
Al Zubarah Archaeological Site (Qatar) No 1402rev

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Al Zubarah Archaeological Site

Location

Madinat Ash Shamal Municipality
State of Qatar

Brief description

The walled coastal town of Al Zubarah flourished for a short period of some fifty years in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when it was one of the most important pearling and trading centres in the Ú^!•ā Gulf.

What distinguishes Al Zubarah from other towns is the fact that it was abandoned and its layout has been preserved under the desert sands. The remains of the entire town, still within its desert hinterland, are a reflection of the development of an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century trading society in the Gulf region and its interaction with the surrounding coastal and desert settlements.

The town is believed to have been founded by Utub merchants from Kuwait looking for a source of pearls. At the height of its prosperity, Al Zubarah had trading links with the Indian Ocean, Arabia and Western Asia. The town was mostly destroyed in 1811 and finally abandoned in the early 20th century, after which its remaining rubble stone and mortar buildings collapsed and were gradually covered by a protective layer of sand blown from the desert. A small part of the town has been excavated.

The property consists of the remains of the town, of its harbour and defensive walls, and, on its land side, of a canal, two screening walls, and cemeteries. A short distance away are the remains of the fort of Qal'at Murair with evidence of how the desert's supplies of water were managed and protected, and a further fort constructed in 1938.

Category of property

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

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List

18 March 2008

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre

31 January 2011

31 January 2013

Background

This is a referred back nomination.

At its 36th session (Saint-Petersburg, 2012), the World Heritage Committee adopted the following decision:

Decision: 36 COM 8B.19

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Documents WHC-12/36.COM/8B and WHC-12/36.COM/INF.8B1,*

2. *Refers the nomination of Al Zubarah Archaeological Site, Qatar, back to the State Party, in order to allow it to:*

a) *Further develop its understanding of how the fabric of Al Zubarah and its desert hinterland were an exceptional testimony to a specific interaction between nomadic herders, pearl divers, fishermen and traders that once characterised the way of life in the Gulf by:*

- i. *Presenting the results of surveys and excavations carried out in the property and its wider setting, including underwater archaeology, that have already permitted the understanding of the origins of the town, the basis for its prosperity, its layout and how it related to the coast, its desert landscape and small satellite settlements and,*
- ii. *Completing the archival and oral history research developed within the project,*

b) *Formalize the official approval of the buffer zone limits and the Madinat Ash Shamal urban plan,*

c) *Complete and implement the Conservation Strategy identifying the interventions desirable to stabilize the urban remains,*

d) *Follow up the development of the Site Management Unit operational on site since 2011,*

e) *Monitor the effectiveness of the Management Plan;*

3. *Recommends that Heritage Impact Assessments be renewed in case major infrastructural projects in the vicinity of the property should become active again in order to ensure that these do not impact adversely on the town and its wider desert setting.*

A Supplementary Nomination dossier was submitted by the State Party on 31 January 2013.

This reflects works undertaken at the property in the two years since the submission of the first dossier. In particular it includes the results of an expanded programme of archaeological research, archival and oral history research, heritage management, and site preservation. The supplementary dossier also includes a Conservation Strategy and approved Buffer Zone limits, as requested by the World Heritage Committee.

Consultations

ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management and several independent experts.

Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 16 to 20 October 2011.

Additional information requested and received from the State Party

None

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

6 March 2013

2 The property

The supplementary dossier reflects the results of two years' extensive and intensive work on Al Zubarah and its hinterland since the drafting of the first nomination dossier. This has included archaeological excavations, regional surveys, archival and oral history research, conservation and heritage management.

This work has led to advances in understanding the cultural, social and political framework within which the town of Al Zubarah developed its relationship with its hinterland and its regional and wider trading links.

Description

Strategically located in the ^{الخليج} Gulf between the Indian Ocean and western Asia, Al Zubarah was one of many towns to have existed in the Gulf over the past millennia whose prosperity was based on sea trade.

Al Zubarah was not the largest but certainly was one of the most prosperous towns in a short period between around 1760 and 1811 AD when its prosperity included trade in pearls.

What distinguishes Al Zubarah from other towns is the fact that it was abandoned and its layout has been preserved under the desert sands.

Al Zubarah also sits in an desert landscape within which have survived the remains of small fortified coastal and inland settlements, some of which had symbiotic relationships with the town, perhaps providing fish, livestock and the protection of artesian wells, while others had earlier origins and were abandoned as Al Zubarah expanded. These smaller settlements are not included in the nominated area and are also outside the buffer zone but are part of its wider setting and contribute to an understanding of its cultural, social and economic context.

The town today consists of low mounds which mask the buried traces of traditional vernacular and religious architecture. Archaeological investigations over the past two seasons, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, have added

significantly to the details provided in the first nomination dossier. This work has encompassed:

- 1 Strategic excavations of selected areas including settlements areas straddling the Inner Town Wall, of structures commonly associated with commercial activities, of a large walled building complex on the southern extremity of the town; of rubbish heaps or middens, and of urban defensive regimes;
- 2 Exploration of Al Zubarah's extensive hinterland in order to locate, record, describe and categorise settlements and activities including water management, agriculture, and the acquisition of other resources, while Al Zubarah was flourishing and evidence for settlement in earlier time periods;
- 3 The classification, documentation and study of material culture recovered from excavations, which has offered insights into the cultural and economic life in the town and its wider region, including extensive trade within the Gulf and beyond.

All of this work has set Al Zubarah within a wide cultural framework, in which it stands out clearly as the largest, and most intact manifestation of the small independent states that evolved in the Gulf region and which formed the basis of today's modern states.

In detail, the property consists of the following:

- Town walls
- Evidence for palaces, houses, *suqs* & religious buildings
- Harbour and evidence for commerce and trade
- Canal and screening walls
- Cemeteries
- Qal'at Murair and water management
- Al Zubarah Fort
- Links to the hinterland

Town walls

There are two town walls, the outer one representing the main phase of the town between c. 1760 and 1811AD. This outer wall is constructed of undressed coral limestone bonded with lime mortar and included twenty-two circular towers that were integrated into the pattern of houses. The later inner wall was lower with eleven towers and overlays the earlier street patterns. The walls are preserved in layout over several kilometres. A few of the towers have been re-constructed.

Recent aerial surveys have shown that Al Zubarah appears to be part of a larger complex settlement and fortification system – still partially unknown – running along the northern Qatar coastline in the Al Zubarah area. This is to be investigated further.

Evidence for palaces, houses, *suqs* & religious buildings

The town appears to demonstrate an overall planned layout of neighbourhoods, palaces, and squares within the outer town wall.

