

# ***Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia***

## **Recommendations Implementation Report**

November 2016

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the past two years, following the inscription of *Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia* on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage and the Central Municipality of Hail Region (Amana) have been actively implementing the strategy presented in the Nomination File and in the Action Plan submitted to UNESCO.

A series of major results has already been achieved since the inscription:

- The **Buffer Zone** has been modified for the component from 100 meters to 150 meters. The recommended further extension of 1.0 to 1.5 km towards the west and the south to be satisfied by the natural topography, rendering the area inapplicable for any type of construction that threatens the integrity of the property;
- The **Masking Process** has been completed, as the growth of the vegetation will take its natural process as it is closely monitored by Jubbah Municipality;
- The reduction of **Visual Impact** has been accomplished by repainting of the water tower with a more settled tone;
- A complete plan of the **Visitor Infrastructures** has been drafted with the detailed specifications, as the budget for this project is secured;
- A **Tourism Management Strategy** including an **interpretation strategy** has already been developed;
- A **Monitoring System** has already been developed and all required equipment mentioned in the protocol has been purchased.

The inscription of **Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia** on the UNESCO World Heritage List has already been instrumental in catalysing the efforts and in creating a new positive approach, at the national and local levels, placing Hail's archaeological heritage at the centre of the scientific development policies.

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### **Introduction**

Following the inscription of *Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia* on the World Heritage List in July 2015; the World Heritage Committee has requested Saudi Arabia to submit a *Recommendations Implementation Report* on the property to be discussed in the 2017 World Heritage Committee. The State Party considers that the preparation of a Recommendations Implementation report is an opportunity to support the daily initiatives carried out on the field by the technical teams, and an occasion to provide insight, at the national and international levels, the recommendations implemented and the issues that still need to be addressed for the long term preservation and revitalization of the Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is pleased to comply with the Decision 38 COM 8B.1.1, and to bring all relevant requested information to the attention of the World Heritage Committee.

#### **Decision 39 COM 8B.11**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-15/39.COM/8B and WHC-15/39.COM/INF.8B1;
2. Inscribes Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i) and (iii);
3. Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

#### **Brief Synthesis:**

The serial property of the 'Rock Art in the Hail Region' is comprised of two components: The Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah, located approximately 90 km northwest of the city of Hail, and the Jabal al-Manjor/Raat at Shuwaymis, approximately 250 km south of Hail. At Jabal Umm Sinman, Jubbah, the ancestors of present-day Arabs left marks of their presence in numerous petroglyph panels and inscriptions within a landscape that once overlooked a freshwater lake; and at 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 within a valley with flowing water. Together, these components contain the biggest and richest rock art complexes in Saudi Arabia and the wider region. Processes of desertification from the mid-Holocene altered the local environmental context and patterns of human settlement in these areas, and these changes are expressed in the numerous petroglyph panels and rich inscriptions. The attributes of the property include the large number of petroglyphs, inscriptions, archaeological features and the environmental setting.

**Criterion (i):** The rock art of Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and the Jabals of al-Major and Raat contain an exceptionally large number of petroglyphs, created by using a range of techniques with simple stone hammers, against a background of gradual environmental deterioration, and are visually stunning expressions of the human creative genius.

**Criterion (iii):** The rock art at Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah and the Jabals

of al-Major and Raat at Shuwaymis provide an exceptional testimony to the challenges of past societies in response to environmental catastrophes. In addition, the petroglyphs at Shuwaymis provide an exceptional testimony of a society that vanished, leaving behind an exceptionally detailed record of its existence.

#### **Integrity**

The serial approach is justified for this property, and together, the components of the Rock Art of the Hail Region contain all the attributes necessary to express the Outstanding Universal Value. The boundaries of the components of the property are appropriate, and buffer zones have been established, although the buffer zone of Jabal Umm Sinman should be extended to the west to adequately protect the visual setting and views. A tall water tower and a dam constructed by the Municipality of Jubbah have an impact on the visual setting of Jabal Umm Sinman; and fencing and other protective measures need further reinforcement to prevent vandalism and graffiti to the rock art, particularly in the south-western portion of Jabal Umm Sinman. The components of the property have been extensively documented and generally exhibit a good state of conservation, although vulnerabilities exist due to some threats from vandalism, development in the buffer zone and lack of preparedness for increased future tourism activity.

