
Rock Art in the Hail Region (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) No 1472

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia

Location

Northern Province, Hail Region
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Brief description

The serial nomination of the 'Rock Art in the Hail Region' comprises two components, namely, the Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and the Jabal al-Manjor/Raat at Shuwaymis. In Jabal Umm Sinman, Jubbah, the ancestors of present-day Arabs left the marks of their presence in numerous petroglyph panels and inscriptions. In Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, Shuwaymis, the large number of petroglyphs and inscriptions has been attributed to almost 10,000 years of human history. Together, these components contain the biggest and richest rock art complexes not only in Saudi Arabia, but in the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East generally.

Category of property

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

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List

17 September 2012

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre

24 January 2014

Background

An ICOMOS Advisory mission within the framework of the first phase of a Pilot project for the Upstream Process (WHC-11/35.COM/12C) was undertaken on 10-17 April 2013.

Consultations

ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committee on Rock Art and several independent experts.

Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 9 to 15 September 2014.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 8 September 2014, requesting additional information, and a State Party response to the letter was obtained on 23 October 2014.

A second letter was sent to the State Party on 23 December 2014 to request additional information on boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone, developments, visitor management and the name of the property. On 8 February 2015 the State Party provided additional information, which has been considered for the elaboration of this report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

12 March 2015

2 The property

Description

The 'Rock Art in the Hail Region' serial nomination is composed of two properties, namely, the Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and the Jabal al-Manjor/Raat at Shuwaymis. Jabal Umm Sinman is located about 90 km northwest of the city of Hail and is bounded in the west, north and south by desert sands and in the east by a security fence that borders the town of Jubbah.

The second component of the serial nominated property is parallelogram-shaped and comprises two hill ranges, namely, Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, that are in the Wadi al-Mukhayet, about 40 km west of Shuwaymis, situated about 250 km south of Hail. Both sites are bounded by security fences along the foot of the escarpments enclosing the rock art sites, and by the edges of the plateaus above, but including ruins of ancient structures.

Together, the components of the serial nominated property cover an area of about 2,043.8ha and are surrounded by a buffer zone measuring a total of 3,609.5ha.

Jabal Umm Sinman, Jubbah

Overlooking the freshwater lake that once existed here and which provided water to people and animals in the southern part of the Great Nafud Desert, is the hill range of Umm Sinman. Here, on these hills, the ancestors of present-day Arabs left the marks of their presence: their religious, social, cultural, intellectual and philosophical perspectives on their beliefs about life and death, their metaphysical and cosmological ideologies.

During the region's desertification, beginning in mid-Holocene times, the oasis of Jubbah provided the only substantial source of water within the desert, facilitating its continuing human occupation up to the present and the gradual adaptation of the population to the significant environmental changes. These changes are distinctly expressed in the numerous petroglyph panels and rich inscriptions, the greatest concentrations of which occur in

the lower rock exposures of the eastern flanks of Jabal Umm Sinman.

Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, Shuwaymis

Jabals al-Manjor and Raat are rock escarpments of a now sand-covered wadi that is thought to have been a broad valley with flowing water during the early Holocene. Both Jabal al-Manjor and Raat contain a large number of human and animal figures, and other hills and outcrops within the buffer zone feature smaller concentrations.

The large number of petroglyphs and inscriptions at these site complexes has been attributed to almost 10,000 years of human history. Although the bulk of this vast corpus of petroglyphs is of a single cultural period of human history, preceding and subsequent rock art traditions have been identified and dated. As the aquifer subsided, probably around mid-Holocene times, the formerly-permanent human population became increasingly transient, but the sites were still visited in recent millennia as indicated in the rock art. The intensive and comprehensive survey of the Jabal al-Manjor and Raat complexes since their recent re-discovery resulted in the locating of hundreds of rock art panels, several stone structures, and typical stone objects of the Neolithic era.

History and development

Observation of Middle Palaeolithic stone tools both on Umm Sinman and in its immediate vicinity, suggests that, already in the Pleistocene, climatic variations attracted human occupation of the Jubbah oasis during dry periods, perhaps acting as a refuge area to both humans and fauna. Near the Shuwaymis sites, streams and lakes occurred during Pleistocene periods and some of this surface water also persisted well into the Holocene. Here too, Middle Palaeolithic occupation evidence has been reported.

