO World Heritage Centre ( WHC) by adoption world heritage as a new concept, so Iraq endorsed the convention of protection world cultural, natural heritage in 1974,

and from that time its sites inscribed on world heritage list,  
(Hatra;1985,Ashur,2003,Samarra,2007)

Samarra Archaeological City was included in a huge project n during 1980s as they called revitalization project of Samarra but all these projects affected due to the regional war with Iran and Kuwait and the last war in 2003 heavily affected on all archaeological works in Iraq as many museums and archaeological sites were looted .

Such a big site needs more international assistance to begin new projects in the process of planning and restoration and archaeological researches .

## **6- Information Context**

### **Historical Background**

The great mosque of Samarra is one of the most important architectural monuments in Iraq and of the Islamic world as a whole.

**The fabric of the mosque has survived exceptionally well, especially considering its bricks and decoration, the heavy-sometimes insensitive –uses to which it has been put over the centuries and its location in a congested part of Samarra.**



**Fig. 1 Great Mosque with its height  
( Sources; Department of Antiquities of Samarra)**

**The great mosque in Samarra is consequently of extreme historical and artistic importance and any efforts to preserve it will be followed with considerable interest by anyone involved in the study of Islamic architecture. Now the site inscribed on the world heritage list since 2007, and State Party-Iraq- must implement corrective measures in the site, so we will inspire with international organizations, its guidelines, such as ICOMOS, ICROM and IUCN.**

**The surroundings of the mosque have changed considerably over the centuries, in spite of urban development project, the mosque retained on its boundaries and buffer zone.**

**It was strongly felt amongst those working with the Islamic monuments of Iraq that the great mosque of Samarra was in need of restoration.**

**It has suffered considerably over the years from period of neglect ,it is also had structural problems ,primary as a result of big project in the mosque conducted by government in 1999-2002 and many alterations have been done in the mosque ,as World Heritage Committee request to remove all these additives .**

**The general program objective include addressing the structural problems of the mosque as well as deterioration of its fabric as a whole .**

**In carrying out these tasks, the restoration team has been concerned to safeguard the historical integrity and its authenticity, its architectural evolution has been carefully studied, and the history of interventions thoroughly documented**

**In addition to these technical issues, the restoration team will move the site in front of tourism.**

### **7- General Program Objectives**

**The project is carried out under the umbrella of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities ,State Board of Antiquities and Heritage , by its technical staff in Samarra, and by direct execution to avoid many of the bureaucratic complications which affect public sector project in Iraq.**

**More specifically ,the project is a part of Samarra Archaeological City Conservation Project, to meet with international commitments .**

**From the history of archaeology in Iraq the great mosque was subjected to more intensive work of investigation ,excavation and restoration, and that allowed to these interventions to be inaccurate in some part of the mosque, so in our current campaign –after inscription the site on world heritage list- we must removes all these inaccurate restoration ,and to emphasis on**

preserving the aged value of the monument rather than carrying out an extensive ,facelift, to provide it with a polished new work,

In general , our intervention will be to remove all inaccurate restoration , and preserve the structural integrity and fabric of the mosque.

The mosque function primary as a place for Muslims to pray, but now is an important tourist land mark, so it has been carrying out this dual task successfully.

The site closed now for the purpose of restoration, we hope to open it next year in front of cultural tourism with new infrastructure facilities.

For detail of the project and its financial resources as follows:

<b>Project period</b>	<b>Total Funds (Million)</b>	<b>Sources of Funds</b>	<b>Starting Work</b>	<b>International Standards</b>	<b>Corrective Measures</b>
<b>12-15 Months</b>	<b>10,5 USD</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>1/6/2013</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Met</b>

Table 2 ; The project within financial ,administrative ,working procedures.

### **8- Corrective Measures Implementation in the Field.**

We must acknowledge that restoration such monuments with such a high historical and artistic value will be scrutinized very carefully, so we began our communication with world heritage center, about our program in the site.