#### **Authenticity**

The authenticity of the serial property and of each component is demonstrated by the diversity and large number of petroglyphs located within the components at Jabal Umm Sinman and Jabal al-Manjor/Raat, and that all have retained their original location, setting, materials, form and design.

#### **Protection and Management Requirements**

Protection is provided through Royal Decree No. M/26 dated 23/6/1392 H (1972 AD) and through the Resolution by the Council of Ministers No. 78 dated 16/3/1429 H (2008 AD). The Government of Saudi Arabia, and of the Hail Region provide substantial resources for the safeguarding of the two components of the property - Jabal Umm Sinman at Jubbah, and Jabal al-Manjor/Raat at Shuwaymis. The museum and antiquities office in Hail has responsibilities for the protection and management of rock art, inscriptions and archaeological sites in the region, and any noted interference or damage to rock art can be reported to the local police by site guards or citizens, including local Bedouin tribes. The local community therefore plays an important role in protecting the sites, and in welcoming visitors.

The 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. There are on-site staff at Jubbah, and site guards are soon to be provided at Shuwaymis, following the completion of a road from the Shuwaymis village to an interpretation centre at the entrance to the buffer zone. Additional planning for tourism management and interpretation have been identified for future work by the State Party.

A management plan that considers the long-term development and protection of the component sites was developed with the nomination to the World Heritage List; and there are also provincial and local tourism plans in place (dated 2002 and 2004 respectively). While there are adequate monitoring arrangements for the rock art, there is a need to monitor development and tourism activities and impacts, to establish Heritage

Impact Assessment processes, and to implement remedial measures where necessary.

The State Party has undertaken to mitigate the visual impact of several developments that have had an impact on the setting of the property - including the existing rain water diversion dam and water tower.

4. Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:
  1. 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;
  2. Frame and mask the rain water diversionary dam or water barrier near Jubbah with typical low desert vegetation in view of the necessity of the structure and the substantial investment already made in its construction;
  3. 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;
  4. 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;
  5. Develop a tourism management strategy including an interpretation strategy that will address the increase in visitation numbers as part of the management plan;
  6. Develop monitoring indicators for impacts of development and tourism on the attributes of the serial property;
5. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by **1 December 2016** a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017.

## **Structure of the Report**

The introductory paragraph presents background information about the evolution of the national heritage policies; the following paragraphs comply with the World Heritage Committee requests and provide updated information on each point underlined in the Decision text. A brief conclusion points out the issues to be tackled in the future and the goals to be achieved. Images and plans are presented as Annex to this report.

## **Background Information**

The Nomination File presented a complete view of the situation in the Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia, and underlined the fact the complex and ambitious revitalization project of the central sector of Hail Region of Saudi Arabia would inevitably require a long timeframe to be implemented on the field. The State Party considers that the Inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List is not the "end" of the process, but rather the beginning of a new phase for the safeguard of this threatened Historic site.

After the submission of the file, and since the inscription, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has continued to act both at the administrative and technical levels to implement the plans presented in the Nomination and in the supplementary volume submitted in February 2015.

- A major breakthrough for the preservation of Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia's represented by the approval of the new Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage law by the Council of Ministers (June 2014). The new ***Law on Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage*** gives the *Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage* the power to manage the rich heritage of the country and notably to deal with archaeological heritage sites. A draft English version of the new Law was included in the Nomination File of *Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia*.  
The relevance of the new legislation for the preservation of *Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia* cannot be overstated, as this new Law (that replaces the earlier 1972 Antiquities Law) includes a more elaborate section dealing with archaeological and historic heritage. The inscription of *Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia* on the UNESCO World Heritage List has followed the approval of the new law. Copy of the official text has been transmitted to UNESCO and is now included in the *UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws*.
- On 29 June 2015, an administrative reform of the ***SCTH*** has been approved. The Council of Ministries has ratified the modification of the name of the Commission to become ***SCTH, Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage***. This change underlines the importance of National Heritage as part of the Kingdom's history and Saudi national identity. The reform enlarges the scope of the Commission, now officially in charge of archaeological heritage.

