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## Luang Prabang (Lao People's Democratic Republic) No 479bis

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### 1 Basic data

#### State Party

Lao People's Democratic Republic

#### Name of property

Town of Luang Prabang

#### Location

Province of Luang Prabang

#### Inscription

1995

#### Brief description

Luang Prabang is an outstanding example of the fusion of traditional architecture and Lao urban structures with those built by the European colonial authorities in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its unique, remarkably well-preserved townscape illustrates a key stage in the blending of these two distinct cultural traditions.

#### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

6 March 2013

### 2 Issues raised

#### Background

In 2007 a World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited the property to assist the authorities in light of the illegal construction which had occurred in the property and the increased development pressure around the listed area. The mission noted that the development pressures in the vicinity of the property constituted a risk to the Outstanding Universal Value and recommended an immediate moratorium on some of the most problematic development projects and the revision of the Urban Plan, recommendations which were endorsed by the World Heritage Committee in 2008.

The mission also recommended the establishment of a buffer zone and the redefinition of the property boundaries to be in line with the area managed by the PSMV (*Plan de sauvegarde et de mise en valeur*). The request for boundary modifications submitted by the State Party in December 2012 (for the property) and January 2013 (for the buffer zone) responds to these recommendations.

#### Modification

The boundary modification increases the size of the property from 750 hectares to 820 hectares to include additional areas to the north (described by the coordinates E 102°6'44.119", N 19°52'50.368"; E 102°7'25.01", N 19°54'5.61"; E 102°8'19.72", N 19°54'45.681"), west (E 102°6'44.119", N 19°52'50.368"; E 102°6'51.93", N 19°52'40.474"), south-west (E 102°8'6.983", N 19°52'35.702"; E 102°8'19.191", N 19°52'38.848") and south (E 102°8'47.877", N 19°53'9.853"; E 102°8'47.721", N 19°53'13.503"). These allow the inclusion of some important wetlands and landscape features across the Mekong River within the property. The area proposed for extension corresponds to the area already managed as part of the PSMV and accordingly already had a World Heritage equivalent amount of management and protection prior to submission of the boundary modification request.

The proposed buffer zone of 12,560 hectares amply surrounds the property in all directions. It includes a significant stretch of the Mekong both up and down river, the landscape features of the mountain chain, an important visual backdrop for the property, as well as the meandering Nan Khan river bed. The buffer zone includes all areas previously exposed to development threats, including the recently extended airport runway.

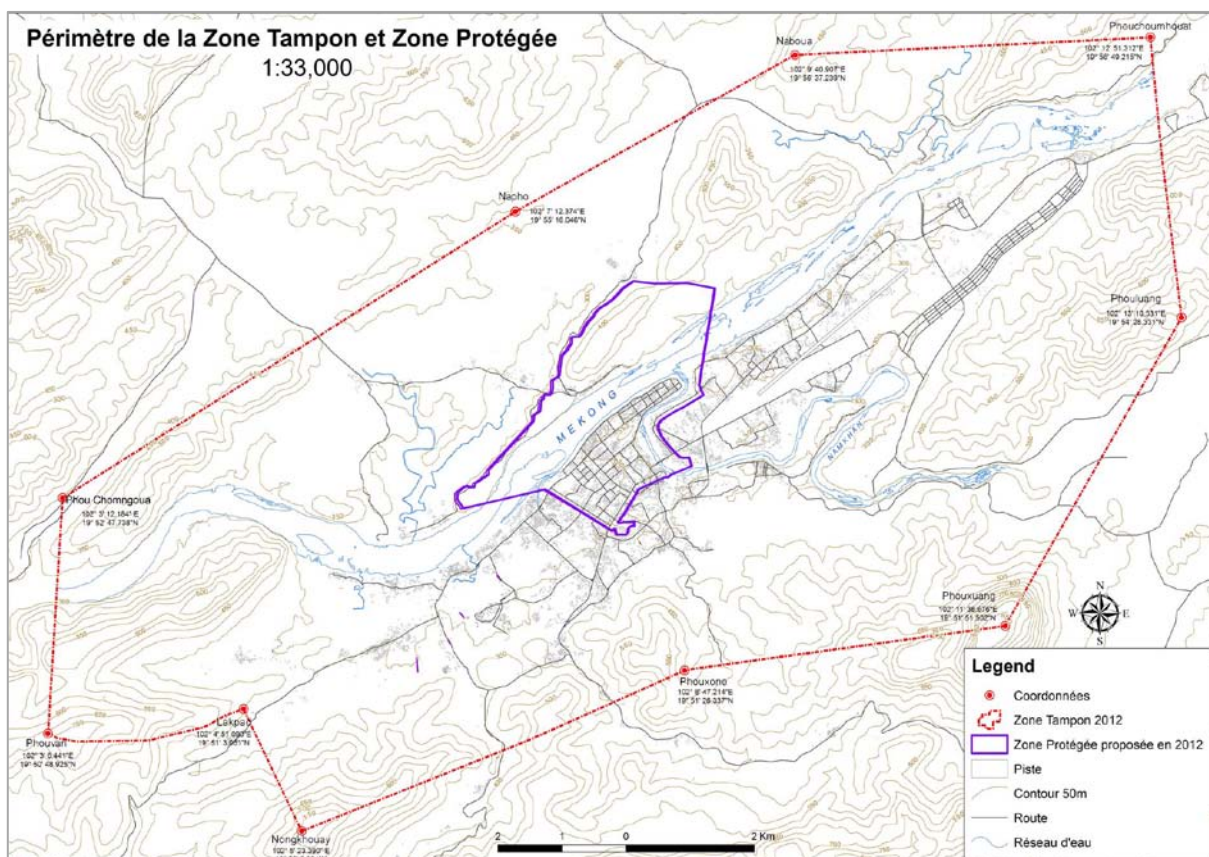
The proposed buffer zone was already integrated in the PSMV as well as in the Urban Planning Regulations of the Town of Luang Prabang. The State Party provided full documentation of the legal protection granted to the buffer zone by decree no 31 of the Prime Minister, issued on 1 February 2012.

### 3 ICOMOS Recommendations

#### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the Town of Luang Prabang, Lao People's Democratic Republic, be **approved**.

ICOMOS also recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Town of Luang Prabang, Lao People's Democratic Republic, be **approved**.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and the proposed buffer zone