

---

# Megalithic Temples of Malta (Malta) No 132bis

---

## 1 Basic data

### State Party

Malta

### Name of property

Megalithic Temples of Malta

### Location

Islands of Malta and Gozo

### Inscription

1980

### Brief description

Seven megalithic temples are found on the islands of Malta and Gozo, each the result of an individual development. The two temples of Ġgantija on the island of Gozo are notable for their gigantic Bronze Age structures. On the island of Malta, the temples of Hagar Qim, Mnajdra and Tarxien are unique architectural masterpieces, given the limited resources available to their builders. The Ta'Hagrart and Skorba complexes show how the tradition of temple-building was passed down in Malta.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

12 March 2015

## 2 Issues raised

### Background

Within the framework of the Retrospective Inventory exercise (May 2005), the State Party was requested to indicate the size in hectares of the six component sites of the property and the size of the buffer zone around Hagar Qim and Mnajdra. The State Party submitted revised maps in November 2005.

These showed buffer zones for the six components of the property which were recognised nationally but had not been officially adopted as World Heritage buffer zones by the World Heritage Committee.

Following a request made by the World Heritage Centre in September 2012, the State Party submitted a minor boundary modification concerning the establishment of buffer zones for the serial property in accordance with Annex 11 of the Operational Guidelines.

These minor modifications were proposed to support the following components of the inscribed serial property.

Components of the inscribed property (in hectares):

#	Name of component of the property	Size
1	Ġgantija (132-001)	0.715 ha
2	Hagar Qim (132-002)	0.813 ha
3	Mnajdra (132-003)	0.563 ha
4	Ta' Hagrart (132-004):	0.154 ha
5	Skorba (132-005):	0.103 ha
6	Tarxien (132-006)	0.807 ha

Due to the proximity of Ta' Hagrart and Skorba, and of Hagar Qim and Mnajdra, the establishment of the buffer zones included locating each of the above-mentioned pairs of sites in a single buffer zone. Therefore, the allocation of buffer zone sizes for the components of the Megalithic Temples of Malta are provided in the table below.

Areas of the proposed buffer zones (in hectares):

#	Name of component of the Megalithic Temples of Malta	Size of proposed buffer zone
1	Ġgantija (132-001)	33 ha
2	Hagar Qim (132-002) and Mnajdra (132-003)	63 ha
3	Ta' Hagrart (132-004) and Skorba (132-005)	60 ha
4	Tarxien (132-006)	11 ha

ICOMOS noted that the material submitted by the State Party consisted of the same plans as were submitted in 2005 with the exception of Ġgantija, where the proposed buffer zone was larger than that previously proposed in 2005.

ICOMOS noted that although the above areas are clearly identifiable on the maps provided, no textual descriptions nor detailed justification for the precise lines of these buffer zones were provided.

ICOMOS also noted that while information was provided on protection legislation for the inscribed properties and buffer zones, no information was given relating to management arrangements for the buffer zones.

ICOMOS considered that this might be an issue where the buffer zones included areas where development is permitted, since the 2012 ICOMOS comments on the approved Management Plan for the Megalithic Temples of Malta made reference to a review of Local Plans in order to amend development criteria to ensure better protection of the buffer zones and contentious developments in the buffer zones. In this context, ICOMOS also recommended that details of all these contentious proposals should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre together with the outcomes of the review of the Local Plans.

The World Heritage Committee has adopted the following decision 38 COM 8B.53 (Doha, 2014):

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-14/38.COM/8B.Add, and WHC-14/38.COM/INF.8B1.Add,

2. Refers the examination of the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the buffer zones for the Megalithic Temples of Malta, Malta, back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Provide a textual description and detailed justification for the precise lines of the buffer zones of the component sites of the serial property;
- Provide information on the management arrangements in place for the buffer zones;
- Strengthen the site-specific development limitation (particularly height limitation) measures within the buffer zones and provide information on the outcomes of the review of the Local Plans.