## **1. The Buffer Zone**

*(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)*

The extension of the proposed buffer zone in the Nomination and the providing additional margins for safety in the field have been the first priorities of the State Party.

since Nomination, the buffer zone has been modified for Jabal Umm Sinman component from 100 meters to 150 meters (a map showing the current expansion of the buffer zone and the extension of the protection fence are included in the Annex document). The recommended further extension of 1.0 to 1.5 kilometres towards the west and the south is already satisfied by the natural topography of the area, as it is completely covered with high sand dunes, making the area is inapplicable for any type of modern development that would threaten the visual integrity of the property.

According to what was recommended, a reinforced coordination has been established between the SCTH Branch in Hail Region and the local Municipalities for Jubbah and Shuwaymis depending from Hail Regional Municipality (Amana). The mechanisms presented in the Factual Errors Report are now active.

## **2. Site Vegetation**

*(Frame and mask the rain water diversionary dam or water barrier near Jubbah with typical low desert vegetation in view of the necessity of the structure and the substantial investment already made in its construction)*

The very aim of the conservation and revitalization plans being implemented in the Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia is the preservation of its unique and extraordinary heritage within a comprehensive strategy for the requalification of the site.

The masking process was completed in 2015; with the positive efforts made by Jubbah Municipality in coordination with the Hail Regional Municipality (Amana); thus, the growth of the vegetation will take its natural process as highlighted in the Factual Error Report submitted to UNESCO.

### **3. Managing Visual Impacts**

*(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)*

Achieving a balance between preservation and development is an essential, and sensitive, element of the plan. The mechanisms of controlling the visual appearance of the water tower east of Jabal Umm Sinman is designed in the framework of the Nomination and the provisions of the existing structure guarantee the respect of the constructive methods and the compatibility of the new projects with the authenticity of the property.

The management of the visual impact of the existing water tower has been accomplished in 2015 by repainting of the tower using a more settled tone to not overcast the site or affect its authenticity. This was highlighted in the Factual Report submitted to UNESCO.

### **4. Visitor Infrastructure**

*(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)*

Tourist paths and urban circuits within the serial sites are in the process of being completed, and the sites of Jabal Umm Sinman in Jubbah, Jabal al-Manjor, and Jabal Raat, in Shuwaymis are still a “work in progress” environment. since both sites are of extensive area, main vehicular axes navigating the sites are being developed.

A complete plan for visitor infrastructures has been drafted with the detailed specifications, as the budget for this project is secured in 2015, SCTH is currently in the process of tendering work to carry out site infrastructure, the project terms of reference was submitted to UNESCO in the Factual Error Report in 2015, containing maps show location and specifications of marked routes, raised walkways and viewing platforms.

The presentation of the site and of its Outstanding Universal Value to both visitors and residents counts among the priorities of the SCTH and of Hail Central Municipality.

The rehabilitation of the Historic town of Jubbah project with the National Urban Heritage Centre of SCTH, have greatly improved the overall aspect and the accessibility of the Jabal Umm Sinman site, providing needed infrastructure and high quality experience to visitors.

## **5. Tourism Management (interpretation) Strategy**

*(Develop a tourism management strategy including an interpretation strategy that will address the increase in visitation numbers as part of the management plan)*

The tourism management strategy including an interpretation strategy are already being implemented, as was provided to the UNESCO in the Factual Error Report in 2015.

A booklet on the Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia and the inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List are being prepared by the SCTH and will be available to visitors in the Visitor Centre currently allocated for the site, while new information panels, presenting the Petroglyphs and the archaeological sites, will be designed and positioned in the sites.

