

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State Party

Kingdom of Cambodia

State, Province, Region

Kampong Thom province, commune of Sambor, and district of Prasat Sambor

Name of Property

Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura

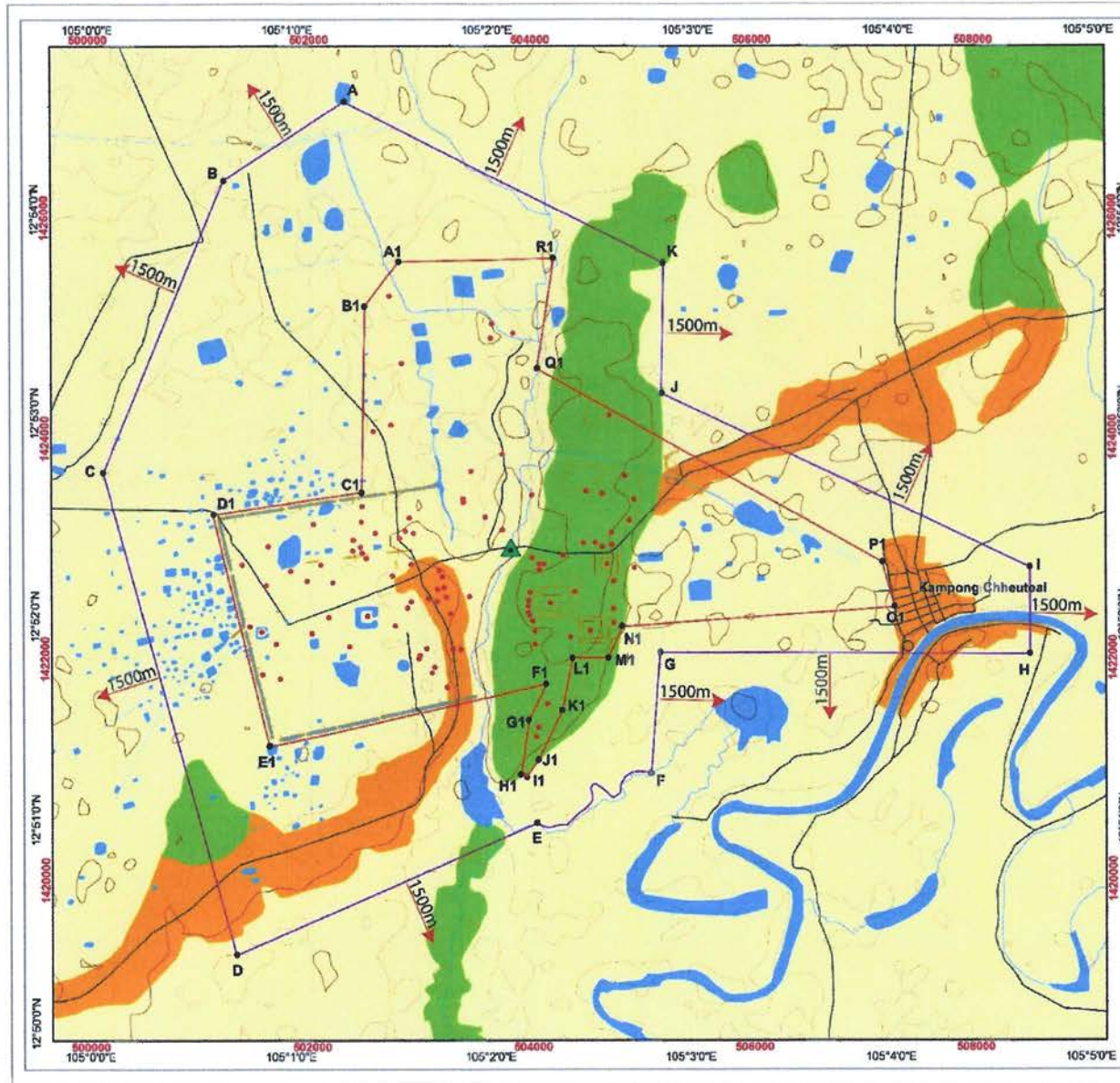
Geographic coordinates to the nearest second

Point Zero: WGS84E 503808 - N 1423012. Point Zero is situated on the point at the approximate center of Prasat Tao Group or Central Group (C) of the much larger Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura

Textual description of the boundary of the nominated property

The 1354.2ha is located on the west bank of the Steung Sen (river) in an area that contains lowlands, a marsh, and plateau. The entire property is situated on a gentle incline from north to south in a relatively flat area with an elevation of 2 m to 10 m. Small rivers punctuate the lower areas. The place is a mixture of rice paddy, tropical forest, and subsistence habitation. The area comprises the cultural site of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group established by the Reform of the Royal Decree of 24 December 2014.