3. Encourages the State Party to keep the World Heritage Committee informed of any development projects within the vicinity of the property in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

#### **Modification**

In response to Decision 38 COM 8B.53, the State Party has responded that:

The buffer zone boundaries are based on a minimum 100 m radius around the component sites and are then extended further to include other minor archaeological or cultural heritage sites in their vicinity. The boundaries follow natural contours and areas that are within a development zone and which could potentially have an impact on the component sites, have been included in the buffer zones so as to ensure additional control.

The buffer zones include Development Zones, Green Areas, Commercial Zones, Village cores, sites of ecological importance as well as other sites of archaeological value, depending on the location of the component site. Management arrangements for controlling development in these zones are covered by the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands (second document, ARC Policies: pp 113-115) and the relevant Local Plans.

Height limitations are specified for all zones in the Local Plans. Feedback to the review of Local Plans has included a submission from Heritage Malta regarding the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development being drawn up by the Malta Environment & Planning Authority (MEPA) with the aim of ensuring that UNESCO World Heritage Sites and sites on the World Heritage Tentative List and their viewsheds are protected from the adverse impact of future development. Both the revision of the Local Plans and the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development are currently underway by MEPA.

ICOMOS considers that the requirements of Decision 38 COM 8B.53 (a) and (b) have been met.

With regard to (c), ICOMOS considers that the State Party should provide a report to the World Heritage Centre when the review of the Local Plans and the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development are completed, explaining how the UNESCO World Heritage Sites and sites on the World Heritage Tentative List and their viewsheds are protected from the adverse impact of future development.