Present data indicates that the record of surviving rock art commences shortly after 10,000 years ago, providing an insight into the Neolithic culture through thousands of petroglyphs. Through the depicted fauna, the pictorial content of the rock art indicates clearly that living conditions were favourable during this period, at both components of the serial nominated property.

However, this record provided by the rock art continues through the remainder of the Holocene, firstly as pictures and eventually these are supplemented by inscriptions. This veritable library provides a continuous record illustrating how human populations coped with environmental fluctuations marking an overall deterioration and gradual desertification. After the lake of Jubbah disappeared, wells had to be dug, which, by the late 19th century, were up to 23 m deep. But as the Jubbah lake bed became the only secure water source in the Nafud Desert, the occupants remained and adapted to the arid conditions they faced. This is well reflected in the late Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Age rock art. The introduction of Thamudic writing, probably about 3000 years ago, is documented in thousands of inscriptions at

Jubbah, compared with significantly lower numbers at Shuwaymis. From the locations and contents of these early inscriptions, it is evident that Jubbah had become an important staging place for camel caravans, whereas there was rather less human activity at Shuwaymis. Jubbah lies on an ancient caravan route to Jordan and Syria.

Between 3000 and 2000 years ago, the desertification process became complete across Arabia. Camels now became the dominant animal motif in the surviving rock art. The next major change in the rock art record comes with the introduction of Islam around 1400 years BP, when earlier scripts were replaced by early Arabic writing (Kufic), and the depiction of living things, especially humans, declined markedly. Nevertheless, there are still a small number of depictions found from the subsequent period.

The Jubbah oasis was visited by several European travellers and historians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, who wrote brief accounts of the site and nothing on rock art or inscriptions from the area. Scientific archaeological investigations at Jubbah began after the Department of Antiquities and Museums initiated a Comprehensive Archaeological Survey of the entire Kingdom in 1976. The rock art of Jubbah was first thoroughly investigated and recorded by the Rock Art Survey team of the Department of Antiquities and Museums in 1986, which published its initial report on Jubbah in *Atlat* in 1987.

Later on, the Ministry of Education erected extensive fencing on the eastern side of Jabal Umm Sinman, facing the town of Jubbah, to prevent uncontrolled access to the rock art. Site guards and facilities were installed. In recent years a visitor centre has been built at Jubbah, and a new museum in Hail is under construction, all as part of the development of the cultural heritage of the region.

The Shuwaymis sites, although always known to the local Bedouin, were officially rediscovered only in 2001, which led to the undertaking of the first scientific investigation of Shuwaymis' rock art. In the subsequent years a sealed road was constructed up to Shuwaymis village, and this is now being extended to the visitor centre at the boundary of the buffer zone of the rock art sites.

3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis

An analysis undertaken by the State Party illustrated a comparison of the serial nominated property with other sites in Saudi Arabia, the Middle East and around the world. In the nomination dossier, a comparison with Saudi Arabian sites indicates them to be generally of significantly smaller assemblages, with the exception of the Al Qara complex. Unlike other sites, this complex houses several tens of thousands of petroglyphs, and it is reported that its substantial library of Arabian rock

inscriptions may exceed those at Jubbah in numbers. However, their Thamudic content is very low, Kufic and recent Islamic texts clearly dominating.

As far as the Middle East is concerned, the analysis concludes that there is no rock art site in the region that would match the values of the two components of the serial nominated property, or qualitatively match their petroglyphs, preservation or management. The State Party pointed out that, on the basis of current information, three of the four largest rock art collections of the Middle East are in Saudi Arabia. Of these, Jubbah and Shuwaymis have the densest concentrations, show the most impressive artwork by far, and they also include the oldest tradition represented.