Due to the huge damage on the site so we being to restore the more destructive area, in great mosque and to remover all inaccurate restoration as follows:

## **8-1- Great Mosque, Prayer Hall.**

**During 2001-2002 huge concrete constructions had been done the prayer hall , and many alteration has been done such as replace archaeological columns and stands with new one built by new brick an cement, and this completely adverse to international standards of historical buildings restoration.**

**So after inscription the site on the world heritage list ,and many technical missions visited the site and requested the state party to dismantle and remove of the modern concrete columns constructed inside the open courtyard of the mosque.**

**Many significant changes have been made to this monument using intrusive methods and incompatible materials. The traces of the 1980s reconstruction project are still evident .**



**Fig. 2 General view for great mosque courtyard Source: Department of Antiquities of (Samarra**

**The more visible are the reinforced concrete foundations and columns installed inside the open courtyard to reconstruct the roofed porticoes. More than 400 reinforced concrete columns constitute the intrusive infrastructure which has altered the authenticity of this valuable monument.**



**Fig. 3 Some of reinforced concrete foundation and column inside mosques courtyard  
(Source; Department of Antiquities of Samarra)**

**The ambitious project for the revitalization of the historical city of Samarra , ordered by the Iraqi government, was carried out by the (SBAH) mostly between 1982-1991 and all these works concluded in 2001-2002 and stopped after US threatens to Iraq.**

**In our work to dismantle and remove of the modern concrete columns it looks that columns connected with the outer wall of the mosque so as not to make more**



**Fig.4 The act of removing concrete columns –last season.**

**(Source; Department of Antiquities of Samarra,2011)**

**damage to structural design of the mosque, and after dismantling some columns last year and affected on the mosque walls so we began with new technique as follows to take out the cover of concrete columns only ( built by new brick) and to restore**

**new stands with its original measure (1,45 X1,45 cms) and to keep the concrete columns inside the new restored stands, in this case the additive column will disappear for ever.**



**Fig.5 New restored stands inside great mosque courtyard**

**( Source; Department of Antiquities of Samarra,2013 )**

**From the pictures of Herzfeld's archive kept in Smithsonian institute it look the new stands parallel the old one as it mentioned by German expedition worked in Samarra in 1911.**

**After we complete restoration of new stands we are going to restore the floor of the courtyard after we distinguished some part of the original floor and it became very easy to complete it with the same traditional material with the same measures**



**Fig.6 Old stands of great mosque courtyard , German excavation,1911 ,it parallel with new stands**

**(Source: Herzfeld's archive, Smithsonian institute ,USA,2013**



**Fig ,7 Some part of the original floor in the west side of the courtyard  
( Source; Department of Antiquities of Samarra,2013 )**

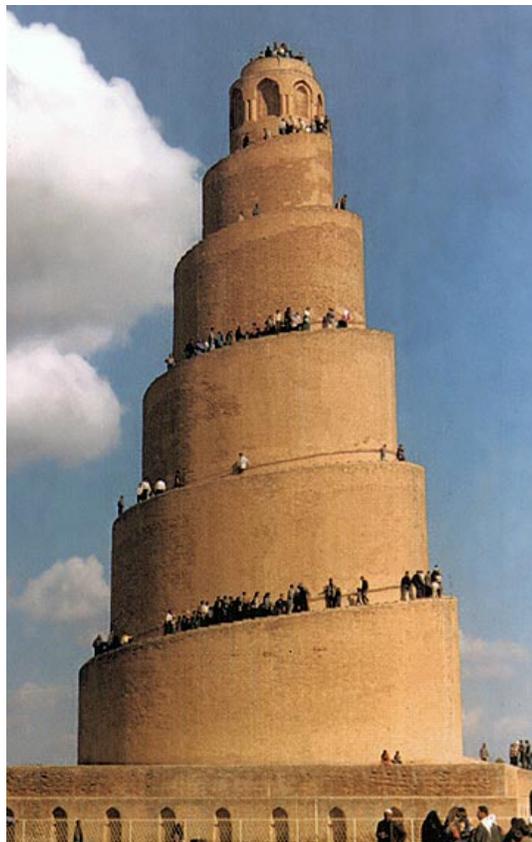
**We must mention that there are two floor one for the covered part of the prayer hall and the other floor will be for uncovered part of the prayer hall.**