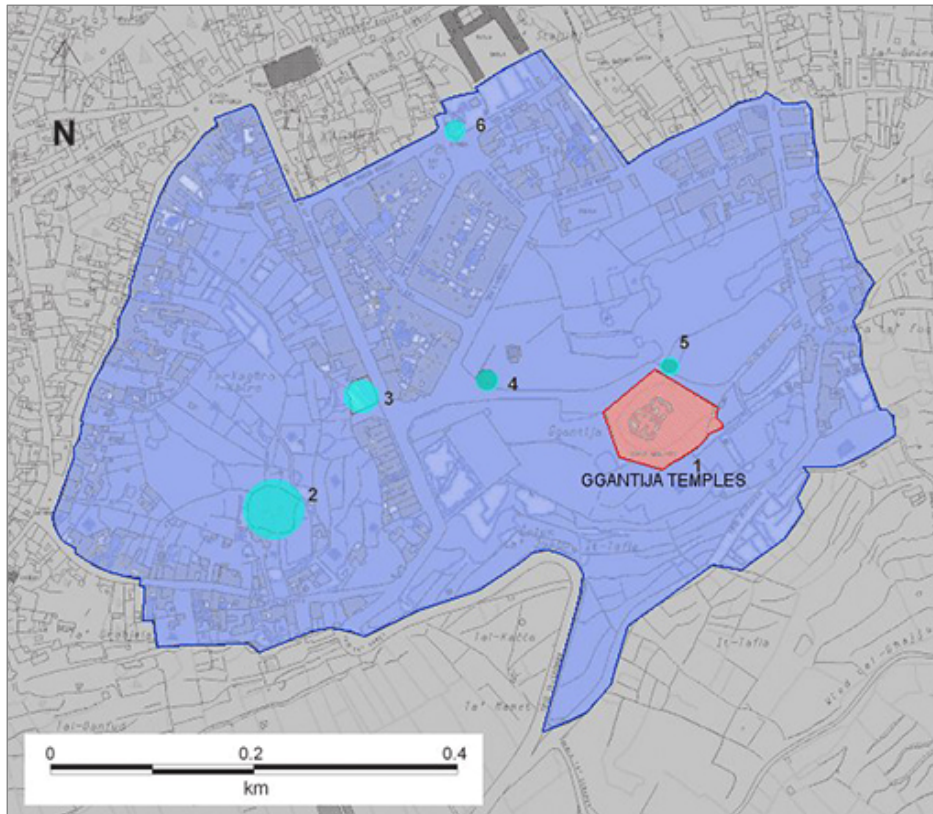
### **3 ICOMOS Recommendations**

#### **Recommendations with respect to inscription**

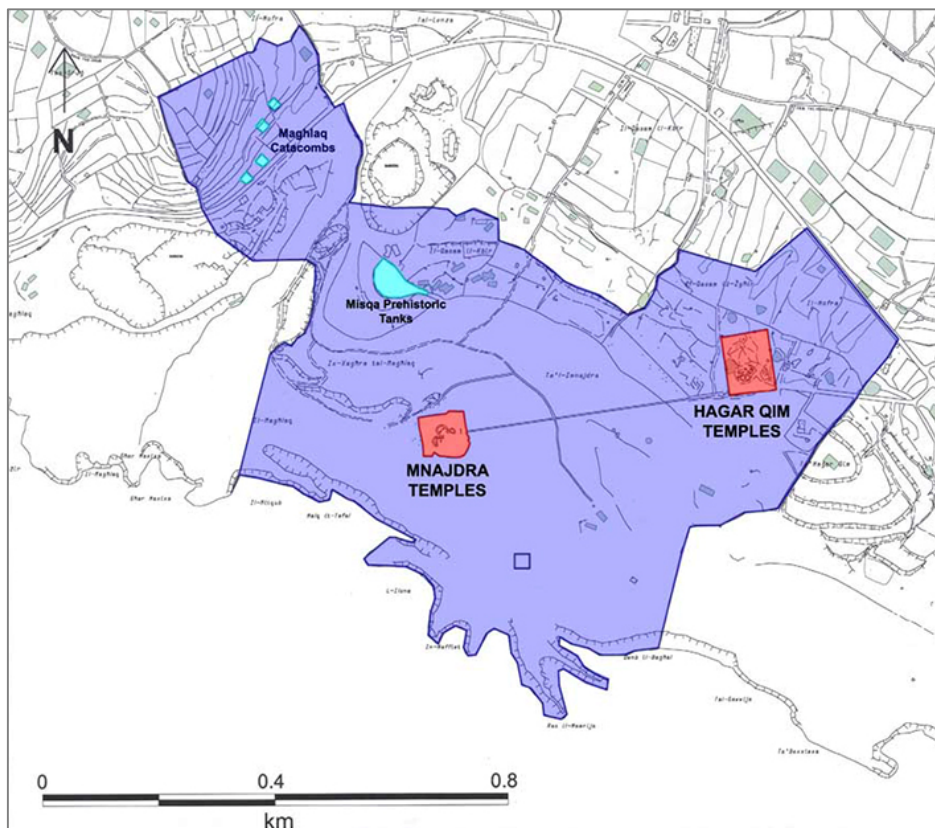
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zones for the Megalithic Temples of Malta, Malta, be **approved**.