In a global context, the State Party states that, if compared to rock art panels located in the Sahara, China, India, South Africa, the Americas or Australia, the nominated property eclipses them in terms of age, and matches these properties in terms of visual qualities and technical perfection.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property has some similarities with other properties located in the wider region, among them stylistic similarities with rock art in the Libyan Messak and in North Yemen, and the most ancient images exhibit influences from Egypt. Despite these similarities, ICOMOS considers that, when considering the age, span of time, amount and quality, the nominated property bears specific features that justify its consideration for the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this serial 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:

- It is a visually stunning expression of the human creative genius.
- It archives more than 6,000 years of continuous human occupation in both rock art and inscriptions.
- The petroglyphs reveal the use of the sites in different cultural periods during which populations adapted successfully to severe environmental changes by acquiring domesticated animals such as cattle and horses, and later the camel.
- The Jubbah and Shuwaymis rock art catalogue and archaeological features are among the world's largest and most magnificent surviving corpus of Neolithic petroglyphs.
- Collectively, the Jubbah and Shuwaymis rock art represent a continuous record of human endeavour covering the past 10,000 years. The record commences with a massive component of Neolithic artwork, followed by comprehensive Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Historic traditions, all of

which used the same localities to create their respective art corpora.

- In contrast to most other rock art sequences in the world, the approximate antiquity of the components of the Hail rock art is reliably known, because their ages are anchored to a series of direct dates derived from key elements.

ICOMOS considers that there are several reasons to support the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, among them the recognition of a "Jubbah style" indicates the importance and uniqueness of the site. The components of the serial nominated property bear an exceptional importance from the point of view of the amount of petroglyphs and of their high quality. As for the evolution of the environment, it is well documented by the studies on lacustrine deposits, by archaeology and by palaeo-environmental studies, which have been multiplied over the last few years. These studies support that the rock art images in the property can contribute to documenting civilisations that have left practically no other kind of vestiges. It is therefore possible to follow their evolution by adaptation to aridification of the environment.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

In the case of Jabal Umm Sinman, the boundary encompasses 14 clusters of petroglyphs on all sides of the mountain. The buffer zone extends northwards to enclose several smaller rocky outcrops with fewer petroglyphs. ICOMOS noted that the area of cluster 8, in the south-western part of the property, is badly vandalized with recent graffiti (mostly names painted in various colours often obliterating the ancient rock art), and littered with garbage. Furthermore, the Municipality of Jubbah has constructed a rain water diversion dam or water barrier of several kilometres length inside the buffer zone's eastern border. This dam is clearly visible from the westernmost north-south road of Jubbah, which bounds the buffer zone on the east, and somehow spoils the views from there towards Jabal Umm Sinman. On the eastern side of Jabal Umm Sinman, immediately north of the nominated property and located within the buffer zone next to the existing freshwater reservoir (in existence for the past 16 to 17 years), is the construction of a huge water tower that is visible from within the nominated property.

The property at Shuwaymis includes both rocky outcrops, Jabal Raat to the west and Jabal al-Manjor to the east, as well as the sandy valley between them. Neighbouring rocky outcrops to the north are incorporated into the buffer zone as they have not yet been thoroughly investigated. Apart from a Bedouin camp with fewer than 25 people living in the buffer zone, there is no town or large settlement nearby.

Covering more than 8 km at Jabal Umm Sinman and about 6 km at Manjor and Raat, steel fences, bars and locked access gates protect these examples of rock art.

According to the State Party, all elements necessary to express the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial nominated property, namely numerous well-preserved petroglyphs, identifiably different rock art traditions over the period from hunting and gathering to animal domestication and writing, independent evidence for climatic change at nearby palaeolake deposits, and evidence for human interaction in a vulnerable environment, are amply represented in the property, and both components are of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features that convey the Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the components that make up the serial nomination contain the attributes to convey its Outstanding Universal Value and that the size of the nominated zones is adequate. Nevertheless, ICOMOS notes that measures to ensure adequate protection should be implemented, something that will be dealt with in the following sections of this report.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series has been justified; and that the integrity of the individual sites that comprise the series has been demonstrated, although measures regarding protection should be reinforced.

Authenticity

The petroglyphs at the two components of the serial nominated property, Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and Jabal al-Manjor/Jabal Raat at Shuwaymis, have retained their original location, setting, materials, form and design even though they do not function within a cultural tradition. According to the State Party, their patination, which is full in the case of the Neolithic petroglyphs and of a decreasing degree for the subsequent Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Islamic periods, and different phases of weathering, attest to their authenticity.

ICOMOS considers the elements on site to be authentic.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole nominated series has been justified; and that the authenticity of the individual sites that comprise the series has been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated series have been met; and for individual sites, 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 (i), (ii), (iii) and (v).

Criterion (i): *representing a masterpiece of human creative genius;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the exceptionally large number of

petroglyphs, created by using a range of techniques with simple stone hammers, against a background of gradual environmental deterioration, are, by world standards, visually stunning expressions of the human creative genius, comparable to the messages left by doomed civilizations in Mesoamerica or on Easter Island. In that sense alone they are of the highest Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the arguments advanced by the State Party are admissible and that the images are outstanding in visual terms, together with terms of employed techniques and location. At the same time, the so-called "Jubbah style" is a testimony to the recognition of this remarkable artistic achievement, which also exhibits an outstanding use of skills to handle both tools and materials.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

Criterion (ii): *exhibiting 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 Jubbah and Shuwaymis exhibit more than 6000 years of continuous human occupation, which is reflected in both rock art and inscriptions.

ICOMOS considers that the State Party had not satisfactorily justified the extent to which the nominated property had influenced other areas, in addition to being a recipient of external influences. ICOMOS considers that, on the basis of the information available, it is not evident that the nominated property has influenced rock art in other areas.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified for the whole series.

Criterion (iii): *bearing 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 at Jubbah the battles of past societies can be followed against the environmental catastrophe they experienced and adapted to in a truly exceptional example of such a situation, where the petroglyphs record the nature of the changes and the stone artefacts show where people lived in relation to the rock art and to the lake as it gradually dried up. At Shuwaymis, by contrast, the petroglyphs are all that remains of the testimony of a society that vanished, leaving behind a pristine record of its existence that is of a magnitude rarely encountered elsewhere in the world.

ICOMOS considers that the arguments presented are worthy of consideration.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

Criterion (v): *being 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 the description as a traditional human settlement or human interaction with a vulnerable environment “under the impact of irreversible change” could have been formulated specifically for the Saudi site complexes. It is hard to think of alternative, similarly comprehensive records of civilizations facing environmental oblivion anywhere in the world that have left such brilliant testimony of their genius. The two properties nominated literally exemplify this criterion.

ICOMOS considers that the property witnesses a period of the history of the region, but that this does not constitute a living tradition and does not represent a significant part of the culture of a present society. ICOMOS considers that the arguments to support this criterion have been taken into account by the justification of criterion (iii).

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified for the whole series.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i) and (iii), as well as the conditions of integrity and authenticity.

Description of the attributes

The attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value are the environmental setting in the midst of a desert; the large numbers of petroglyphs of exceptional quality attributed to between 6000 and 9000 years of human history, and archaeological features; and the inscriptions that reflect the last 3000 years of the early development of writing (Thamudic) that represents the Bedouin culture, ending in Quranic verses.

4 Factors affecting the property

ICOMOS noted that there are no modern constructions within the boundaries of the nominated property.

However, there is a construction of a dam underway near Jubbah, of which about 3.8 km length has been completed. At the time of the technical mission, the construction was halted as part of a consultation process between the Municipality and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, to determine how to proceed. In

response to ICOMOS’s concerns on the visual impacts of the dam, the State Party committed to framing and masking the dam with typical low desert vegetation (shrubs and scattered tamarisk trees). With regard to another construction work of a tower within the buffer zone of Jabal Umm Sinman around an existing fresh water reservoir, also noted by ICOMOS, the State Party reported that the impact of the water tower will be reduced by repainting the tower with a matching colour and texture.

The identified threats include climate change and rain water flow from the mountain slopes at Jubbah, which occurs occasionally.

ICOMOS notes that there are currently no plans for management of large-scale visitation to the nominated property, something which renders the property ill-prepared for a sudden increase in tourist numbers. For instance, there is no visitor infrastructure, such as marked routes, raised walkways and viewing platforms, that prevent visitors from making direct contact with the rock art panels and thus disturbing archaeological features and deposits.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are development and tourism.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

Jabal Umm Sinman

The area of the component of the nominated property in Jubbah, Jabal Umm Sinman, measures 1783.9ha and is surrounded by a buffer zone of 1951ha. According to the State Party, Jabal Umm Sinman is bordered in the west, north and south by desert sands and in the east by a security fence that borders the town of Jubbah. ICOMOS noted that the security fence referred to borders the buffer zone, not the property as recorded in the nomination dossier, and in the west, north and south, the boundary of the property follows the edge of the rocky mountain outcrop. The importance of the views from the west and especially the one from the south towards Jabal Umm Sinman is considered, in the Management Plan, to be key and also contributing to the visual integrity of the property. Despite this importance, the view is currently not protected. In the State Party’s response to the ICOMOS letter, it was reported that the buffer zone in this particular area will be extended to an extra 50 to 100 metres and that the variance will depend on the general topography. The State Party also reported that an agreement with the Municipality had been reached and the demarcation poles for the buffer zone, as well as a map showing the extended buffer zone, will be provided by 30 April 2015. Currently, the buffer zone boundary is properly materialized on the ground with large white concrete blocks placed about 50 to 100 meters apart, depending on the topography of the terrain.

ICOMOS considers that an extension of 50 to 100 metres to be inadequate for the protection of such significant views to the property. ICOMOS considers that a major extension, between 1.0 to 1.5 km west and south could be achieved with no major effort and costs. The pylons of the mountain outcrop could be used as demarcation poles of the boundary of the buffer zone.

ICOMOS is also concerned that in the western part of the nominated property, where Rock Art clusters 8-14 are situated, there is no fence, and apparently cluster 8 has been badly vandalized with graffiti. This constitutes a clear indication that here the property is inadequately protected as the area is used as a picnic spot. In response to this, the State Party stated that a protection fence will be extended to protect the Rock Art clusters 8-14 as well as 15-24. All this work, together with a map showing the extension of the protection fence, will be provided by 30 April 2015.

Jabal al-Manjor/Raat

Both Jabals al-Manjor and Raat are included within a parallelogram-shaped nominated component of the nominated property which measures 259.9ha and is surrounded by a buffer zone of 1658.5ha. These Jabals are bounded by security fences along the foot of the escarpments enclosing the rock art sites, and by the edges of the plateau above, but including ruins of ancient stone structures. ICOMOS noted that the parallelogram-shaped demarcation only exists on a map and will therefore need to be marked with beacons or demarcation poles on the ground. On-site demarcation currently covers only 30 to 40 percent of the total area. ICOMOS also noted that the State Party is to fence the parallelogram-shaped component of the property within 3 to 4 months after the technical mission.

It was noted during the technical mission that the buffer zone is also demarcated with large white concrete blocks spaced about 30 to 50 meters apart, some with the inscription "SCTA" on them.

ICOMOS considers that the buffer zone for this component of the nominated property is sufficient.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the Jabal al-Manjor/Jabal Raat component of the nominated property and its buffer zone to be adequate, and that the buffer zone of the Jabal Umm Sinman component should be adjusted towards the western part of the nominated property to protect the view.

Ownership

Jabals Umm Sinman, al-Manjor and Raat are government-owned properties and are protected zones under national law.

Protection

Protection of the heritage sites of the Kingdom is through a Royal Decree No. M/26 dated 23/6/1392 H (1972 AD) which was issued over 40 years ago, and also through the

Resolution by the Council of Ministers No. 78 dated 16/3/1429 H (2008 AD).

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud and Prince Saud bin Abdulmushin bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, the Governor of Hail Region, are keenly interested in preserving and highlighting the cultural heritage of the country, and the government provides substantial support for the safeguarding of the Jubbah and Shuwaymis rock art.

The site at Jabal Umm Sinman has been fenced (8 km long) by steel posts and wires. A 6 km-long fence was erected around Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat. ICOMOS notes that there are plans to fence the entire area of Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raat, for which a proposal was being considered by the finance department.

The actual legal protection process involves submission of a report, by a site guard or any citizen about any infringement of the law, especially any interference with or defacement of a rock art panel, to the local police.

There is a museum and antiquities office in Hail where the museum staff and its director are responsible for the protection and management of rock art sites and all antiquities in the Hail region.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is generally adequate.

Conservation

Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and Jabal al-Manjor at Shuwaymis are being intensively investigated, and most of the petroglyph and inscription localities are registered and properly documented. A computer record of these sites is available on the websites of the National Museum and Saudi Commission. Also, hard copies of all records of registered sites and petroglyphs are safely stored in the Survey and Excavation Centre, with original digital photographs, maps and charts, etc. available for researchers and students.

There are some joint archaeological projects with foreign institutions who have also trained Saudi archaeologists working on the sites in various aspects of archaeology and rock art. The current Palaeodeserts Project with British archaeologists and palaeo-environmentalists is an example of such a collaboration, in this case between Oxford University and King Fahd University in Riyadh.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that conservation of the property is adequate.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The serial nominated property is managed by the provincial Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) in Hail, which operates under the supervision of the SCTA head office in Riyadh. On-the-ground protection

of the Jubba site complex is provided by staff already operating there, including controlling access to the site. ICOMOS notes that site guards will be installed at Shuwaymis once the road and the interpretation centre have been completed.

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

A Provincial Tourism Plan for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was completed in 2002, and was followed with the preparation of a plan specifically for Hail in 2004. There is also a management plan that was submitted together with the nomination dossier, of the site, that considers the long-term development, preservation and protection of the sites, governance arrangements with the local mayor, and administration of Jubba and Shuwaymis villages. Currently, a 40 km-long road is under construction, joining the village of Shuwaymis to the interpretation centre at the entrance to the buffer zone, which will facilitate the transport of visitors.

In a response to ICOMOS's concerns over lack of on-site visitor infrastructure, the State Party reported that work on the infrastructure will commence as soon as the specifications are outlined by the tourism management strategy and the interpretation strategy.

ICOMOS concurs that the visitor-related challenges could be properly addressed through the tourism management strategy and the interpretation strategy, that will address the increase in visitation as part of the management plan, once completed.

Involvement of the local communities

Local Bedouin tribesmen are involved in protecting the rock art and have reported misdemeanours to their sheikh or directly to the police, and people defacing rock art have been prosecuted under existing legislation. The local community plays an important role not only in preserving and protecting the sites but also takes an interest in the development of the area and welcoming visitors.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the management system for the overall serial property is adequate.

6 Monitoring

There has been no previous monitoring or reporting of the detailed conditions of both rock art properties. Since it would be impractical for each of the petroglyphs to be monitored individually, the State Party has committed to doing sampling. The SCTA will be responsible for monitoring, for storing the data, and for designing and implementing conservation measures.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that monitoring for the rock art is adequate; however, there is a need to monitor development and tourism impacts, and implement remedial measures where necessary.

7 Conclusions

ICOMOS recognises the Outstanding Universal Value of the Rock Art in the Hail Region serial nominated property, which meets criteria (i) and (iii). The required conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met, although attention should be paid to improving the protection measures that ensure preservation of the attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS thanks the State Party for taking up the challenge of the heritage conservation of a property of this kind. Nevertheless, ICOMOS notes that some measures should be assured, among them those related to preserving the visual integrity of the property and those related to visitor management. ICOMOS has identified development and tourism impacts as factors that, if not properly addressed, could threaten the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. The State Party has agreed to implement measures to mitigate the visual impact of the dam and of the water tower, which will be completed by 30 April 2015. Regarding visitor management, the State Party has announced some measures that will be completed between June and October 2015.

ICOMOS has also noted that, although the boundaries of the components that make up the serial nomination can be considered adequate, it would be necessary to redefine the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone for Jabal Umm Sinman as explained above, considering the possibility of an extension of 1.0 to 1.5 km towards the west and south.

ICOMOS has proposed to change the name of the property to "Rock Art in the Hail Region", a proposal that has been agreed to by the State Party by letter dated 8 February 2015.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of 'Rock Art in the Hail Region (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)', be **referred back** to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Extend the buffer zone of the Jabal Umm Sinman component of 1.0 to 1.5 km towards the west and the south, in order to preserve the long-term visual integrity of the property;
- Frame and mask the rain water diversionary dam or water barrier near Jubba with typical low desert vegetation in view of the necessity of the structure and the substantial investment already made in its construction;
- Consider ways of reducing the visual impact of the water tower that is constructed on the eastern side of

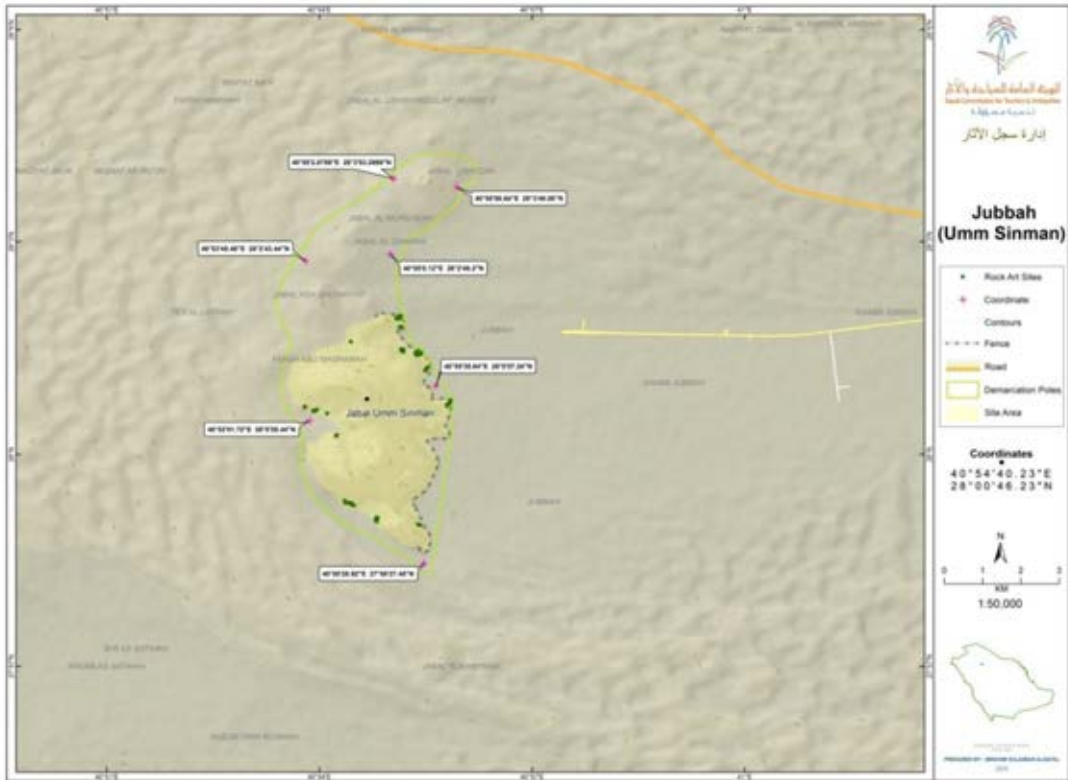
Jabal Umm Sinman, near the existing fresh water reservoir;

- Set up visitor infrastructures that will include marked routes, raised walkways and viewing platforms, that will prevent visitors from making contact with the rock art panels, and carry out this work in accordance with the *ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*;
- Develop a tourism management strategy including an interpretation strategy, that will address the increase in visitation numbers as part of the management plan.