## **8-2 –Spiral Minaret**

**The Great Mosque, with its spiral minaret al-Malwiya, is one of the best known and**

**marks new stage of mosque development by using a spiral minaret and a secondary**

**outer enclosure with covered porticoes (Arabic ziyada), to provide shelter for unable to Muslims find a place in the mosque for the Friday prayer.**



**Fig. 8 Spiral Minaret with its height during tourist season  
(Source: Department of Antiquities of Samarra,1987)**

**The spiral minaret is one of the oldest archeological existing Iraq minarets, unique among the minarets of the Islamic world situated outside the mosque at a distance of (27,20m) from the northern wall.**

**Body of the minaret is spiral resting on a square two-tier terrace, length of the bottom one (31,80m) and the upper (30,5m), rising (4,20m) above the ground level and embellished by curvatures with pointed vaults (9) in number on each side except the southern side where there are (7) only, as part thereof covers the end of ramp leading to the base. The body of minaret is cylindrical in shape around**

**which a spiral staircase goes around it, in anticlockwise direction, and permeates**

**in its upper part the last cylinder in the body ending in the apex of minaret of (3m) in diameter, while the wonderful thing about the upper part of minaret is a group of Mihrab niches, eight in number, crowning the body and their vaults are resting on baked brick semi-cylindrical fused pillars, this minaret's height is about (50m), except the base.**



**Fig.9 From un inaccurate restoration using stone limestone beneath the ramp**

( Source; Department of Antiquities of Samarra,2013)



**Fig.10 From un inaccurate restoration using new bricks  
( Source; Department of Antiquities of Samarra,2013 )**

**During 1980s revitalization project in Samarra many un inaccurate restoration have been done beneath the base of minaret , such as blocks and new bricks so we are going to replace all these new additives according to international commitments.**

## **9-Infrastructure Facilities**

### **9-1-Site Unit Building**

**From the most important infrastructure in site, site unit building while technical staff can monitor the site, and can plan for the site and to put all plans relating with site from management plan to directing the visitors.**



**Fig.11, A proposed site unit building in the site  
(Source; Department of Antiquities of Samarra,2013)**

**In our world in front of pressure of tourism so world heritage site face many challenges relating managing ,protection and conservation.**

**In front of all these we must established an effective site unit building with technical staff .**

**So our proposed site unit building will be from turnkey construction  
( Sandwich Panel) on the shape (U) ( Fig.10)**

**The, site unit building is from major infrastructure in World Heritage Sites , so it was agreed to establish this building in diameter of the site, which is located to the left inside of the site and after the visitors centre and its total space is 150 sq. - and up 2.30 M and includes building unit of rooms allocated for administration staff and manager of the site , equipped with furniture ( and office equipment and archives . See attached chart)**

**Therefore, the functions of the administration unit and the crew have a great concern. They include planning for the site and plans ward off the dangers of the site and management of visitors and many others.**

## **9-2-Vistors Center**

**A visitor center is a public educational facility or dedicated space within a building for interpretive displays, programs, services, and information.**

**visitor centers generally have support facilities and conveniences for the traveling public.**

**Interpretation is a combination of educational activities designed to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of presentations, original objects,**

**first hand experience, graphic illustrations, activities, or media designed to help people understand, appreciate, and care for the natural and cultural environment.**