#### **Additional recommendations**

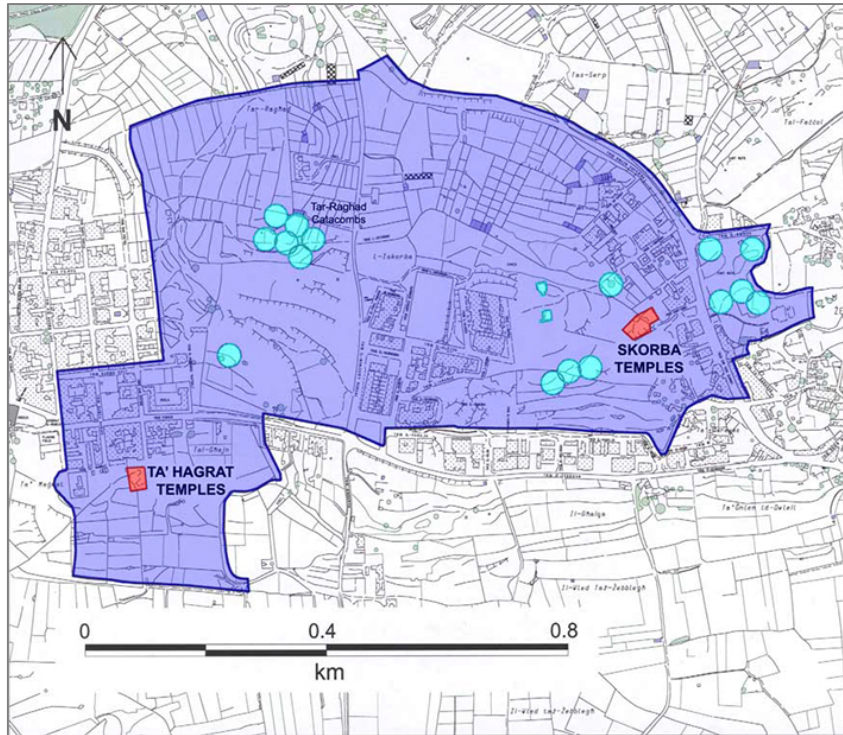
ICOMOS recommends that the State Party submit a report to the World Heritage Centre when the review of the Local Plans and the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development are completed, explaining how the UNESCO World Heritage Sites and sites on the World Heritage Tentative List and their viewsheds are protected from the adverse impact of future development, for examination by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS.



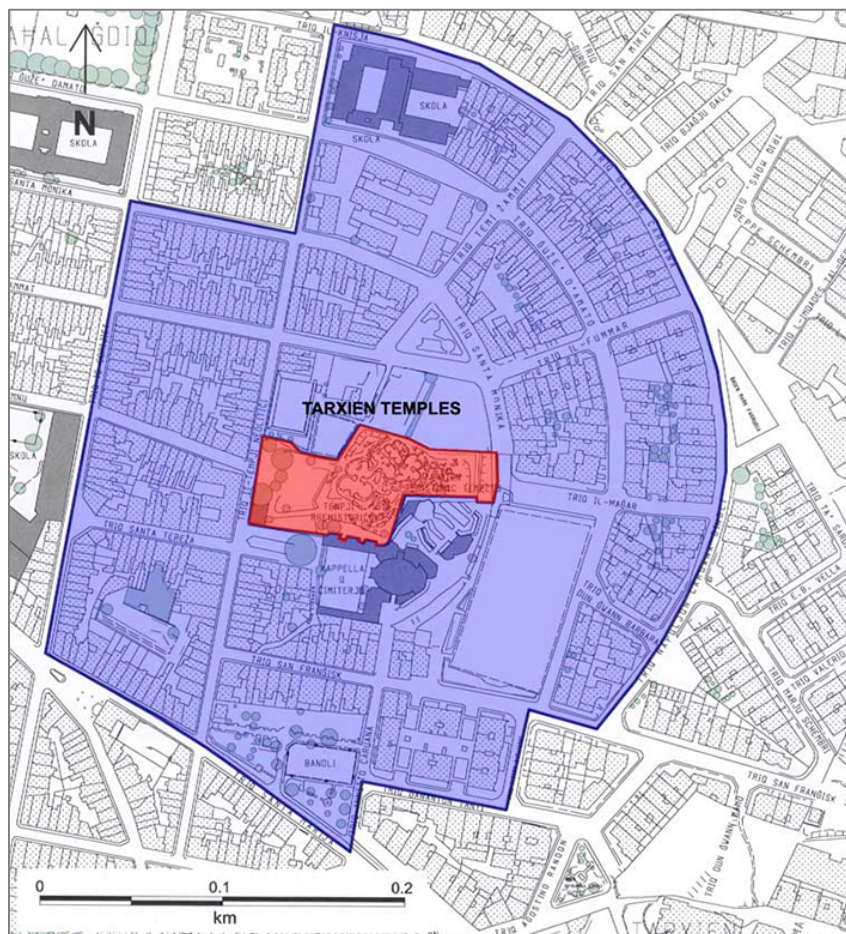
Ggantija – map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone



Hagar Qim and Mnajdra - map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone



Ta' Hagraat and Skorba - map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone



Tarxien - map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone