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## Neolithic Site of Çatalhöyük (Turkey) No 1405

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### Official name as proposed by the State Party

The Neolithic Site of Çatalhöyük

### Location

Province of Konya  
District of Çumra  
Turkey

### Brief description

The two large tells of Çatalhöyük rise up to 20 m above the Konya plain on the Southern Anatolian Plateau. Excavations of the Eastern mound have revealed 18 levels of Neolithic occupation dating from 7,400-6,200 BC including a large assemblage of wall paintings, reliefs and other symbolic, artistic features illuminating the evolution of prehistoric social organisation and cultural practices as humans adapted to sedentary life and agriculture. The Western mound shows a continuation and evolution of cultural practices in Chalcolithic occupation levels dating from 6,200-5,200 BC.

### 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

6 February 2009

### International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

### Date received by the World Heritage Centre

31 January 2011

### Background

This is a new nomination.

### Consultations

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

### Literature consulted (selection)

Düring, B. S., *The Prehistory of Asia Minor: From Complex Hunter-Gatherers to Early Urban Societies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011.

Matero, F. and Moss, E., 'Temporary site protection for earthen walls and murals at Çatalhöyük, Turkey' in *Conservation and management of archaeological sites*, Vol.6 Nos. 3 & 4, 213-227, ICCROM, Rome, 2007.

Sagona, A. and Zimansky, P., *Ancient Turkey*, Routledge, London and New York, 2009.

### Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 28 to 30 October 2011.

### Additional information requested and received from the State Party

A letter was sent to the State Party on 12 December 2011 requesting a timetable for the review, updating, approval and implementation of the Management Plan and clarification on the roles and responsibilities of all partners, the management structure and objectives and the means of implementation. A response was received on 25 February 2012 and the information has been incorporated into the relevant sections below.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

14 March 2012

## 2 The property

### Description

The nominated property covers 37 hectares with a surrounding buffer zone of 110.74 hectares.

Çatalhöyük lies on the Konya plain on the southern edge of the Anatolian Plateau at an elevation of approximately 1,000m above sea level; the highest point of the East Mound of Çatalhöyük is 1,020.3 m above sea level. It lies within the boundaries of Küçükköy, a small village located one kilometre north. The centre of Çumra province is 12km south/south-west and its capital, Konya is 60km north-west.

The two mounds which compose the property are Çatalhöyük East clearly visible from some distance and Çatalhöyük West much lower with gently sloping topography. Each mound is fenced and they are separated by farmland, some of which is actively cultivated, and an irrigation channel that reflects an ancient water course or lake.

Çatalhöyük East consists of 21m of Neolithic deposits dating from 7,400-6,200 BC with later deposits mainly of Byzantine burials and rubbish pits. Çatalhöyük West is 6m high and is almost exclusively Chalcolithic (6,200-5,200 B.C.), with the presence of some Byzantine burials.

The site represents significant social change and development: hunting, domestication of plants, the invention of pottery, and the coming together of thousands of people in a permanent settlement. Furthermore the two mounds together span over 2,000 years and indicate a high degree of continuity through time.

Excavations have reached the bottom of the East Mound and have discovered a total of 18 levels of occupation. The main architectural components of the site are densely clustered mud brick houses, rectangular in plan, of which 166 have been excavated, with areas of refuse or midden between them. On both mounds, houses are clustered together without streets and with roof access. On the West Mound, however, houses are two-storey and have buttressed walls. The extensive art, symbolism, and burials discovered at the site occur within houses.

There is evidence of productive activities in all houses, on midden areas and house roofs. None of the sampling shows evidence of large public buildings, ceremonial centres, specialized areas of production, or cemeteries. However there were houses with more art and longevity that may have been ritual centres; houses as centres for burial, and the selective special treatment of some individuals in death. The evidence is generally taken to indicate that society at Çatalhöyük was largely egalitarian without large-scale centralized administration and that its rich art was produced in a domestic context.

#### Çatalhöyük East

The Southern area of the East mound was excavated by James Mellaart in the 1960s, revealing the stacked sequence of housing in the different layers throughout the height of the tell that provided evidence of a continuous, if evolving, cultural tradition.

Excavations in the Northern area have exposed houses grouped in small clusters that appear to have shared ancestral burial houses, with some larger-scale groupings into sectors of clustered houses bounded by midden areas and/or alleyways.

Wall paintings exposed during excavations in the 1960s were executed on walls plastered with white, lime-based clay and showed images of humans, raptors and wild animals in narrative scenes of hunting and baiting. Wild bulls are the centrepieces of the north walls of several buildings. Relief sculptures modelled in clay on the walls were also exposed, including of plastered bull skulls with bull horns attached (*bucrania*) and complete animal

figures. Rounded plaster protuberances on the walls resembling female breasts contained the teeth of foxes and weasels, the lower jaws and tusks of wild boars, the claws of bears and the beaks of vultures. All of these deposits and paintings suggest that animals played important roles in many rituals.

Most burials in the settlement were beneath house floors and platforms. Over 400 burials have been excavated.

Craft goods and tools recovered during the excavations included small figurines, pottery, obsidian objects, baskets, clay balls, beads and bone tools, obsidian knives and blades, as well as grinding stones, mortars and pestles, axes, mace heads, stone vessels and palettes mostly made from igneous rocks.

Stamp seals found at the site, made of fired clay and painted with a variety of forms and motifs, form a significant and distinctive group among Neolithic stamp seals dating from 8,000 to 5,000 BC found at various settlements in the Near East.

#### Çatalhöyük West

The settlement that formed the West Mound grew up during the period following the Neolithic known as the Chalcolithic. Traditions beginning to develop in the upper levels of the East Mound continued in the western settlement as houses became more independent and self-sufficient. Excavations on the West Mound have uncovered larger, more complex, multi-roomed houses arranged around a central, plastered room with a central hearth. Here there is no evidence of burials below floors, and to date no evidence of wall-painting or relief sculpture. On the other hand the pottery, stone vessels and ceramic pot-stands were decorated with elaborate paintwork showing a continuity of imagery from the walls of the East Mound, with paintings of bull heads, splayed bear figures, women and headless bodies.

The excavated areas of the two mounds together represent less than 10% of the overall site area. Two large shelters have been built over excavated portions of the East Mound. Also, a Visitors Centre, 'Dig House', and an experimental house as well as facilities have been provided outside the nominated property boundary.

The landscape in which the nominated property lies is perceived today as a flat, arid and for most parts intensively cultivated agricultural plain, encircled by mountains. The lack of trees enables Çatalhöyük and the many other tell mounds that dot the plain to be readily visible.

### History and development

By the end of the Pleistocene period c.13,000-11,500 BC, the lake that preceded the Konya Plain was drying up, and by 9,500 BC a warmer and wetter environment promoted soil conditions suitable for farming. Çatalhöyük developed as a settlement in the Neolithic period and was occupied for 2,000 years from approximately 7,400 – 5,500 BC. According to the nomination dossier, Çatalhöyük developed from small local communities to larger urbanized areas. Over time, the settlement expanded in height and area. New buildings were constructed on top of midden deposits, after some decades or even centuries of use. Waste was also thrown off-site around the edge of the settlement and as it accumulated it provided the basis for the construction of new buildings. Buildings towards the edge of the settlement were terraced down the slope. The estimated population was between 3,500 and 8,000.

For centuries houses were built over other houses, the hearths staying in the same relative location. A remarkable continuity in the 8th and 7th millennia is observed throughout the various levels of the site. Nevertheless, detailed analysis of the buildings shows an endless cycle of movement and reorganization. Ovens, hearths and bins were moved from one side to the other along the south wall or were located in side rooms and then back into the main rooms. There is a changing sequence as pottery appears, obsidian becomes more specialized, stamp seals are introduced, figurines change in style, social differentiation becomes more marked, and houses become more independent.

The settlement's densest phases seem to be in Levels VII and VI of the East Mound. The largest numbers of burials occur in houses in Levels VII and VI, in both the Southern and Northern areas. The shift to the use of pottery in cooking in Level VII shows that cooking was more varied and complex, and pottery production intensified. In the main East Mound levels, hearths and ovens are always by or close to walls. On its upper levels and in the West Mound, the hearth is in the centre of the room, indicating a focus on domestic production.

In the East Mound's upper levels burials beneath floors decrease and wall painting give way to painted pottery carrying similar images as the previous wall paintings. Houses became more independent and self sufficient as production relations of exchange and specialization developed. Over millennia the bricks used at the site gradually decrease in size. There is evidence of feasting on wild cattle up to Level VI. By the 6th millennium on the West Mound feasts depended more on the provision of domesticated animals.

From the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium the northern area of the East Mound was gradually abandoned and there was some occupation of the eastern slope producing a small eminence. The area of occupation in the south shrinks

quickly from Level VI onwards. Radiocarbon dating indicates that the West Mound began to be occupied during the last phases of the East Mound's occupation, giving a sense of housing dispersal and indicating a clear move from the former close huddling of buildings. After the site was abandoned, thousands of years of environmental processes and erosion lowered the top of the mounds by 2 m, whereas on the surrounding plain alluviation covered the Neolithic land surface and covered the lower slopes of the East and West Mounds.

Surface finds indicate the presence of a Byzantine site to the east of East Mound. The site is under cultivated land and has not been investigated. Its exact date, nature and extent are unknown and there is no evidence that either Çatalhöyük East or West were settlements in the Classical or Byzantine periods.

In 1951, James Mellaart, from the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara conducted the first systematic survey of the Konya Plain. Çatalhöyük was observed from a distance in 1952 during the second survey season. In 1958 David French and Alan Hall visited the Mound and exposed areas revealing mud brick buildings, bones, potsherds and obsidian. Early measurements of the site indicated that it was 450 m in length and 275 m in width, covering approximately 34 acres with over 20 m of Neolithic deposits, making it the largest Neolithic site hitherto known in the Near East.

In 1958 Turkish law designated the site as an ancient monument protected by the General Directorate of Monuments and Museums. Mellaart's excavations between 1961 and 1965 discovered about 160 buildings on the different occupation levels, mainly confined to the East Mound although two small trenches were dug on the Chalcolithic West Mound. It all took place with scarce technical resources and no scientific analysis (except radio carbon dating). The site was abandoned from 1965 to 1993. Since 1993 the site has been excavated by the Çatalhöyük Research Trust (Çatalhöyük Research Project) supported by several universities and foreign entities, which has excavated or planned excavating approximately 80 buildings.

The main conservation works undertaken were those by James Mellaart in 1964; the extensive program undertaken in 1993 when the site was re-opened, and the *in situ* stabilisation methods initiated from 1993 to 1999 by the Conservation Laboratory, University of Pennsylvania. The first on-site artefact conservator commenced work at the site in 1999. A conservation database was set up as part of the excavation database, and conservation guidelines for archaeologists, as well as for packaging and storage, were produced in 1999.

Since then a conservation team from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London has been working at the property in collaboration with conservators from Cardiff University, UK and Mimar Sinan University, Istanbul.

### 3 Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity

#### Comparative analysis

The nomination dossier states that none of the World Heritage sites in Turkey or in the Near East date from the Neolithic. ICOMOS notes that this statement is incorrect as will be seen below in discussion of Choïrokoitia, Cyprus. The nomination dossier then considers noteworthy Neolithic sites in Anatolia and the Middle East including Hacilar, Höyücek, Suberde, Musular, Pınarbası, Can Hasan, Asıklı Höyük, Çayönü, Hallan Çemi, Nevalı Çori, Göbekli Tepe, Jerf el Ahmar, Abu Hureyra, Mureybet, Qermez Dere, Zawi Chemi Shanidar, Eynan, Ain Ghazal, and Jericho, with many of which Çatalhöyük shares similar elements. The nomination dossier points out that in comparison with these sites Çatalhöyük can be seen to have a combination of distinguishing features. In particular the site was occupied year round and was fully sedentary, in contrast to other sites such as Göbekli Tepe, which is on Turkey's Tentative List (2011), where the inhabitants were still primarily hunters and gatherers who used the site as a cult centre. Çatalhöyük is extremely large and was continuously occupied for 2000 years. The practices of passing human skulls down from generation to generation within houses, holding feasts involving wild male cattle, and remembering these ritual events through the extensive use of symbolism in the house testify to the continuity of cultural practice at the site. There is an unparalleled concentration of wall paintings, wall reliefs, sculpture and symbolic installations. The imagery depicting human dominance of animals is understood as evidence of the beginnings of animal domestication. The nomination dossier concludes that Çatalhöyük is the most distinctive representative Neolithic archaeological site reflecting the transformation to settled agricultural life in large dense settlements and the accompanying social and spiritual developments.

The nomination dossier refers to other settlements included on the World Heritage List including the Heart of Neolithic Orkney (United Kingdom), the Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne (Ireland), the Neolithic Flint Mines at Spiennes (Mons), Belgium and Stonehenge and Avebury (United Kingdom), and points out that these sites represent the changes occurring in the Neolithic in North-west Europe over a thousand years after occupation at Çatalhöyük ceased. It is argued that the Neolithic sites currently on the World Heritage List are primarily monumental, and appear to reflect a deepening of social

hierarchies, whereas Çatalhöyük, without such monuments, represents a relatively egalitarian society. The significance of Çatalhöyük lies in the evidence it provides of all aspects of Neolithic social life. ICOMOS notes that some World Heritage listed sites in Central Europe and the Balkans do in fact provide evidence of Neolithic social life as discussed below.

ICOMOS considers that comparison with Neolithic sites in Greece, the Balkans, Central Europe and Italy is necessary to make the case for Çatalhöyük as a bridgehead from the near East to Europe and this has not been made. In this context the nominated property could be compared with the World Heritage Listed (2011, criteria (iv) & (v)) Prehistoric Pile dwellings around the Alps from Austria/France/Germany/Italy/Slovenia/ Switzerland. This series of 111 archaeological pile-dwelling sites composed of the remains of prehistoric settlements dating from 5,000 to 500 BC have provided information on the agriculture, animal husbandry and developments in metallurgy of early agrarian societies in Europe over a period of more than four millennia, but there are no evident links to the Anatolian Neolithic. Comparison could also be made in this context with Two Neolithic Dwellings with their interior and household furnishings and utensils completely preserved, Stara Zagora, which is on Bulgaria's Tentative List (1984). The dwellings, preserved *in situ* with furnaces, hand-grinders, ceramic vessels, stone implements and ornaments offer a complete idea of the life of a Neolithic family in Europe from the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC - its number, economic life and everyday occupations, the nature of home furnishings and utensils, the manner of building, maintenance and the preparation of food. However again there are no evident links with the Anatolian Neolithic. The claim in the nomination dossier that bull symbolism, the cult of Cybele and traditions of carpet motifs found in Mediterranean, European, and Middle Eastern traditions to this day derive from Çatalhöyük cannot be substantiated, although there is no doubt that bull symbolism in particular has been a recurring phenomenon throughout the region.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property could also be compared with the World Heritage listed site of Choïrokoitia, Cyprus (1998, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv)), which is an aceramic Neolithic site dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. This settlement is located on a riverine peninsular and is characterised by circular dwellings constructed of stone, mud brick and rammed earth, protected on the west by successive walls with a complex defensive gateway. These features are not found at Çatalhöyük. There is evidence of animal domestication, and human burials beneath floors. Finds of anthropomorphic stone figurines suggest ritual practices. To date no evidence of wall paintings, relief sculpture or other symbolic installations has been discovered, but much of this site remains to be excavated. However ICOMOS considers that the recognised Outstanding Universal Value

of Chirokoitia does not diminish the exceptional qualities of Çatalhöyük.

Comparison could also be made with Neolithic sites on the Tentative Lists including Céide Fields and North West Mayo Boglands (Ireland); Liangzhu Archaeological Site (China); Archaeological Site of Mehrgar (Pakistan); the Historical–Cultural Axis of Fin, Sialk, Kashan (Iran) and Historical Texture of Damghan (Iran). It can be clearly seen from the available information on these properties that the size and longevity of settlement at Çatalhöyük together with its evidence of ritual practices and artistic symbolism make Çatalhöyük stand out as a Neolithic human agglomeration.

ICOMOS considers that Çatalhöyük is a very rare example of a well-preserved Neolithic settlement. The level of preservation of items such as wall paintings and the three dimensional preservation at the site is unique. It has been considered one of the key sites for understanding human Prehistory for some decades. The substantial size and great longevity of the settlement, the presence of a large assemblage of features that inform us about the symbolic world of the inhabitants, together with the extensively documented research at the site make it the most significant and informative large, human agglomeration of its period.

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ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis it conducted beyond that provided in the nomination dossier justifies consideration of this property for inscription on the World Heritage List.

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#### **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:

- Prior to the excavations at Çatalhöyük in the early 1960s, there was little evidence to suggest an early development of the first farmers and the first towns and villages outside the Fertile Crescent. For this reason, the British archaeologist James Mellaart's discoveries at Çatalhöyük inspired widespread interest.
- Initially, the importance of the site was recognized as its large size at an early date and its location outside the supposed 'cradle' of civilization in the Near East.
- A major factor for its prominence was also undoubtedly its art, described by Sir Mortimer Wheeler as a curious and sometimes a trifle macabre artistry which nevertheless distinguishes a site which represents an outstanding accomplishment in the upward grade of social development.
- Today we know that Çatalhöyük was not the earliest or the largest farming community in Anatolia and the Levant; however, it was a major participant in the

cultural and economic changes that swept across the Near East in the Neolithic Period.

- Its strategic location in Anatolia made it a bridgehead for the spread of the Neolithic way of life to Europe and beyond.
- The Neolithic Site of Çatalhöyük stands out because of its large size (covering 34 acres with a population of 3,000-8,000 people), the length of its occupation (over 2,000 years), its dense concentration of 'art' in the form of wall paintings, wall reliefs, sculptures and installations, and its excellent state of preservation.
- Çatalhöyük is a site of great importance for our understanding of the first steps towards civilization, including early settled agricultural life and the overall process that led from settled villages to urban agglomerations.

ICOMOS considers that this justification is not entirely appropriate. Justification for Çatalhöyük as a bridgehead for the spread of the Neolithic way of life, or as a major participant in the cultural and economic changes that swept across the near East in the Neolithic period requires the support of a broader comparative analysis. However ICOMOS considers that the comparatively large size, length of occupation and artificial production in Çatalhöyük is unique and can be considered of Outstanding Universal Value. The site is further of great importance to the understanding the early processes of settled communities and agricultural life, their development from villages to urban settlements, as well as early forms of animal domestication.

#### **Integrity and authenticity**

##### **Integrity**

The State Party reports that the gradual way in which the Neolithic Site of Çatalhöyük was abandoned, and the environmental processes and erosion which occurred after the site's abandonment, contribute to its integrity. Over millennia the plain surrounding the site rose and buried large portions of Çatalhöyük. The top of the site today is 21 m above the Neolithic land surface and 18 m above the current land surface of the plain.

The portions of the site excavated by Mellaart, in general, suffered extensive deterioration after the site's closure in 1965. The site and its trenches were then left open for 30 years, with the result that collapse of walls and soil sections, and vegetation growth on prehistoric walls and plasters were widespread.

In 1993, when the site was re-opened, extensive conservation work was undertaken. Shelters and consolidation have been used and the buildings remain exposed under these shelters throughout the year so that they can be viewed by visitors while being protected from

the direct effects of the climate. The shelters have been designed so as not to detract from the site's integrity.

The Çatalhöyük Research Project's current approach is to avoid highly interventionist techniques. The emphasis is to leave features *in situ* as long as feasible and to display not only the products, but also the processes of excavation and conservation. This approach significantly contributes to the integrity of the site.

The property preserves relevant remains of the prehistoric settlement spanning 2,000 years. To date the landscape has been largely preserved because urban development is mainly concentrated around Konya 60 km north-west of the site and because the area surrounding the site is dedicated to non-damaging agriculture.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has, in general, retained its integrity but is vulnerable to increasing tourism.

#### Authenticity

The State Party considers that the property meets the requirements of authenticity mainly due to:

- Documented field research, involving excavation, environmental reconstruction, and regional survey, applying the latest scientific analyses to the archaeological material in the field and in the laboratory;
- Excavations have aimed to retain the *as found* profile of the mounds and spoil from the excavations is disposed accordingly;
- The use of new materials such as synthetic polymers is expensive and their long-term effect is difficult to predict, so ways of reducing their repeated use are sought and traditional alternatives such as local clays are being tested. The preservation of original materials also contributes to authenticity;
- The East and West Mounds have kept to a great extent the original form and design of their architectural components and of the whole settlement as well as many decorative elements and craft works which allow understanding of the life of the societies that occupied the site;
- The archaeological findings of complete housing units, artworks and implements as well as their current presentation make it possible to interpret the site's original functions, traditions regarding construction, rehabilitation and repair, domestic customs, production and agriculture, arts and crafts, social relations, spiritual beliefs and burials, feasts and ceremonies, all of which have been revealed;
- The location within the landscape, and evidence of how this setting was organically transformed over time allowing interpretation of the complex relation between man and nature, contribute to the site's authenticity.

ICOMOS considers that over forty years of research and excavation at the site bear testimony to the site's authenticity. The site is well preserved. Its physical mass and scale have not much altered since it was first found in 1958. However, its bifurcated nature and the discrete fencing of the East Mound and West Mound, coupled with the development of a vehicular entrance with Guard House at the East Mound create a visually confusing approach to the nominated site.

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ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met, but are fragile due to the nature of the property.

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#### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

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

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

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Çatalhöyük represents an important period of human development with the shift from hunting to agriculture, and the move to sedentary, communal living. The building plans, internal structures and so arguably the way of life were repeated over several generations, for around 2,000 years.

ICOMOS considers that the justification given by the State Party does not clearly illustrate an interchange of human values but appears to be focused on the testimony of a shift towards communal sedentary living, which is better recognized under criterion (iii). ICOMOS considers that the function of the site as a 'bridgehead' or 'major participant' towards Europe has not been demonstrated and that therefore its reference character for other sites cannot be confirmed at this stage. There seems a potential that the artistic traditions of Çatalhöyük have continued to influence Mediterranean, European and Middle Eastern traditions after the decline of the settlement. However, such aspect would need to be supported by a wider comparative analysis of the potential reference role of Çatalhöyük as an artistic centre, including analysis of sites which developed receptive artistic traditions.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been demonstrated.

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

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Çatalhöyük bears unique testimony to a key period of human development. Evidence at the site, such as wall

paintings, figurines and burial rituals, attests to strong cultural and artistic traditions, the concentration of which is unique to this period in Asia Minor. Although settlement at Çatalhöyük came to an end in 5,200 B.C., excavations have revealed evidence of artistic traditions that have continued to influence Mediterranean, European and Middle Eastern traditions to this day.

ICOMOS considers that the Çatalhöyük provides a unique testimony to a moment of the Neolithic, in which the first agrarian settlements were established in central Anatolia and developed over centuries from villages to urban centres, largely based on egalitarian principles. The early principles of these settlements have been well preserved through the abandonment of the site for several millennia and remain illustrated in the urban plan, architectural structures, wall paintings and burial evidence. The stratigraphy of up to 18 settlement layers provides an exceptional testimony to the gradual development, re-shaping and expansion of the settlement.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

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*Criterion (iv): be 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 is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the two mounds at Çatalhöyük, and particularly the Neolithic East Mound, are outstanding examples of an architectural ensemble which indicates a significant stage in human history: the decision to live together as a collective, maintaining the same location within the landscape for over 2,000 years. There is a unique settlement pattern of back-to-back houses with roof access into buildings.

ICOMOS considers that the house clusters of Çatalhöyük, characterized by their street-less neighbourhoods, dwellings with roof access, and house types representing a highly circumscribed distribution of activity areas and features according to a clear spatial order aligned on cardinal directions, form an outstanding settlement type of the Neolithic period. The comparable sizes of the dwellings throughout the city illustrate an early type of urban layout based on community and egalitarian ideals.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been demonstrated.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv) and conditions of authenticity and integrity and that Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

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#### **Description of the attributes**

The attributes carrying the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are the two tells in their flat plain setting, the excavated *in situ* remains including rectangular mud brick houses, burials, wall paintings and reliefs, symbolic installations including *bucrania*, excavated artefacts including painted pottery with symbolic imagery, obsidian objects and stamp seals.

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

##### **Development Pressures**

Impacts of irrigation and fluctuations of water levels were affecting the underground archaeological material but are now duly monitored and well controlled. Agriculture between the mounds and on the west side of the West Mound does not currently have a significant negative impact on the integrity of the buried remains but might affect the views of the site. Ongoing work with local stakeholders is helping to develop sensitive agriculture practices, and to raise awareness amongst farmers in the region to stop deep ploughing over mounds. As the West Mound is a lower, flatter mound its topography lends itself more readily to agricultural use. The West Mound has been protected from agricultural use since 1996, when the boundaries of the Neolithic Site of Çatalhöyük were extended. Now no tree plantation or intervention, including agriculture, is permitted on the West Mound.

New construction is controlled by the local municipality through applications to its planning department. The Çatalhöyük Research Project additionally works with the local community to develop sensitive building practices.

Facilities for the Çatalhöyük Research Project and for tourists are located in the buffer zone and are built in such a way as to minimize the impact on the site. Guidelines are followed for new buildings at the site. The two shelters built on the site were designed and constructed so as to protect the site's integrity. Prior to laying the foundations, all archaeological material was removed and all findings fully recorded.

Large infrastructure projects such as high tension cabling, and pylons are not undertaken without consultation. The Çatalhöyük Research Project established a consultation process with transport, electricity, and water authorities, prior to works that would impact the site and its setting. Theft and illegal excavation are avoided by means of adequate fencing on the site's boundaries and with trained guards.

ICOMOS considers that it would be highly inappropriate for any new buildings or tourist infrastructure to be provided within the property or its buffer zone, apart from the upgrading of fencing and other management actions.

#### Tourism pressures

The number of visitors to the site has increased from 7,000 in 2004 to 15,000 in 2010. The authorities expect to raise this number to 50,000 -150, 000 annually in 2020. ICOMOS observed that under current management conditions this would greatly affect the property. An area has been provided for vehicle parking next to the site, opposite the entrance, and is screened by trees. The current pathway arrangement maintains the natural appearance of the mounds and allows for seasonal flexibility and changes, but is susceptible to compaction and erosion. At the present time all visitors must be accompanied by a guard when on the mounds and the Çatalhöyük Research Project continues to monitor wear and tear and compaction of paths. Paths are moved every 3 years, allowing vegetation to return to older paths and preventing paths becoming eroded. Litter and site maintenance is being undertaken by the excavation team on the site. The number of bins on site has had to increase as tourism has risen over the years.

#### Environmental pressures

Anatolia can suffer hot summers, high winds and cold snowy winters which might affect the structures. Frequent exposure of the archaeological remains and sites under excavation to drastic climatic variations might be dangerous. The Çatalhöyük Research Project's integrated conservation program provides emergency stabilization and protection for mud brick walls and painted surfaces during excavation and between field seasons, as well as monitoring, material analysis, and conservation treatment, testing and application. The two shelters were designed precisely to bear extreme weather conditions with high wind uplift and heavy snow load.

#### Natural disasters

The property is in a low intensity seismic zone of Turkey and any movement could cause severe damage to the structures. No analysis of this threat is provided in the nomination dossier. Fire might occur but the grass on site is cut regularly and fire breaks have been created around the site.

#### Impact of climate change

No impact from climate change has been noted in the nomination dossier, however, ICOMOS notes that changes in water level have affected underground archaeological material in the past and may be of concern if heavy rain and snowfalls become more frequent.

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ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are environmental factors, possible earthquakes and rapidly increasing tourism.

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## 5 Protection, conservation and management

### Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundary of the property lies at the base of the mounds, running along the break of the slope between mound and flat. The border is additionally demarcated by an irrigation ditch along the east boundary; a road, the dig house, and the northern edge of land parcel no.342 along the north boundary; a road and canal at the western edge of land parcels nos.103 and 342 along the western boundary; and an irrigation ditch at the southern edge of land parcels nos.94, 95, 96, and 98 along the southern boundary. According to the State Party, this delineation encompasses all the relevant attributes.

ICOMOS notes that coring indicates that archaeological remains extend outside the proposed site boundary within the buffer zone; however the prehistoric remains lie at depths of 2 m to 3.5 m below present ground level and are therefore protected.

The buffer zone provides an adequate perimeter zone around the site. On the southern and eastern sides of the property, it is defined by present land divisions, a roadway and a drainage channel. To its western side it also reflects land divisions. On the north-west and south-west, lands which are not subdivided have had to be transected to provide a continuous boundary of appropriate size and integrity. The Dig House, storage and tourist facilities are located in the buffer zone.

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

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### Ownership

The nominated property is mainly owned by the State, but there are some privately owned land parcels currently under the expropriation agenda of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The proposed buffer zone is mainly owned by private owners, mostly farmers.

### Protection

In 1958 Turkish law designated the property as an ancient monument under the protection of the Directorate General of Monuments. It was registered as a conservation site on the national inventory of 1981 by the Superior Council for Immovable Antiquities and Monuments. It is also protected by Law 2863/1983 on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage amended in 1987 and 2004, which established numerous provisions and regulations for the cultural immovable patrimony. According to these instruments, local authorities are also responsible for the property's protection.



In 1994, the 3rd grade archaeological conservation zone surrounding the nominated area was also registered by the decision of Konya Council for the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage. Since 1996, when the boundaries of the property were extended, the West Mound received the same level of protection as Çatalhöyük East, including a fence and guards, and no form of intervention, including tree plantation or agriculture, is permitted within the site boundaries.

ICOMOS finds that the nominated property is legally protected against any negative development or change.

#### Effectiveness of protection measures

The property is legally protected at the highest and local levels. Measures include regulations on construction, agriculture and the need for permits.

Nevertheless, effective legal protection in practice requires an efficient management structure and operation.

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ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate.

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### Conservation

#### Inventories, recording, research

The property has been thoroughly inventoried. There is an electronic archive with general information including excavation diaries and the excavation database containing information on each archaeological unit. It can be queried by unit number, numbers of building or parts of a building) or feature number (e.g. a hearth). It includes the unit sheet description; stratigraphic data; samples taken; details of 'bulk' animal bone and obsidian finds. The website runs from a server within the University of Cambridge and is backed up regularly by staff from the University. There are also film and photograph archives. Copies of reports and excavation documentation and plans are held at the General Directorate of Cultural Assets and Museums (Ministry of Culture and Tourism); Directorate of Konya Archaeology Museum, Konya Regional Council for Conservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage; and at the Çatalhöyük Research Project, Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

ICOMOS finds that the whole property has been thoroughly inventoried and excavation interventions duly registered. However the documentation is held by various entities, primarily the Çatalhöyük Research Project. The national and local entities with overall responsibility for keeping the inventories and documentation of the property need to be defined and recognised.

#### Active Conservation measures

According to the nomination dossier the conservation activities include: emergency stabilization and protection during excavation and between field seasons, condition survey and environmental monitoring, material analysis, and conservation treatment development, testing, and application. There has been documentary research on the site's excavation and on its treatment history as a base to establish previous conditions and subsequent conservation methods. Technical analysis and characterization of the mud-brick, plasters, paintings and relief sculpture using standard geo-technical and wet chemical techniques, microscopic and instrumental analyses are systematically undertaken.

Other measures are monitoring and recording of site conditions using developed methods for earthen materials and diagnosis of deterioration mechanisms. Also part of the conservation practices are the design, testing, and execution of a treatment programme specifically focused on the *in situ* stabilization of architectural fabric including plain and painted earthen plasters and mud brick walls and features.

Drainage problems from the winter snows and rains have been dealt with by landscaping and excavating drainage channels around the shelters which direct and manage water flow.

The shelters have allowed excavation, conservation, and exhibition to take place beneath them and are regarded as successful overall in protecting the remains. However they have resulted in some fluctuations in relative humidity, which are being researched and managed by the Çatalhöyük Research Project and adjustments to the shelter covering materials are under consideration.

Water levels are now monitored, stabilised, and maintained by the Turkish Water Authority at a constant level to avoid the deterioration of the archaeological remains at Çatalhöyük.

#### Maintenance

ICOMOS notes that no information on regular maintenance is provided in the nomination dossier but it is legally established that the research entities are responsible for maintenance. The nomination dossier does not report any systematic conservation and maintenance plans.

The two shelters have sides which enclose the archaeological remains in the winter months and are removable for the summer months, in order to increase the flow of air and decrease temperatures inside. The seasonal adjustment of the shelters is a standard maintenance procedure.

#### Effectiveness of conservation measures

Due to decades of research and conservation by skilled personnel, a high degree of preservation of the property and its attributes has been achieved.

ICOMOS notes that no state funding is provided for conservation, which fully relies on foreign grants and cooperation.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is in a good state of conservation but that a regular state budget for conservation and maintenance needs to be established and a responsible state agency named for keeping all inventories and documentation.

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#### Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

ICOMOS considers that there are some issues with the management of the site, the primary one being that there is no single agency charged with responsibility for the management of the site, although the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has overall responsibility.

The day-to-day management and monitoring of the site is by the Director and staff of the Çatalhöyük Research Project which is funded by a range of annual charitable sponsorships, donations and research grants.

As set out in the nomination dossier the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Konya Regional Council and the Director of the Museum in Konya, who acts as site manager, are charged with monitoring and evaluating the conservation projects for the site.

In response to ICOMOS's request of 12 December 2011 for clarification of the roles and responsibilities of all partners, the management structure and objectives and the means of implementation the State Party has provided information on these as set out in the proposed new Management Plan structure. Within the framework of Turkey's Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties Act No. 2863, as amended by the Act No. 5226 (2004) and its supplementary regulation no. 26006 gazetted 27 November 2005 concerning the Principles for Site Management, the management structure will comprise a Çatalhöyük Coordination and Supervision Council (CSC), an Advisory Board and a Management Plan Team. The CSC will include the site manager, 2 members of the Advisory Board (to be elected at its first meeting), and representatives from the related administrations. The Advisory Board comprising bodies and/or individuals with the right of ownership within the management plan boundary; representatives from the Chamber of architects and city planners; representatives from non-governmental

organisations; representatives from the related departments of the universities, and the site manager (who is the Director of the Konya Museum) has already been established. The Management Plan Team including experts from the excavation team in Çatalhöyük and the departments related to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has also been established.

The objectives are to sustain the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the site for present and future generations by means of implementation of the new Management Plan. The new Management Plan will take into account issues such as visitor management, tourism, access, education, research and the needs of the local community.

The State Party advised that the Department for World Heritage Sites within the Directorate General of Cultural Heritage and Museums, Ministry of Culture and Tourism started the process of facilitating the review of the 2004 Çatalhöyük Management Plan in 2011. The timetable for the development of the Management Plan was included as Annex-1 to the information provided in the State Party's supplementary information dated 24 February 2012. According to the timetable, the first draft of the Management Plan will be available to the Advisory Board for comment at the end of June 2012 and following revision will be subject to public consultation during August and September 2012. It will then be reviewed by the Advisory Board and a final draft submitted to the Çatalhöyük Coordination and Supervision Council for approval in December 2012, with publication expected by the end of December 2012.

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

The current Management Plan was developed in 2004 by the Çatalhöyük Research Project with assistance from the European Union and support from the Turkish Directorate General for Cultural Heritage and Museums, also engaging regional and local stakeholders. According to the nomination dossier, the objectives of the Management Plan are the property's evaluation and management in the context of its setting and surrounding landscape; better access to information, training and site presence; to minimize impacts on exposed and underground archaeological material; storage and display of finds from excavation under proper conditions for conservation; involvement of local communities as partners in the protection and interpretation of the property and surroundings; good interpretation, educational materials and security for visitors; and sustainability of all policies put forward in order not to endanger the values of the site. No reference is made to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The Management Plan prescribes its formal adoption by the Directorate General for Cultural Heritage and Museums and recognition by the Çumra Municipality as planning guidance. A five year revision is foreseen, with forward looks to 10 and 25 years being given in the document. Staffing and expertise as well as funding have been provided by the Çatalhöyük Research Project.

A visitor centre located in the courtyard of the dig house complex provides information about the site and serves as an exhibition space. Nearby is the 'experimental house' which amalgamates a number of features common to the Neolithic buildings of Çatalhöyük such as platforms, ovens, and wall paintings. The original aim of the house was as a research tool to investigate the building techniques used at Çatalhöyük and it now serves an interpretative function. A dedicated route has been created that leads the visitor firstly to the North Shelter on the East Mound and then across the mound to the South Shelter, where the large vertical section left by the Mellaart excavations has been cleaned and annotated to aid visitor understanding. The walkway is made of interlocking wooden planking resting on sandbags to protect the underlying archaeology. Low roped sides keep visitors from straying off the path and information panels have been put at strategic places.

Finds from the excavations and a presentation of the site are on display also at the Konya Museum and at the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations at Ankara.

ICOMOS notes that there is a well-developed proposal to construct a new, dedicated museum, within which the entire collection will be updated and displayed. The proposed museum has an architectural treatment that reflects the character of the flat-roofed, mud-brick structures on the site. In addition a 2 ha site has been purchased for a new visitor centre, some 1.2km from the site close to the entrance to the village of Küçükköy, from where shuttle bus access would be provided to the site. New ways of presenting the site are currently being researched with the aim of communicating to three types of visitor: local residents and Turkish nationals, school children, and international tourists. Installations in the visitor centre will include interactive 3D computer graphic models of objects and buildings, replica artefacts, animated digital reconstructions, mural art, photographic displays and audio-video presentations.

ICOMOS also notes that projects which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, such as any proposal to build within the property or buffer zone boundaries, should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre at an early stage for review in accordance with the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* paragraph 172.

#### Risk preparedness

No contingency plans are described in the nomination dossier for dealing with foreseeable risks such as fire, storms or earthquakes. ICOMOS recommends that an adequate risk preparedness strategy be developed as part of the new management plan.

#### Involvement of the local communities

The Çatalhöyük Research Project has involved members of the local community at Küçükköy in archaeological education programs including the Training, Education, Management and Prehistory in the Mediterranean (TEMPER) program, sponsored by the European Union, which also provided educational materials related to the site in local schools. The Project runs summer workshops for children from the Konya region and other areas across Turkey, which gives several hundred children a day at the site, and a community based participatory research project including a library in Küçükköy. Collaborative projects include a regular series of comics based on the current excavations that also incorporates future management and care of Çatalhöyük, an internship and a Newsletter which is now distributed once a year in all six towns and villages. The Project also supports an annual Festival of activities at the site, which in 2010 was attended by nearly 500 community members. The local community has become a partner in the project and has produced its own displays in the Visitor Centre.

#### Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and training

An international and multidisciplinary team of archaeologists, architects, anthropologists, geologists, conservators and other technicians lead by a British archaeologist associated with Stanford University is responsible for carrying out the activities of archaeological research, conservation, promotion of the site for visitor access, and site management. Additional expertise and training are provided by the Project's institutional partners, including Selçuk University, Stanford University, University College London, Adam Mickiewicz University, and Istanbul University. A number of local people are employed at the site as cooks, cleaning staff, heavy residue sorters, screeners and flotation machine operators. Four local guards are employed.

Funding for the Çatalhöyük Research Project and its associated Teams has come from Foundations and Research Councils in Britain and the United States of America, as well as corporate sponsorship. The annual operating budget for the project is raised from a number of sources: corporate sponsors (29%), donations (13%) and academic foundations (58%).

ICOMOS notes that no consideration appears to have been given to the security of funding for management of the site in the future when the Çatalhöyük Research Project may no longer be active at the site and international philanthropic and grant funding together with corporate sponsorship may no longer be available.

ICOMOS notes that there appears to have been no consideration of a framework for the long term management of research knowledge. The long tradition of international team study has influenced where the archives of the site reside. It is not clear how the management of such archives will be achieved in the future. At present the Museums at Konya and Ankara accept key finds from the site, but the museum personnel do not appear to be involved with the management of information generated by the site in any other way. Turkish excavation teams have had limited involvement at the site.

#### Effectiveness of current management

ICOMOS welcomes the proposed new management structure as set out in the State Party's supplementary information of 24 February 2012, and notes that while funding and visitor management will be covered under the new Management Plan, there is no heading for risk management as such.

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ICOMOS considers that the new Management Plan needs to be developed, approved and implemented, including consideration of risk management.

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## 6 Monitoring

The State Party reports that the Çatalhöyük Research Project is responsible for monitoring the property. Different entities from the State Party are also legally charged with monitoring and evaluating the conservation projects but the nomination dossier does not provide details on their activities.

The indicators employed are the following:

- Temperature and relative humidity throughout the year.
- Water ingress and water regime in the structures (walls and floors),
- Salt crystallisation identification and effects.
- Insect and rodent damage.
- Inclination/leaning of walls.
- Overall conditions of structures
- Condition of shelters and access routes within them
- Condition of paths on mounds
- Water table beneath mounds

These indicators can detect several of the negative effects on the integrity and authenticity of the property's values. However, consideration needs to be given to the possible impact of environmental and climatic threats, agriculture, tourism and other developments which might affect the property.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the monitoring measures and indicators are incomplete. Furthermore, ICOMOS recommends that local authorities participate more actively in cooperation with the Çatalhöyük Research Project in monitoring the property.

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## 7 Conclusions

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv) and conditions of authenticity and integrity and that Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated. Criterion (ii) has not been substantiated. The main threats to the property are environmental factors, possible earthquakes, and rapidly increasing tourism. The boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are adequate. The legal protection is adequate and the property is in a good state of conservation. However, the property does not have long-term financial security due to lack of a state budget for conservation and maintenance. ICOMOS further recommends to identify one designated state agency to take custody of all relevant inventories, research documentations and management documents of the property.

The management system currently relies heavily on the Çatalhöyük Research Project (a non-governmental international entity), with insufficient input from the State Party. However the State Party has advised a new management structure in its supplementary information of 24 February 2012 which lays out how this issue is to be addressed. The new Management Plan will define the management structure and operational procedures to involve all stakeholders including the State Party, and also aims at identifying future state funding and tourism management strategies. ICOMOS considers that a risk preparedness strategy needs to be included. The management plan is expected to be completed and approved by December 2012.

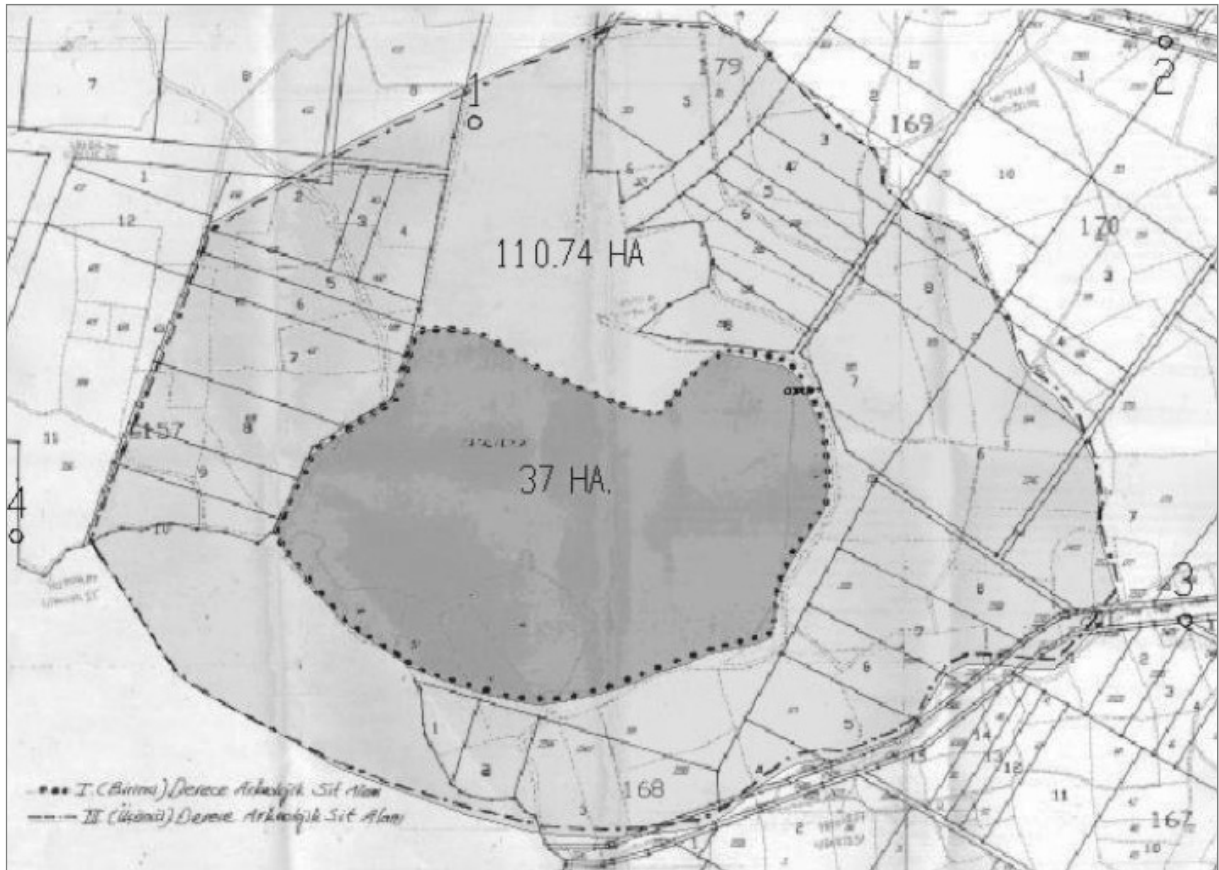
**Recommendation with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of the Neolithic Site of Çatalhöyük, Turkey, be **referred back** to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Develop, complete, approve, distribute and implement the new Management Plan, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all parties including the State Party, and include strategies for visitor management and risk preparedness;
- Identify as part of this process a strategy for future funding security for conservation and maintenance.

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

- Including, among the monitoring indicators, the evaluation of environmental and climatic impacts as well as those related to the effects of agriculture, tourism or other developments, which might affect the property;
- Defining, besides the Çatalhöyük Research Project, the national and local entities responsible for the custody of the inventories and documentation on the property.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



Area underneath the northern shelter



Buildings in the northern shelter



Adult male buried in the northern shelter



View under the southern shelter