SCTH and Municipalities of Jubbah and Shuwaymis have also created a and furnished a Visitors' centre in Jubbah and Shuwaymis presenting the property to the public.

## **6. Monitoring Impacts of Development**

*(Developing monitoring indicators for impacts of development and tourism on the attributes of the nominated serial property)*

At the moment of Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia inscription on the World Heritage List, ICOMOS pointed out the importance of a developing monitoring indicators for impacts of development and tourism on the attributes of the nominated serial property in order to plan its safeguard and development. it was mentioned in the Factual Error Report that a monitoring system has already been developed. Furthermore, the all required equipment mentioned in the protocol has been purchased and installed at the sites since 2015.

Accordingly, since the inscription, a technical methodology for documentation have been pursued. Notably, the following protocols:

- Microscopic Monitoring, (200 microns) for patina and colour using portable x-ray fluorescence equipment;
- Macroscopic Monitoring, monitoring the rock surfaces at the sites.

## **Conclusion**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, fully aware of the complexity of this task and of the efforts that still need to be done, is actively pursuing the goals set in the Nomination File and is proud to renew in front of the international community its full commitment for the preservation and revitalization of the World Heritage property of Rock Art in the Hail Region of Saudi Arabia.

An ambitious and long-term plan is being realized and the first seeds planted with the Nomination are now beginning to yield its fruits. The attention of the World Heritage Centre and of the Advisory Bodies is a major incentive for the Kingdom. A closer working cooperation with ICOMOS will be developed in the coming years to define the most sustainable solutions for the property.

On the basis of the results achieved, the State Party has implemented the recommendations for the sites of Jabal Umm Sinman in Jubbah, and Jabal al-Manjor & Jabal Raat in Shuwaymis set by the decision of the World Heritage Committee. The World Heritage Centre is fully aware of the efforts paid in these sites. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia looks forward to the possibility of organizing

technical meeting with ICOMOS in in the future to present their efforts and discuss jointly the way forward for the safeguard of the property.

