

Bam and its Cultural Landscape (Iran)

No 1208

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: Islamic Republic of Iran

Name of property: Bam and its Cultural Landscape

Location: Kerman Province, Bam District

Inscription: 2004 ; World Heritage List in Danger (2004)

Brief Description

Bam is situated in a desert environment on the southern edge of the Iranian high plateau. The origins of Bam can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th cent. BC). Its heyday was from the 7th to 11th centuries, being at the crossroads of important trade routes and known for the production of silk and cotton garments. The existence of life in the oasis was based on the underground irrigation canals, the *qanāts*, of which Bam has preserved some of the earliest evidence in Iran. The Citadel of Bam (Arg-e Bam) is the most representative example of a fortified medieval town built in vernacular technique using mud layers (*chineh*).

2. ISSUES RAISED

Background

At its 30th Session, the World Heritage Committee urged the State Party to accelerate efforts to clearly redefine the World Heritage protective zones which fully reflect the Outstanding Universal Value of Bam and its Cultural Landscape (30COM 7A.25)

Modification

The State Party has submitted slightly modified boundaries for the core zone together with an extension to the buffer zone. The revised boundaries have been redefined to reflect not only the criteria for which the property was inscribed, but also new information obtained through research in the past three years.

A minor extension is proposed to the core zone in the northern boundary near Qalaeh Dokhtar. This should provide extra protection for Qalaeh Dokhtar in the light of increasing informal settlement in the vicinity.

The buffer zone has been extended to the south and west. This revision means that the buffer zone now surrounds the core zone and encloses the whole of Bagh Chemak, (the garden of Chemak, an integral part of the cultural landscape) rather than as before cutting through it.

The protection afforded by the enlarged buffer zone is equivalent to that in place for the former smaller buffer zone.

The new delineations have been put in place following the involvement of ICHHTO (Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization) and UNESCO experts in January 2007, as part of the development of the comprehensive management plan.

ICOMOS considers that the modification to the core zone is very minor and a logical and beneficial extension to provide extra protection. It does not alter the justification for inscription. ICOMOS further considers that the enlarged buffer zone provides much greater protection for the integrity of the property.

3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

ICOMOS recommends that the revised boundaries of the core and buffer zones of Bam and its Cultural Landscape, Islamic Republic of Iran, be approved.