**Visitor centers enhance the public's awareness and understanding of reclamation's**

**mission and stewardship responsibilities.**

**The appropriateness and suitability of a visitor center and the type of visitor center at**

**a project will be assessed through a systematic and comprehensive interpretive**

**planning process that defines the visitor center's messages, interpretive themes, interpretive tools and techniques, displays, programs, and services, consistent with reclamation's visual.**

**A visitor centre is located inside the site with access through a dedicated main gate. . This practice eases security concerns for these displays. There is scope to improve the display and to engage the visitor more actively in various aspects of the site.**

**The use of the interpretation centre as the first stop on a visit enables key information about the site and conduct on it to be given to the visitor.**

**Our proposes visitors center will be as a square shape in front of the site from turnkey construction with the total space 100 sq. and consist of room of presentation and interpretation and some other facilities**

### **9-3 Green space**

**Green spaces play a crucial role in supporting ecological system and its reflection on the built –heritage.**

**And one of the most significant functions of green spaces is to stabilize and protect the soil against water and wind erosion ,**

**At the international level proved to be a green space that covers the soil have an active role in the absorption of sunlight and its effects on neighboring buildings and reduce the energy reflected from the ground on the buildings nearby and has a special role in the cooling air currents passing and make wind pedestrians are free of dust and sand so we come to establish such a green space in the north west corner of the site to reduces all those climate impacts on the site.**

**Establishment the Green space , will be attractive to tourists so it has to be set up and establish some stalls prepared to meet the demands of tourists from refreshments and soft drinks especially in the hot summer time.**

**So it was agreed to establish and set up four stalls are distributed within the vicinity of the green space, a square shape and rise 2.10 m and stalls this will be of aluminum or iron galvanized and will rent these stalls for citizens , which will improve the site and the surrounding environment and society custodial her as you see the goals and the literature of World Heritage for moving towards sustainable development at the site**

**From international concern, UN program aims to protect the population in the first place and then the environment and the economy through the Creation of green spaces.**

**The climate change in the contemporary world as one of the most important threatens and affecting World Heritage sites , so the World Heritage Committee in its 29th meeting has acknowledged that climate change is one of the factors threatening and facing Heritage Sites.**

**World Heritage conference of experts , which was held in 2006 therefore and the purpose of developing strategies to assist the States Parties to deal with this matter and recommended the state parties to implement appropriate measures to reduce the effects of climate changes .**

**At the site of Samarra the sand storms regarded of the most factors a threaten the site because it carries dust from that areas that separate historical monuments , mostly barren free of vegetation so it has been agreed and within the table prepared on-site to develop green spaces centered in the north west part of the site after it became clear the region is the absence of any archaeological features and its dimensions ( 150 X 112) m and cut by corridors of width 1.5 m paved with brick and there are many break seats will be established in these green spaces.**

## **9-4 Other Works**

**There are many works must be done to supplement site infrastructure as follows;**

### **9-4-1 The Outer Fence of the Site**

From the table prepared to work in the site they agreed to establish new outer fence and will surround the site and its length will be 1666 M . This fence consist of two parts ,the first one will build with brick to 1 m. then there are iron fence cut by towers of brick ,and the fence the upper part of it will decorated from Samarra decoration styles and the total height of the outer fence will be 2,9m In the west side of the fence there will be three gate one main gate and its dimensions( 5m –width and 5,8m as a height) other two gate with width 2 m.

#### **9-4-2 The Outer Archaeological Wall of the Site**

The outer archaeological wall of the site has been excavated from previous seasons it built from unbaked brick with many towers. So during this campaign of restoration rehabilitation of the site, it agreed to expose the wall and to restore part of it with the same size of bricks 30-30-8 cm. And the length of this wall to restored 20 M. So this wall will give the visitor an idea about the outer wall and its towers.

#### **Conclusion**

In our recent work while we highly advanced ,we hope our work to be the first step to move to other part of the city and we hope all efforts will, lead to remove the city from the word heritage list in danger. Infrastructures establishes in the site such as site unit building and visitors center will serve the site as whole