Within the town there are two distinct palatial compounds of a form that is found in many other parts of the Gulf such as at Masmak in Saudi Arabia or Jabrin, Oman. However at Al Zubarah they are clearly seen to be part of a planned urban form and their complete layout has been preserved. Parts of the palaces have been excavated. Near to these palaces are two large public squares and adjacent to one of these a mosque site has been identified. In the last two years further excavations in one of the palaces has revealed its fortress like appearance with circular defensive towers up to around four metres in height. The presence of an influential family can be inferred from the finds of imported porcelain and glass and from evidence for the hunting of gazelle, often seen as an activity of ruling elites.

The town plans shows clearly the sub-division into neighbourhoods. Between 500-600 buildings have been identified, suggesting a population of around 5,000 to 6,000 people. Courtyard houses are the most common architectural form. Many are of generous size and display porticos and entrance halls sometimes with traces of elaborate gypsum plaster decoration that reflects the prosperity of the town.

One courtyard houses has been analysed in detail to reveal its precise layout, including several areas with washing facilities, a room with 20 cooking ovens, and space for fish preparation. Nearby evidence has been uncovered of a specialised date-syrup production facility. Throughout the site, there is evidence of large, high-capacity date presses associated with this syrup production.

Near the beach, excavations have recovered evidence for more ephemeral houses of timber and palm thatch (*barasti*), of a type once common around the Gulf and which were possibly associated with fishermen or pearl divers.

Below the 18th century architectural phase, a densely acculturated layer of sand and mixed cultural material has been uncovered. Analysis of it has shown that this pre-architectural occupational phase was dominated by tents and/or palm frond structures that were subjected to numerous rebuilds and repairs. Analysis of the pottery indicates that these transient structures cannot be that much earlier than the founding of the town.

Harbour and evidence for commerce and trade

The harbour was protected to the north by a spur of the town wall that extended into the sea by some 50 metres, and culminated in a round tower. In 1895 British warships sank a large number of dhows in the harbour

(see History below) and their remains could still be preserved underwater.

Excavations of the past two years near the harbour have revealed details about the central role of commerce and trade.

Excavations of an area identified as a possible *suq* has confirmed this attribution and revealed complexes of warehouses linked to the harbour. Within the warehouses was evidence of commerce, such as pots from Khunj, Iran, blue porcelain, a glass bead and haematite diving weights, and of artisanal enterprises especially iron-working.

Further evidence of trade has come from the excavations of middens in which were considerable quantities of stone fruits and grains imported from India and Iran.

Canal and screening walls

The canal predates the screen walls as it was partly filled in by the southern wall. The canal runs from Qal' at Murair to the sea, a distance of some 1.76km. It is on average 20metres wide 1.5 to 2.0 metres deep. From written records it appears to have facilitated the transport of goods and water to and from the fort. Satellite imagery suggests it originally ran some 300 metres further inland.

Two almost parallel screening walls with round towers at regular intervals extend from the outer town wall inland towards the remains of the small fort of Qal' at Murair. The northern wall now extends to 1.3km, while the southern wall extends to around 0.9km. Both have been destroyed beyond a modern road. The walls appear to have offered protection for a water supply from Qal'at Murair.

Cemeteries

Outside the town there are remains of three cemeteries.

Qal'at Murair and water management

This fort was constructed in 1768 on a raised escarpment overlooking the town. It was destroyed between 1960 and 1970. Remains of three wells are within the walls of the fort and there are several more outside on the escarpment. Excavations have revealed a large cistern for storing water.

Linked to the fort are several enclosures that could have been used for cattle or for the cultivation of date palms.

Al Zubarah Fort

At a short distance inland from Al Zubarah town and unrelated to its development, is a small intact fort constructed in 1938 as a military and police post. Its form and parts of its construction reflect the tradition of fort building around the Gulf.

Links with the hinterland

In the past two years survey work in the desert hinterland has documented how the town was connected with its natural and cultural surroundings. This involved surveys and mapping within a radius of around 25km to the north and east of the property, especially in the Buffer Zone; and strategic excavations at a select number of archaeological sites.

This work has revealed evidence of agricultural/ pastoral settlements clustered around water sources that date to the early Islamic period around 8-11th centuries AD. These have been linked to the town of Murwab south of Al Zubarah. They are characterised by a line of rectangular structures sometimes accompanied by a mosque, often stretching for hundreds of metres along a rocky rise or ridge above flatlands.

The survey work has also focused on coastal settlements, in particular Freiha just north of Al Zubarah where a long and complex settlement history was revealed that predates Al Zubarah, and Ruwaidah, a large settlement that was abandoned by the early 1900s. Excavations at Ruwaidah have revealed a six bay mosque, fortress, warehouses and mausoleum next to the sea. 13th-14th century Chinese ceramics, indicates that Ruwaidah may be one of the few sites to have substantial remains which date from before the 18th century. Excavations have shown cyclical development in which periods of re-building followed decline. All of these coastal settlements were fortified, like Al Zubarah. All appear to have had some sort of symbiotic relationship with other smaller inland settlements which perhaps supplied water and other commodities such as cattle.

Buffer Zone

The property is surrounded by a large Buffer Zone, extending to 7196.4ha. This incorporates both the wider hinterland and the extensive coral reef system off the shore of Al Zubarah.

History and development

There is little evidence for early settled habitations in northern Qatar, although rock art and low burial mounds attest to some possibly seasonal occupation perhaps related to fishing or pastoralism in pre-historic times. In early historical times the region was associated with the breeding of fine horses and camels.

It is only from the 9th century, in the later Abbasid times, that evidence for significant settlement begins to appear. From the 9th century onwards the area became more densely populated, perhaps as a result of the pearl trade, although most settlements were not on the coast. Coastal settlements began to be developed in significant numbers between the 14th and 18th centuries. They were fortified and reflect intense exploitation of marine resources including fishing for pearls.

The recent aerial and grounds surveys and excavations in the hinterland of Al Zubarah have much amplified this picture – as described above. This work has resulted in the identification of many important villages, hamlets and encampments inland and on the coast that existed from the 9th century onwards.

Al Zubarah appears to have been founded in the 18th century as a result of an Utub migration from Kuwait. The exploitation of pearls is suggested as a reason for this migration. Although Al Zubarah was a new planned town on the site of a small rural settlement, it was inserted into a populated rural landscape with which it appears to have had a symbiotic relationship. It also probably had a competing relationship with existing coastal towns such as Freiha, Ruwaidah, and Fuwairit – as evidenced by their fortifications.

Al Zubarah soon expanded with an influx of merchants from Basra and more from Kuwait who took advantage of its 'tax free' status. By the 1770s it was the largest settlement in the Ú^!• (Kuwait) Gulf.

Disputes arose with the Persian governor of Bahrain that led to a series of skirmishes. In 1783 Kuwait supported a successful invasion of Bahrain and this allowed the Utub Al-Khalifas to expand their influence in Bahrain. The independent Al-Khalifas shifted their allegiance between Oman, Iran and the rising Wahhabi factions in central Arabia. Regional instabilities eventually led the Sultan of Oman to launch an attack on Al Zubarah in 1811 and it was burnt to the ground.