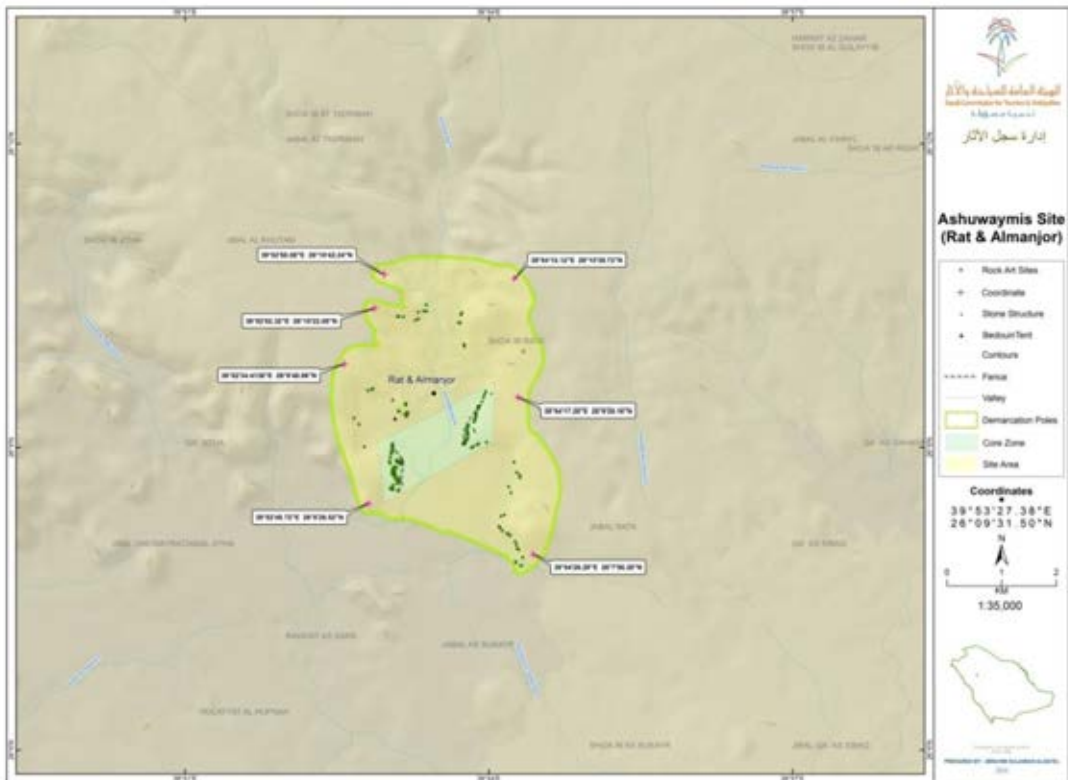
Additional recommendations

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

- Developing monitoring indicators for impacts of development and tourism on the attributes of the nominated serial property.



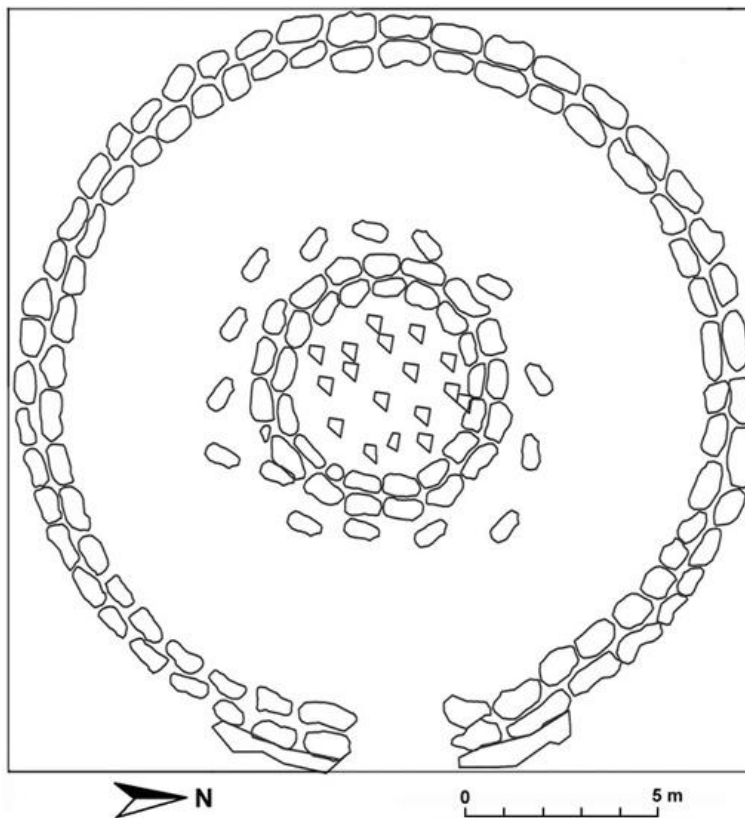
Map showing the boundaries of Jabal Umm Sinman component site



Map showing the boundaries of Jabal al-Manjor and Jabal Raath component site



Major stone structure on the edge of the Jabal al-Manjor plateau



Map showing the stone structure



Neolithic petroglyphs at Jabal Raat



"The Lion of Shuwaymis"