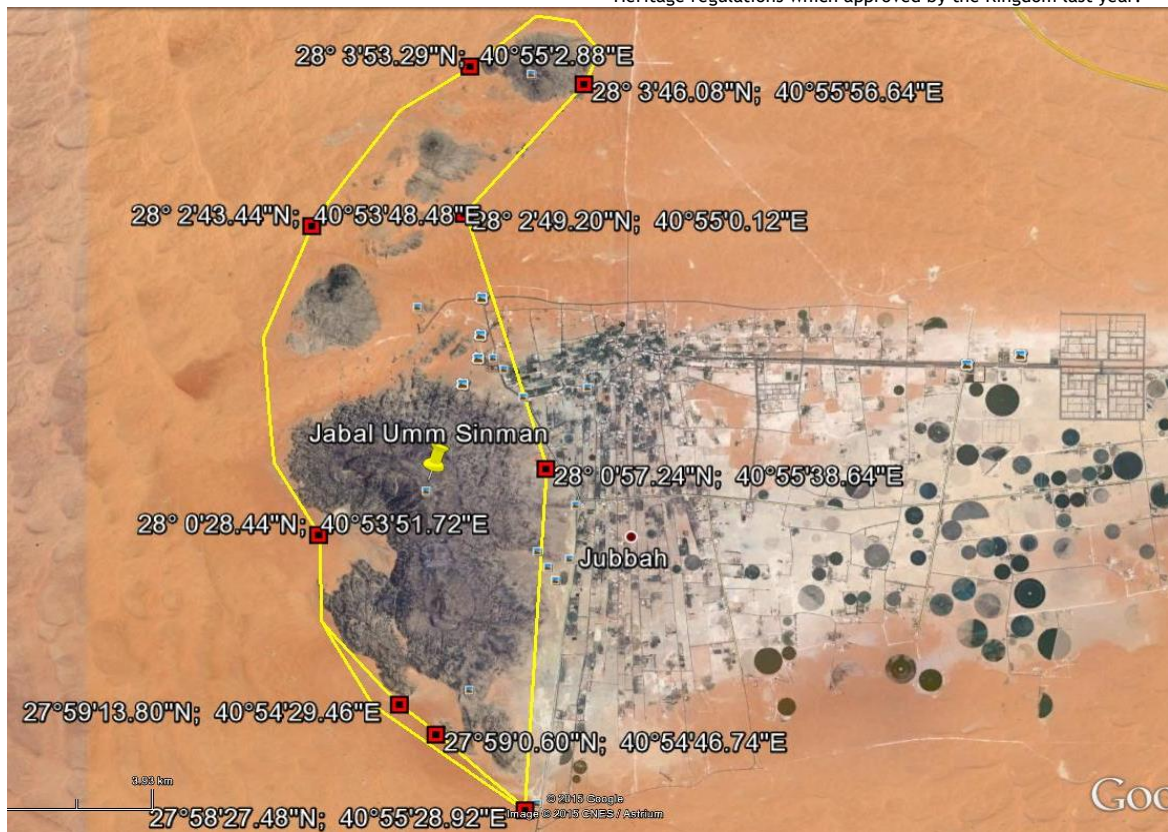


## Annex: References



A major breakthrough for the preservation of Rock Art Sites in Hail Region of Saudi Arabia is represented by the approval of the new Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage law by the Council of Ministers (June 2014). The new Law on Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage gives the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage the power to manage the rich heritage of the country and notably to deal with archaeological heritage sites. A draft English version of the new Law was included in the Nomination File, in the Legal Annexes.

On Monday 12/9/1436 A.H corresponding to 29/6/2015 A.D The Council of Ministers approved the amendment of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities name to the (Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage). The new name is ought to be suitable for its tasks entrusted to it (Monuments, Museums, Urban Heritage, Handicrafts). supervising programs relevant to national identity and the promotion of citizenship. The decision comes in line with the Antiquities, Museums and Urban Heritage regulations which approved by the Kingdom last year.





Local bread of desert plantation sheltered by thin layer of fabric to provide better wind resistance till the plant is fully self sustained



Efforts by Jubbah Municipality in complying with UNESCO Regulations



Work underway to frame and mask the rain water divisionary dam/water barrier with typical low desert vegetation to preserve the long term visual integrity of the site