Only around a third of the settlement was subsequently re-inhabited and Al Zubarah became eclipsed by other towns. As a result of its involvement in a dispute in 1895 between the Ottomans and Bahrain, which was supported by the British Empire, during which 44 dhows were sunk in the harbour, the settlement was largely abandoned.

Over the past two years there has been extensive work on identifying archive resources that it is anticipated will shed more detailed light on the commercial and political history of Al Zubarah. ICOMOS considers that more work is still needed on this limited, uneven but complex body of source material.

There have been several phases of excavation at Al Zubarah under the direction of the Qatar Museums Authority (QMA) and its predecessor. The first was in the early 1980s and the second between 2002 and 2003. In all, only a small part of the site (2.5%) was investigated. In 2009 the Qatar Islamic Archaeology and Heritage Project (QIAH) was launched jointly by the QMA and the University of Copenhagen. This is a ten year project that aims to research the site and its hinterland and preserve its fragile remains. In two seasons, 2010-11 and 2011-12, enormous strides have been made as are outlined above.

These have had a considerable impact on understanding of how Al Zubarah relates to extensive Arab and Islamic heritage in its hinterland.

3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis

The analysis in the original nomination dossier is based on comparison with other pearl trading centres in Qatar, in the Gulf and worldwide. It also offers comparisons with other merchant settlements already inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Comparisons are made with two inscribed sites in the Gulf, Qal'at al-Bahrain – Ancient Harbour and Capital of Dilmun, Bahrain (2005, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)), and the Land of Frankincense, Oman (2000, criteria (iii) and (iv)), and also with the Ruins of Loropéni, Burkina Faso (2009, criterion (iii)), and with the Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape, Japan (2010, criteria (ii), (iii) and (v)). With all these examples similarities are suggested rather than differences, with the conclusion being drawn that all provide a compelling insight into trade networks.

The analysis states that for 'millennia' the primary focus of the global pearl industry was the ^{U^!•ā} Gulf which provided some 60-70% of the world's pearls. Nevertheless there were other centres between India and in Sri Lanka, in the Philippines, and in the Caribbean. In Sri Lanka, development has overlain the traditional ports and pearl fishing grounds. In Jolo, Sulu Islands, in the Philippines, the fortified remains of a once extensive town were apparently bombed in 1973 during political instabilities and information is difficult to obtain on its current status. The once great pearling (and slave) town of Nueva Cadiz, Venezuela, established by the Spanish, was abandoned in 1541 after an earthquake and tsunami and its ruins are currently neglected with some parts covered by modern structures.

Within the ^{U^!•ā} Gulf, a group of towns are identified that were the focus of the pearl trade between the mid-17th century to the 19th century, when the complex geopolitics of the area led to many settlements being newly created or re-built in response, in particular, to the arrival of the Utub tribe from Arabia and to the rivalry between certain centres of power.

On the Persian shore are Nakhilu, Bandar Lingeh, Bandar Abbas, and Bushire. Only Bandar Lingeh survives as a small trading town that has not been completely re-developed.

In the Upper Gulf, are Kuwait City, Qatif, Awal (modern Manama), and Muharraq, (part of which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2012 as *Pearling, Testimony of an Island Economy*) and all except Muharraq have had their trading centres erased by later development.

In the Lower Gulf are Muscat, Jazirat al Hamra, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. In all except Jazirat al Hamra has the evidence for pearl trading activities been lost. Jazirat al Hamra was abandoned in the 1970s and at that time did present all the aspects of an early 20th century mercantile settlement that unlike Al Zubarah had not been raised by fire. However, it is now a victim of land pressure combined with neglect and these have brought significant changes.

Within Qatar there were a few settlements along the coast associated with pearling such as Huwella, and its close neighbour, Fuwairit, and Al Bida near Doha. But the first two were demolished in the early 19th century and Al Bida has been absorbed into Doha.

The conclusions are that within the Gulf the settlements "*exhibit notable, but limited, information on the Gulf pearl trade and its role in global mercantile culture. The physical remains of such sites are in poor condition, if they survive at all, and are in all cases divorced from their supporting hinterland. Unchecked urbanisation and minimal protection have regrettably led to the destruction, loss or neglect of many of these sites.*"

ICOMOS notes that, as presented in the nomination dossier, compared to other pearling sites in the Gulf, Al Zubarah does present a more complete ensemble of urban archaeological remains in its totality. However, it should also be noted that some of the other Middle Eastern pearling sites have actually more intact and integrated 'still standing' architecture as compared to Al Zubarah.

In the first nomination dossier, the comparative analysis highlighted the fact that Al Zubarah survives as an intact ruin in its landscape and as such might have the potential, on the basis of further research to be seen as exemplifying urban coastal settlements in the Gulf and their inter-relationship with desert settlements and desert use over time. Following the last two seasons of work, the relationship between Al Zubarah and its hinterland has now become much clearer as has, the distinction between *Al Zubarah archaeological Site* and its Gulf counterparts.

Al Zubarah can now be seen as a snapshot of an 18th /early 19th century pearling and trading town. The vast majority of physical remains from this period have disappeared under the massive urban development of the 20th century.

Other major examples of such towns (Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Dubai, Ras al-Khaimah, Muharraq, Bushehr etc.) are heavily built up and altered, such that their early urban form can never be reconstructed.

ICOMOS considers that Al Zubarah, because of its abandonment of in favour of Doha, has survived as an intact and can now be seen as an authentic example of a trading settlement in the Gulf at a crucial moment in the region's history and one that cannot be paralleled.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the property for the World Heritage List.

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value

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

- Al Zubarah is the Gulf's most complete and well-preserved town of the 18th-19th centuries connected to the practice of pearl trading and fishing.
- The town played a pivotal role in the historic phase of development of the pearl industry, as it represented one of the most prolific and crucial international trading ports in the region.
- The site reflects the history of tribal migration in the Persian Gulf, as it was founded by merchants arriving from Kuwait and Basra in the search for pearls.
- Al Zubarah also represents a unique mode of occupying a fragile desert ecosystem, which includes a particular system of water management.
- The port was the Gulf's most important trading hub, connecting the Indian Ocean with Arabia and western Asia, and highlighting how trade and exchange connected people from east and west economically, socially and culturally.
- The ruins of Al Zubarah encompass a complete urban town plan of an 18th 19th century pearling and trading settlement in the Gulf.

Since the first nomination dossier, the Qatar Islamic Archaeology and Heritage Project (QIAH) through a combination of survey and targeted test excavations within the town and across its hinterland, has provided considerable detail on the way the city developed, the basis of its prosperity, and its relationship to other coastal trading centres and to its hinterland.

Al Zubarah was a flourishing settlement for a period of around fifty years and from its position on the coast and its fortified harbour; its prosperity was based on fishing, urban trade through the export of pearls and the import of high value commodities from as far as afield as India and China.

What has now become clearer is how Al Zubarah represents a coastal urban tradition that goes back many centuries. It was in a long line of prosperous trading towns that developed from the early Islamic period, around the 9th century AD along the coast of what is now Qatar, and in other parts of the Gulf, all reflecting a tradition of pearl fishing and involvement in the long distance Gulf/Indian Ocean carrying trade.

Thus a clear picture is now emerging that positions Al Zubarah as the almost final flourishing of valuable coastal trade based on pearls and other commerce in this part of the Gulf. Moreover the extent of the town and

its relationship with its desert hinterland can still be appreciated from its intact ruins.

ICOMOS considers that Al Zubarah can be considered as an outstanding testimony to an urban trading and pearl-diving tradition which sustained the major coastal towns of the region from the early Islamic period or earlier to the 20th century.

Al Zubarah specifically reflects the particular flourishing of this tradition in the 18th and early 19th centuries outside imperial control (Ottoman, European, Persian). It was one of a string of urban foundations which rewrote the political and demographic map of the Gulf during the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Due to its very short life span and the lack of significant subsequent occupation, its urban configuration remains almost complete, as does its desert hinterland with its scattering of small inland settlements with which it probably had symbiotic relationships.

Al Zubarah is an architectural ensemble and landscape which exemplifies the foundation of the independent Arab city-states which endure today.

Its architectural ensemble represents the stage at which tribal Arab groups settled on the Gulf coast and founded new, stable and prosperous cities, most of which ultimately developed into the states that exist today.

Thus the overall settlement of Al Zubarah, together with rural settlements that supported the main city through provision of cattle or water, is beginning present a vivid picture of a small 'city state' in the Gulf and how it related to its desert hinterland and other coastal trading centres.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the Al Zubarah site relates to how far its remains can be said to include all the attributes of potential Outstanding Universal Value.

Al Zubarah has lain in ruins following its destruction in 1811. Only a small part of the original area was resettled during the late 19th century. As a result, the 18th century urban layout of Al Zubarah has been almost entirely preserved in situ.

The nominated site contains the whole town and its immediate hinterland, while the buffer zone encompasses a much wider part of the desert setting. The boundaries thus encompass all the attributes that express siting and functions.

The physical remains are highly vulnerable to erosion, both those that are still undisturbed and those that have been excavated. However detailed research and experimentation conducted over the past few seasons,

and still on-going is addressing the optimum stabilisation and protection approaches. The whole site is within a strong fence.

The integrity of the wider setting is adequately protected.

Authenticity

Authenticity relates to how far the attributes can convey clearly their value.

Only a small part of the town has been excavated in three phases: early 1980s, between 2002 and 2003 and since 2009. Restoration work carried out during the 1980s involved some re-construction of walls and, in some cases, the use of cement which had a destructive effect. Lack of maintenance during the twenty-five years before 2009 also resulted in substantial decay of the exposed walls. Thus the authenticity of the remains revealed by the early excavations has to a degree been compromised. But as this only pertains to a very small percentage of the remains, the overall impact is limited,

Since 2009, new excavations have been back-filled. Starting in 2011 a project has begun to stabilize walls using methods devised following extensive trials and research, and using the latest available information and technologies. These methods should allow parts of the excavated area to be consolidated so that they may be viewed.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (v).

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;

The criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the abandoned settlement of Al Zubarah is a unique testimony to the merchant and pearl trading tradition of the Persian Gulf during the 18th and 19th centuries and is the only complete urban plan of an Arabian pearl-merchant town.

ICOMOS considers that the further survey and research work undertaken over the past two years since the first nomination has allowed a better understanding of the way Al Zubarah developed and how it related to other trading settlements and to its hinterland. What is emerging is the value of Al Zubarah as the almost intact remains of a complete town that demonstrates the almost final flourishing of a long tradition of trading and pearl-diving tradition which sustained the major coastal towns of the region from the early Islamic period or earlier to the 20th century.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (iv): refers to "an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history";

This criterion was not suggested in the revised nomination dossier, but ICOMOS considers that the strengthened information now presented suggests that it could be met.

Al Zubarah as a fortified town linked into settlements in its hinterland exemplifies the string of urban foundations which rewrote the political and demographic map of the Gulf during the 18th and early 19th centuries through building on the strategic position of the region as a trading conduit.

Al Zubarah can thus be seen as an example of the small independent states that were founded and flourished in the 18th and early 19th centuries outside the control of the Ottoman, European, and Persian empires.

This period can now be seen as a significant moment in human history, when the Gulf States that exist today were founded.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Al Zubarah Archaeological Site bears unique testimony to the human interaction with both the sea and the harsh desert environment of the region. Pearl divers' weights, depictions of dhows, and imported ceramics show how the town's development was driven by trade and commerce, and how closely the town's inhabitants were connected with the sea.

ICOMOS considers that the past two year's excavations and surveys within Al Zubarah and in its hinterland have strengthened an understanding of the trading and pearling traditions that prevailed along the Gulf coasts, and their historical context. They have also strengthened understanding of now abandoned forms of traditional desert and sea-use exploitation such as fish traps, wells and agricultural activity sustained the coastal towns.

Not only is the archaeological site of Al Zubarah relatively unaffected by later occupation and modern development, but the surrounding landscape is also relatively intact.

ICOMOS considers that the urban landscape of Al Zubarah and its seascape and desert hinterland are not intrinsically remarkable or unique, amongst Gulf settlements, nor do they exhibit unusual land

management techniques. What makes them exceptional is the evidence they present as a result of complete abandonment over the last three generations. This allows them to be understood as a fossilised reflection of the way coastal trading towns harvested resources from the sea and from their desert hinterland at a specific time.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met and that criteria (iii), (iv) and (v) have been justified.

4 Factors affecting the property

The site is a fairly remote desert area. However, while it has remained largely away from development pressures since it was abandoned, major infrastructure projects that are planned could begin to change completely the wider setting of the site.

A 40km Qatar–Bahrain causeway and bridge was planned to be routed a few kilometres south of Al Zubarah Archaeological Site. This could have impacted adversely on the integrity of the site within an open desert landscape.

The Qatari authorities have now decided to re-route the causeway a few kilometres south of the Buffer Zone, in order to minimise its visual impact. A large interchange and border customs terminal that were planned for a site to the south-west of the Buffer Zone have also been moved further east.

An archaeological assessment of the impact of the Qatar-Bahrain ‘Friendship Bridge and causeway’ was undertaken in 2008-2009. As the Qatar-Bahrain Friendship Bridge Project at present has been halted and there is no planned date for its construction, the State Party states that a new Heritage Impact Assessment will be commissioned if and when the project should become active again.

A further large infrastructure development project at Madinat Ash Shamal, north-east of the Buffer Zone is related to the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The ICOMOS mission was informed that this will not encroach on the site, or on the Al Reem Biosphere Reserve, or on the National Heritage Park of Northern Qatar, as they are all legally Protected Areas. The tournament spectators for Ash Shamal stadium will be arriving from Doha via the main eastern coastal road and the Bahrain-Qatar Causeway Bridge to the south, causing minimal impact on the site.

The development and promotion of Al Zubarah as a major tourist attraction could draw large numbers of visitors, especially in winter time. The impact resulting from heavy tourism on the archaeological fabric of the

site, if uncontrolled, could threaten the integrity of the surviving fragile remains. In the first evaluation, ICOMOS considered that these concerns would need to be addressed by a discrete Tourism Strategy, as envisaged in the Management Plan (see below).

In the revised nomination dossier, it was stated that the QIAH Project had already undertaken the first steps towards developing a discrete tourism strategy. Since 2011, the QIAH Project has started the process of gradually developing the site for visitors and particularly for purposes of school education.

The harsh desert climatic conditions in north-west Qatar and the erosion processes caused by the sea and wind threaten the survival of the archaeological fabric of the site over time.

Rising sea water levels as a result of global warming could also pose a threat to the site. The fact that the town of Al Zubarah lies at seashore level and is surrounded on three sides by a *sabkha* makes it vulnerable.

ICOMOS considered in its first evaluation that such challenges need to be addressed by a Conservation strategy for the site that sets out what interventions would be possible and desirable. Such a Strategy has now been put in place (see below).

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are the extremely fragile nature of the archaeological remains and potential major infrastructural developments that could have an adverse impact on the relationship between the town and its desert landscape.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The nominated property includes the entire remains of Al Zubarah town with its associated structures and features running inland.

The Buffer Zone surrounding the site encompasses a large area of landscape within which are various archaeological sites of Qal’at Shuwail, Helwan, Gebel Freiha and the abandoned village of Ain Muhammad. The Buffer zone also extends into the sea enclosing the harbour area and an extensive coral reef system off shore.

The Buffer Zone is surrounded to the south and south-west by Al-Reem Biosphere Reserve, its buffer zone and terrestrial and marine transition areas (about 200,000 ha). This offers Al Zubarah Archaeological Site an extra ‘buffer zone’ adequate to control any future urban development in the region and protect the wider natural setting of the site.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are adequate.

Ownership

The Al Zubarah Archaeological Site is owned by the government.

Protection

Al Zubarah is designated as an archaeological site according to the Law of Antiquities no. 2 of 1980, and its amendment, Law no. 23 of 2010. As such, it is a legally protected property.

The Buffer Zone has now been legally approved by the Ministry of Municipality and Urban Planning of Qatar. This means that no permits will be granted for any economic or real estate development within the Buffer Zone.

Al Reem Biosphere Reserve and the National Heritage Park of Northern Qatar, in which Al Zubarah Archaeological Site is included, have the status of legally Protected Areas. These effectively extend protection to the wider setting and will be crucial in insuring that any regional development, especially of Madinat Ash Shamal, will respect the protection and conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the region.

The Madinat Ash Shamal Structure Plan has already been submitted but not yet approved. The Structure Plan would guarantee the protection of the site from any urban encroachment from the north-east. This is relevant to the large infrastructure development proposals related to preparations for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The Plan is due for approval in 2013.

In addition, the Qatar National Master Plan (QNMP) states that the protection of cultural heritage sites, of which *Al Zubarah Archaeological Site* is the country's largest, is of crucial importance throughout Qatar (Policy BE 16). 'Conservation Areas' are established in order to ensure this protection and the policy actions expressly state that this includes Qatar's northern coastline (Coastal Zone Protection Area) and the area between Al Zubarah and Al Shamal (Al Shamal Conservation Area). The Plan also states that growth will be constrained by the protected areas and that planned road networks shall avoid the Buffer Zone.

The Management Plan sets out a raft of new policies for the protection of Qatar's cultural heritage that have been developed or are being developed. These include the National Development Strategy, 2011, and the Qatar Master Plan, 2011. Further Plans in progress include the Qatar National Development framework and Municipal, City and Local Area Plans.

Given the open nature of the wider setting of the site and the potential major development projects that are being considered, there is a need to ensure that there are

mechanisms in place to allow major projects outside the Buffer Zone to be scrutinised for their impact on the site.

ICOMOS considers that the protective measures for the property will be adequate when the Madinat Ash Shamal Structure Plan has been officially approved in 2013.

Conservation

At the time of the first nomination, ICOMOS noted that the conservation and consolidation of the surviving and newly exposed archaeological structures of Al Zubarah, posed a major challenge, as they were highly vulnerable to deterioration from the harsh environmental conditions.

The earliest conservation works at the site had been carried out following the initial archaeological excavations in the 1980s. These focused primarily on excavated buildings and segments of the outer town wall. Old stones were used to re-build additional courses on some walls, while other walls were extensively reconstructed. The mortar used in these works was mainly cement-based (rather than the softer lime of the original walls) and the walls were capped with a cement coat. After nearly three decades of neglect these harsh materials had caused substantial decay of the exposed walls around and beneath the cement mortar causing some collapses to the structures.

In 2009, the Qatar Islamic Archaeology and Heritage project (QIAH) was started. This is a ten-year research, conservation and heritage initiative, being undertaken jointly with the University of Copenhagen, to investigate the site, preserve its fragile remains, and work toward the presentation of the site to the public.

The first phases of the project have covered documentation using modern 3D laser scanning and more traditional techniques to provide an holistic assessment of the state of conservation of the old excavation areas; and an exemplary inventory and catalogue of the state of conservation of two parts of the site, one of which is the excavated parts of the town wall, together with a preliminary mortar and plaster analysis.

At the time of the first nomination, ICOMOS noted that there was no defined conservation strategy. This awaited the outcome of a series of further surveys and conservation experiments.

The revised nomination provided the results of this further work over the past two years.

The project has developed a Conservation Strategy that will:

- 1 Both protect and strengthen the structures in order for them to be preserved for future generations;
- 2 Take a certain amount of annual visitors into consideration;
- 3 Be a sustainable strategy that in addition to protecting archaeological remains, made them an

understandable medium for explaining the town's history.

The new strategy brought in a different approach for stabilising the excavated and other remains. It moved from trying to stabilise the stone walls by applying lime mortar shelter coat over all the upstanding remains to a new more targeted approach that focused more on the earth mortars.

The revised strategy includes the re-plastering/re-surfacing of wall faces to protect the actual building stones from erosion. Furthermore, there is a much clearer differentiation between wall faces and wall tops with a 'double lined' plaster ledge separating the wall plaster and the rough surface of the wall top. Both the treatment of surfaces and the visual characteristics of the new, currently lime-based plaster approximate to the historic construction processes.

The revised strategy also entails a degree of structural rebuilding, including the restitution of architectural elements such as wall faces, niches, ledges and doorways. The consolidation of historic plasters includes the stabilisation of exposed surfaces, stitching cracks and border lines, filling voids and fixing loose components. In sum, the revised conservation strategy is specifically tailored to the characteristics of earthen architecture.