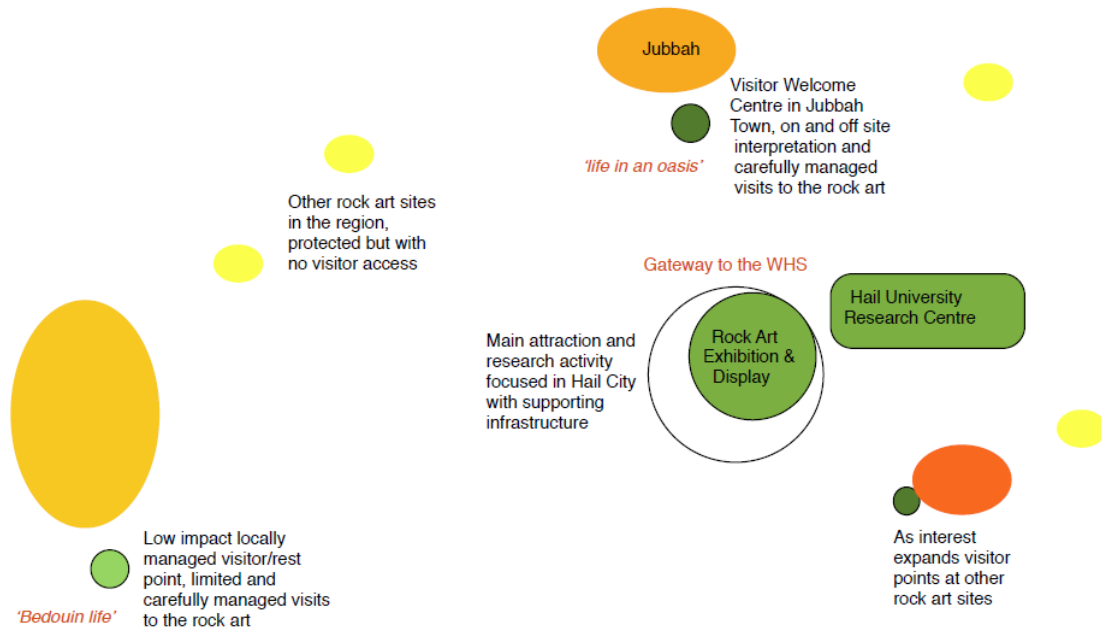


Details of the site owned by the water authority near Jabal Umm Sinman



In Compliance with recommendations, the water authority in Jubbah underwent changing the color of the water tower to reduce its visual impact

CONCEPTUAL SCHEME FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ROCK ART SITES IN HAIL PROVINCE

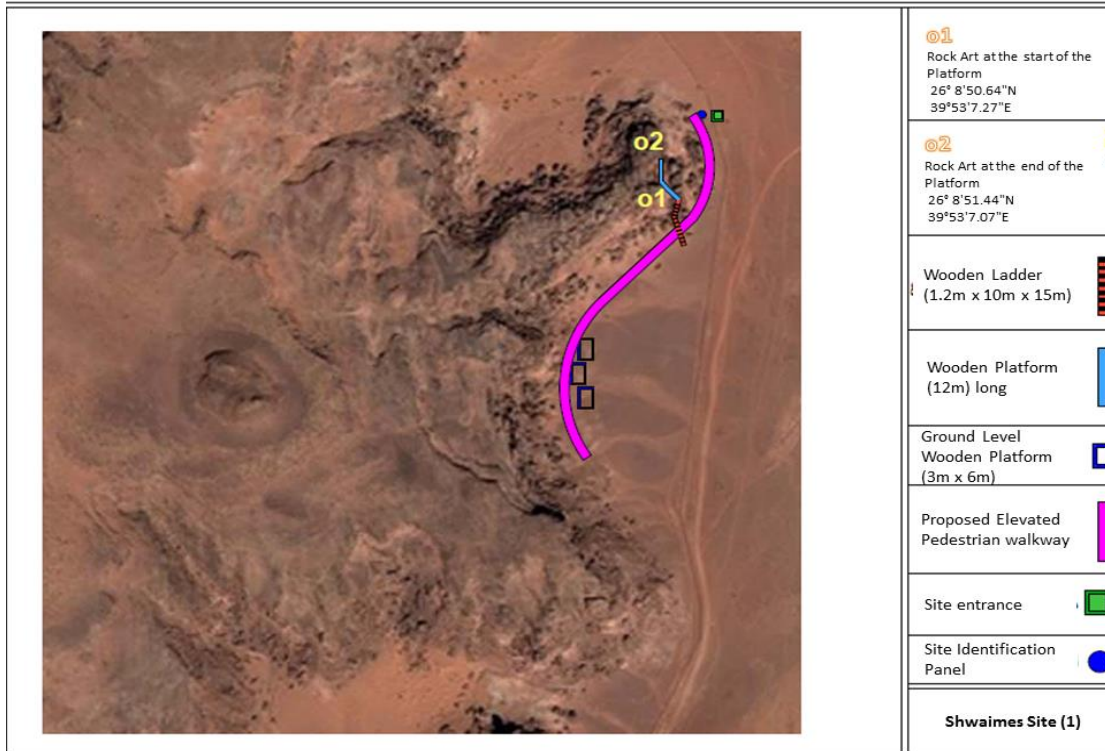


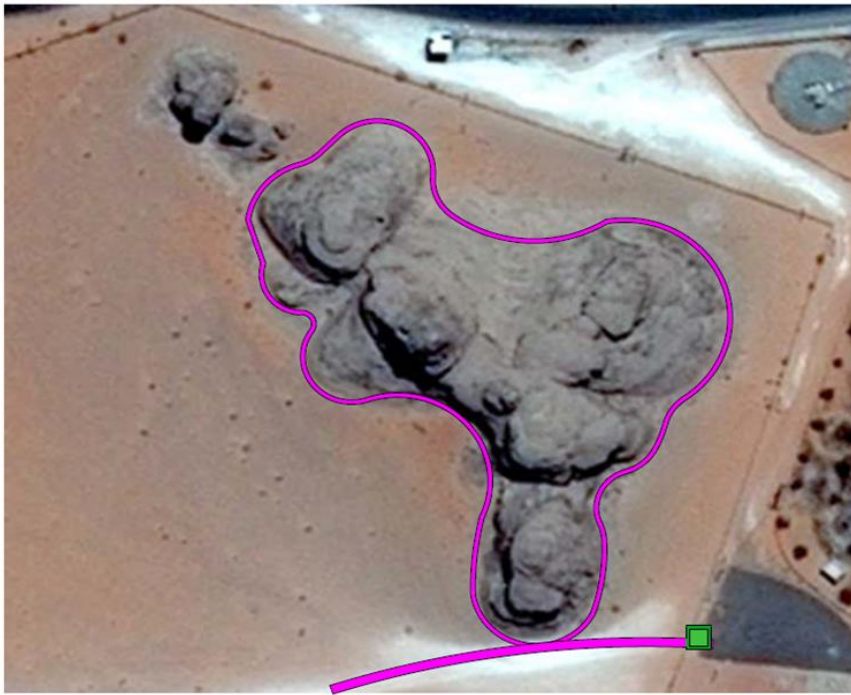
Aylin Orbasli, May 2015



The paved vehicular road foreseen to be implemented in the site



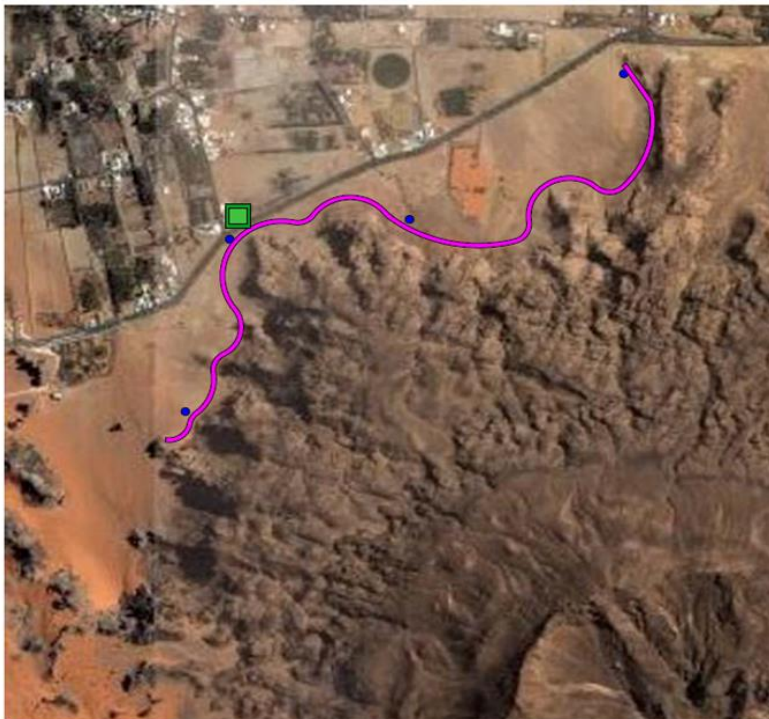




Proposed Pedestrian walkway

Site Entrance

Jubbah Site (2)



Site Entrance

Proposed Ground Pedestrian Walkway

Site Identification Panel

Jubbah Site, Jabal Umm Siman