It is acknowledged that owing to the environmental conditions and the composition of the historic building, this work cannot completely stop deterioration and a regular programme of maintenance and monitoring is required.

Protection and conservation measures undertaken in 2012 also involved the implementation of solutions to mitigate the impact of pedestrian and vehicular traffic approaching the site and within it. These involve the construction of three raised walkways for visitors, of which one so far has been completed.

The project has produced a *Conservation Handbook*. This is organised into three main sections: 1. Basics; 2. Conservation Concept; and 3. Conservation Manual.

The Basics covers Al Zubarah's history and archaeology, environmental /climatic conditions, information on building materials and general deterioration patterns at Al Zubarah.

The Conservation Concept sets out an examination and assessment of previously executed consolidation work and provides examples of characteristic architectural features as a basis for good practise.

The third part, the Conservation Manual, provides technical instructions, organised according to a 'fiche method', where each fiche summarises a specific aspect of conservation work.

Starting with general topics covering Health and Safety regulations on site and how to deal with specific materials, the manual presents a step by step description of the conservation and consolidation work. Each work step is accompanied by images and text. Relevant reports and documents are compiled in appendices to the overall Handbook.

In parallel to the work on the town, conservation work has also been undertaken on the modern Fort in preparation for its use as a Visitor Centre. A separate Conservation Handbook: Al Zubarah Fort is being prepared that looks at the conservation of the traditional building techniques exemplified in the Fort. This will be completed in 2014.

ICOMOS considers that the challenges facing the conservation of the highly fragile remains in a hostile climate are immense.

The conservation approach adopted of survey, analysis and trial approaches is to be highly commended, as is the development of a Conservation Handbook so that the extensive research and analysis and the agreed conservation strategy are readily available to all, in a straightforward, readily accessible but highly professional manner.

A group of experts known as The Heritage Conservation Strategy Group meets at least three times per year to follow up on the conservation activities and optimise the implementation of the conservation strategy.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the property is fragile, a reflection of the inherent weaknesses of the archaeological remains in a hostile maritime and desert climate and some previous interventions; the development of the detailed Conservation Handbook based on extensive research and analysis is an admirable approach.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

Responsibility for site management is with the Department of Antiquities under the authority of the Qatar Museums Authority (QMA), which falls in turn under the direct authority of the Amiri Diwan (office of the Qatari Amir).

The Management Unit for the property has been fully operational since 2010-2011. Until 2015 the Site Management Unit will be run jointly by the QIAH Project and the QMA. A QIAH-appointed Site Manager works in collaboration with a QMA-appointed Deputy Site Manager (position established in 2011). There are 14 guards at the site, 2 at the main gate and 3 teams of 4 guards each patrol the site and its perimeter during day time.

In 2011-2012 a programme of training in conservation techniques for a selected workforce was started. Over the course of the next three years, the programme aims to create a skilled workforce specifically trained to undertake all restoration activities at the property.

A National Committee for the site was established in June 2011 and held its first meeting in October 2011. The Committee members include representatives of the various stakeholders groups, including the local community, various Ministries and the Universities of Qatar and Copenhagen, and is chaired by the Vice-Chair of the QMA. Its aim is to facilitate dialogue and to advise the QMA on protection and monitoring of the site.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

A Management Plan for the site was submitted in January 2012 to replace the shorter version submitted with the first nomination dossier.

The Management Plan sets out clearly the threats to the site from uncontrolled tourism and lack of heritage conservation capacity.

The Management Plan will be implemented in three phases over nine years. The first phase (2011-2015) focuses on archaeological investigation, conservation and the preparation of a master plan for tourism development, including the planning and designing of a visitor centre to be opened in 2015, and capacity building; the second phase (2015-2019) is a medium-term strategy for presentation and capacity building but will include further archaeological investigations, while in the third phase (2019 onwards) the QMA will take full responsibility for managing the site which should by this time be conserved and presented.

The QIAH project also had a remit to develop the Heritage Master Plan for the whole of the north of Qatar, an area between Al Zubarah and Madinat Ash Shamal which includes abandoned villages and other archaeological sites. A proposal for this Master Plan will be developed during Phase One.

The formation of the Management Plan has allowed the QMA to negotiate and implement heritage control and prevent or modify unsuitable development plans such as re-routing of the Bahrain-Qatar Causeway project and imposing restrictions the development of Madinat Ash Shamal towards Al Zubarah in the south-west. However ICOMOS considers that continued vigilance will still be needed to ensure these projects do not compromise the site.

As envisaged in the Management Plan, a QIAH-QMA mentoring system aimed at capacity building in the field of heritage in Qatar was started in 2012.

A series of new interpretive panels for visitors are planned. These will be developed over the course of the next three years (2013-2015). An additional series of interpretive panels targeted mainly at schools' education will also be created.

The Al Zubarah 1938 Fort will be developed into a visitor centre dedicated to presenting the cultural and natural heritage of *Al Zubarah* and northwest Qatar. The ICOMOS mission was informed that a feasibility study is being conducted to examine potential locations for a larger Visitor centre for the whole northwestern Qatar region. One proposed location is the abandoned village of Ain Muhammad to the north, just outside the Buffer Zone. The Management Plan provides further information on the low impact approach to this project.

Risk management will be addressed at the first update of the Management Plan in 2015.

The Management Plan sets out details of the resources allocated to Al Zubarah for three years since 2008-9. These have amounted to over \$400m in total.

The management of the property is evolving in parallel with the evolution of the QIAH project. Both reflect the way the approach to the property is becoming more professional, more structured and better targeted.

Involvement of the local communities

There are no local communities in the property or the buffer zone.

Community archaeology and outreach activities are planned as part of the QIAH project. A work plan will be drawn up in 2012. This will include contact with people who once lived in the Ash Shamal area near the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate.

6 Monitoring

Monitoring of the site is foreseen in the Management Plan. Indicators will include meteorological data, satellite imagery of the buffer zone, and visitor statistics.

In the first evaluation, ICOMOS noted that an initial set of indicators had been presented in the Management Plan. These included the state of conservation of the fabric monitored once a year and damage caused by visitors. ICOMOS noted that the indicators need to be more tightly related to the key attributes of the site and, in terms of monitoring the state of conservation of the archaeological remains, they need to be more specific in terms of what is being monitored and how.

In response, in the supplementary information, details have been provided on more detailed indicators such as

permanent data loggers for temperature and humidity measurements, visual, and photographic monitoring, lab-analyses of building materials and 3D-laser scans.

This combination of monitoring procedures allows specialists to access and evaluate the executed work, and to record decay processes. It is stated that evaluation of the data will lead to contexts specific methods and materials, which, in turn, will result in improved maintenance processes.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring indicators in place are appropriate

7 Conclusions

ICOMOS noted in its first evaluation that what emerges clearly in the first nomination was the fact that the abandoned coastal town of Al Zubarah within its desert landscape setting, scattered with the remains of smaller settlements, is a rare survival in the Gulf Region.

What the revised nomination has set out, on the basis of very extensive survey, research and excavation within Al Zubarah and its wider desert hinterland over the past two years, is a firm understanding of what Al Zubarah can be said to represent in an exceptional way.

Al Zubarah was a trading town on the edge of the Gulf. It relied on establishing a symbiotic relationship with smaller settlements in its hinterland. Its prosperity related to its involvement in Gulf and Indian Ocean trade of high value commodities, most notably the export of pearls. Al Zubarah was one of several trading towns around the coast in what is now Qatar and one of many towns around the Gulf that similarly relied on inland settlements. Individually these trading towns probably competed with each other over the many centuries during which the India Ocean trade was plied.

What distinguished Al Zubarah from these other towns is that it lasted a comparatively short space of time, secondly that it was abandoned, thirdly that it has lain largely untouched since being covered by the desert sands and fourthly that its wider context can still be read through the remains of small satellite settlements and the remains of possibly competing towns nearby along the coast.

Al Zubarah is not exceptional because it was unique or distinguished in some way from these other settlements, but rather for the way that it can be seen to exemplify the string of urban foundations which rewrote the political and demographic map of the Gulf during the 18th and early 19th centuries and led to the development of small independent states that flourished outside the control of the Ottoman, European, and Persian empires and which eventually led to the emergence of modern day Gulf States.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Al Zubarah Archaeological Site, State of Qatar, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iii), (iv) and (v)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The walled coastal town of Al Zubarah in the Persian Gulf flourished as a pearling and trading centre for a short period of some fifty years in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Founded by Utub merchants from Kuwait, its prosperity related to its involvement in trade of high value commodities, most notably the export of pearls. At the height of its prosperity, Al Zubarah had trading links with the Indian Ocean, Arabia and Western Asia.

Al Zubarah was one of a long line of prosperous, fortified trading towns around the coast in what is now Qatar, and in other parts of the Gulf, that developed from the early Islamic period, around the 9th century AD, onwards and established a symbiotic relationship with inland settlements. Individually these trading towns probably competed with each other over the many centuries during which the India Ocean trade was plied.

Al Zubarah was mostly destroyed in 1811 and finally abandoned in the early 20th century, after which its remaining rubble stone and mortar buildings collapsed and were gradually covered by a protective layer of sand blown from the desert. A small part of the town has been excavated. The property consists of the remains of the town, with its palaces, mosques, streets, courtyard houses, and fishermen's huts, its harbour and double defensive walls, and, on its land side, of a canal, two screening walls, and cemeteries. A short distance away are the remains of the fort of Qal'at Murair, with evidence of how the desert's supplies of water were managed and protected, and a further fort constructed in 1938.

What distinguished Al Zubarah from the other trading towns of the Gulf is that it lasted a comparatively short space of time, secondly that it was abandoned, thirdly that it has lain largely untouched since being covered by the desert sands, and fourthly that its wider context can still be read through the remains of small satellite settlements and the remains of possibly competing towns nearby along the coast.

The layout of Al Zubarah has been preserved under the desert sands. The entire town, still within its desert hinterland, are a vivid reflection of the development of an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century trading society in the Gulf region and its interaction with the surrounding desert landscape.

Al Zubarah is not exceptional because it was unique or distinguished in some way from these other settlements, but rather for the way that it can be seen an outstanding testimony to an urban trading and pearl-diving tradition which sustained the major coastal towns of the region from the early Islamic period or earlier to the 20th century, and to exemplify the string of urban foundations which rewrote the political and demographic map of the Gulf during the 18th and early 19th centuries and led to the development of small independent states that flourished outside the control of the Ottoman, European, and Persian empires and which eventually led to the emergence of modern day Gulf States.

Criterion (iii): The abandoned settlement of Al Zubarah, as the only remaining complete urban plan of an Arabian pearl-merchant town, is an exceptional testimony to the merchant and pearl trading tradition of the Persian Gulf during the 18th and 19th centuries, the almost final flourishing of a tradition that sustained the major coastal towns of the region from the early Islamic period or earlier to the 20th century.

Criterion (iv): Al Zubarah as a fortified town linked to settlements in its hinterland exemplifies the string of urban foundations which rewrote the political and demographic map of the Gulf during the 18th and early 19th centuries through building on the strategic position of the region as a trading conduit. Al Zubarah can thus be seen as an example of the small independent states that were founded and flourished in the 18th and early 19th centuries outside the control of the Ottoman, European, and Persian empires. This period can now be seen as a significant moment in human history, when the Gulf States that exist today were founded.

Criterion (v): Al Zubarah bears a unique testimony to the human interaction with both the sea and the harsh desert environment of the region. Pearl divers' weights, imported ceramics, depictions of dhows, fish traps, wells and agricultural activity show how the town's development was driven by trade and commerce, and how closely the town's inhabitants were connected with the sea and their desert hinterland.

The urban landscape of al Zubarah, and its relatively intact seascape and desert hinterland are not intrinsically remarkable or unique, amongst Gulf settlements, not do they exhibit unusual land management techniques. What makes them exceptional is the evidence they present as a result of complete abandonment over the last three generations. This allows them to be understood as a fossilised reflection of the way coastal trading towns harvested resources from the sea and from their desert hinterland at a specific time.

Integrity

Al Zubarah has lain in ruins following its destruction in 1811. Only a small part of the original area was resettled during the late 19th century. As a result, the 18th century

urban layout of Al Zubarah has been almost entirely preserved in situ.

The property contains the whole town and its immediate hinterland. The boundary encompasses all the attributes that express siting and functions. The buffer zone encompasses part of its desert setting and context.

The physical remains are highly vulnerable to erosion, both those that are still undisturbed and those that have been excavated. However detailed research and experimentation conducted over the past few seasons, and still on-going is addressing the optimum stabilisation and protection approaches. The whole property is within a strong fence. The integrity of the wider setting is adequately protected.

Authenticity

Only a small part of the town has been excavated in three phases: early 1980s, between 2002 and 2003 and since 2009. Restoration work carried out during the 1980s involved some re-construction of walls and, in some cases, the use of cement which had a destructive effect. Lack of maintenance during the twenty-five years before 2009 also resulted in substantial decay of the exposed walls. Thus the authenticity of the remains revealed by the early excavations has to a degree been compromised. But as this only pertains to a very small percentage of the remains, the overall impact is limited.

Since 2009, new excavations have been back-filled. Starting in 2011 a project has begun to stabilize walls using methods devised following extensive trials and research, and using the latest available information and technologies. These methods should allow parts of the excavated area to be consolidated so that they may be viewed by visitors.

Management and protection requirements

Al Zubarah is designated as an archaeological site according to the Law of Antiquities no. 2 of 1980, and its amendment, Law no. 23 of 2010. As such, it is a legally protected property.

The buffer zone has been legally approved by the Ministry of Municipality and Urban Planning of Qatar. This ensures that no permits will be granted for any economic or real estate development within the Buffer Zone.

Al Reem Biosphere Reserve and the National Heritage Park of Northern Qatar, in which Al Zubarah Archaeological Site is included, have the status of legally Protected Areas. These effectively extend protection to the wider setting, The Madinat Ash Shamal Structure Plan due to be approved in 2013 will guarantee the protection of the site from any urban encroachment from the north-east.

The Qatar National Master Plan (QNMP) states that the protection of cultural heritage sites, of which *Al Zubarah Archaeological Site* is the country's largest, is of crucial importance throughout Qatar (Policy BE 16). 'Conservation Areas' are established in order to ensure this protection and the policy actions expressly state that this includes Qatar's northern coastline (Coastal Zone Protection Area) and the area between Al Zubarah and Al Shamal (Al Shamal Conservation Area). The Plan also states that growth will be constrained by the protected areas and that planned road networks shall avoid the Buffer Zone.

A Site Management Unit for the property will until 2015 be run jointly by the Qatar Islamic Archaeology and Heritage (QIAH) project and the Qatar Museums Authority (QMA). A QIAH-appointed Site Manager works in collaboration with a QMA-appointed Deputy Site Manager. A National Committee for the property includes representatives of the various stakeholders groups, including the local community, various Ministries and the Universities of Qatar and Copenhagen, and is chaired by the Vice-Chair of the QMA. Its aim is to facilitate dialogue and to advise the QMA on protection and monitoring of the property.

An approved Management Plan will be implemented in three phases over nine years. The first phase (2011-2015) focuses on archaeological investigation, conservation and the preparation of a master plan for tourism development, including the planning and designing of a visitor centre to be opened in 2015, and capacity building; the second phase (2015–2019) is a medium-term strategy for presentation and capacity building but will include further archaeological investigations and the development of a risk prevention strategy, while in the third phase (2019 onwards), the QMA will take full responsibility for managing the property which should by this time be conserved and presented.

The Qatar Islamic Archaeology and Heritage Project (QIAH) was launched jointly by the QMA and the University of Copenhagen in 2009. This ten year project aims to research the property and its hinterland and preserve its fragile remains.

A Conservation Strategy has been developed that is specifically tailored to the characteristics of earthen architecture and devised to meet the needs of the Al Zubarah ruins. It aims to protect and strengthen the urban remains in order for them to be preserved for future generations; to take a certain amount of annual visitors; and to allow them to be understandable in terms of explaining the town's history. It is acknowledged that owing to the environmental conditions and the composition of the historic buildings, conservation work cannot completely stop deterioration and a regular programme of maintenance and monitoring is planned. A Conservation Handbook has been prepared that includes the Conservation Concept and a Conservation Manual and overall allows the extensive research and

analysis that has been undertaken and the agreed conservation strategy to be readily available to all, in a straightforward, readily accessible but highly professional manner.

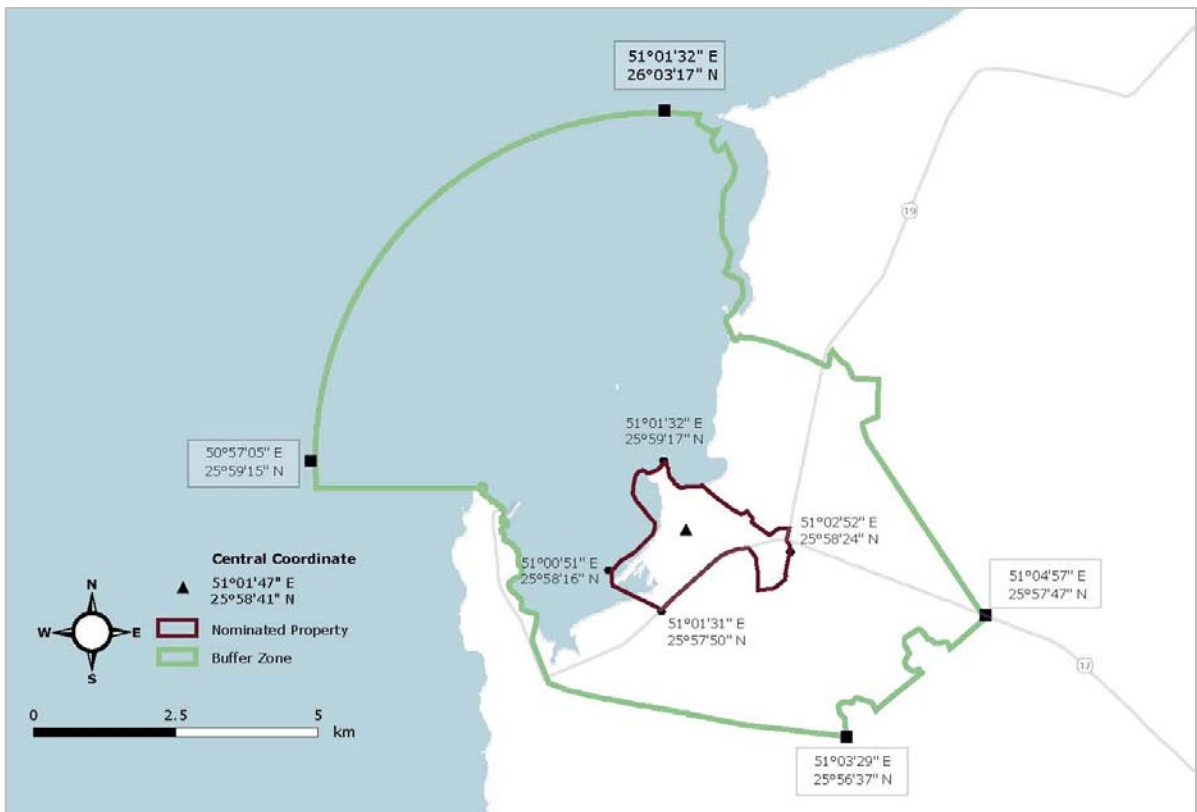
A group of experts known as the Heritage Conservation Strategy Group meets regularly to follow up on the conservation activities and optimise the implementation of the conservation strategy. A programme of training in conservation techniques has been initiated the programme to create a skilled workforce specifically trained to undertake all restoration activities at the property.

The challenges facing the conservation of the highly fragile remains in a hostile climate are immense. The approaches being devised for survey, analysis and conservation, as well as visitor management, aim to be exemplary.

Additional recommendations

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

- Carrying out Heritage Impact Assessments for major infrastructural projects considered in the vicinity of the property in order to ensure that these do not impact adversely on the town and its wider desert setting;
- Continuing its wide-ranging survey, research and analysis of the wider setting of the property, and, in particular, its relationship with other coastal towns and inland settlements.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



Al Zubarah Fort



Aerial view of houses



Aerial view of Al Zubarah shoreline



Inner (left) and outer (right) town walls