A4 size maps of the nominated property, showing the boundaries and buffer zone



Map of Nominated Property of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group Annex to the Royal Decree..NS/RKT/11214/1488
 Date: 24 Dec 2014

For the Nominated Property of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group

Legend

- X=503808.859, Y=5023012.735
- Contours (5m)
- Water Course
- Rural Road
- Ruin
- Core Zone
- Buffer Zone
- 1500m Satellite Zone
- Water Body
- Agriculture Land
- Forest Land
- Village

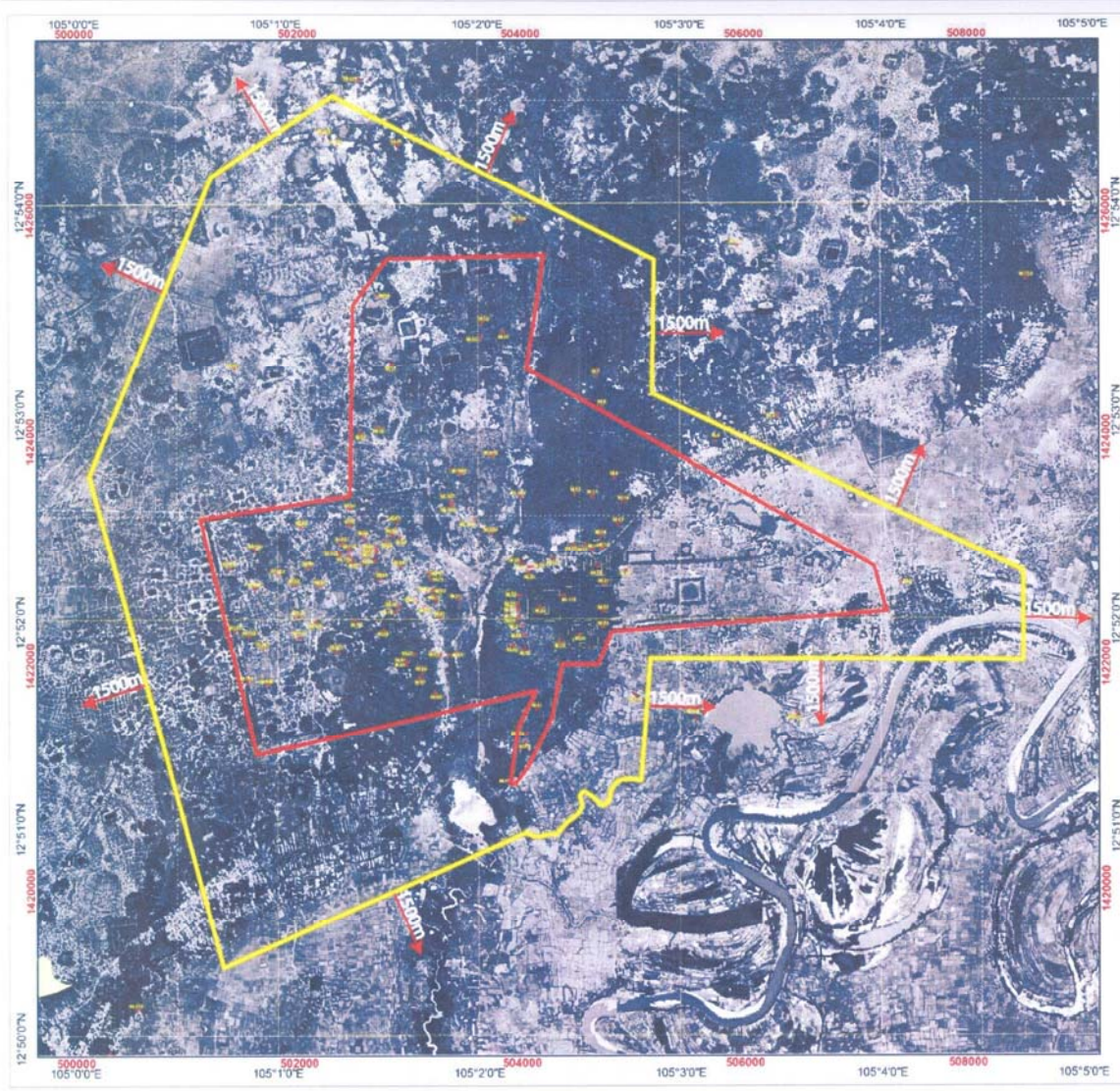
Scale 1:25,000

Data sources:

- Aerial photo in 1992, scale: 1:25,000
- GPS points from Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and Royal Decree No: NS/RKT/0303/116

Prepared by Geography Department in collaboration with General Department of Heritage 2013.

- Projection: UTM, Zone 48 North
 - Datum: WGS 84



Map of Nominated Property of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group Annex to the Royal Decree *NS/RKT/1214/1488*.
Date: *24 December 2014*.....

For the Nominated Property of Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Group

Legend

- X=503808.859, Y=5023012.735
- Ruin
- Core Zone
- Buffer Zone
- 1500m Satellite Zone

N

Scale 1:25,000

Data sources:
 - Aerial photo in 1992, scale: 1:25,000
 - GPS points from Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and Royal Decree No: NS/RKT/0303/116

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Criteria under Which the Property is Nominated

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site Representing the Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura is nominated for the World Heritage List under criteria (ii), (iii) and (vi):

Criteria (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.

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

Criteria (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

(a) Brief synthesis

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura (first known as Bhavapura), ancient capital of the Chenla Empire, is the most important site for 6th -7th Century Southeast Asia, showing a very complex city planning on monumental scale (harbor, causeways, hydraulic structures, religious complexes introducing octagonal architecture and moated habitation zone) and a unique iconography currently known as the “Sambor Prei Kuk Style”.

Politically, administratively and spiritually, the capital resonated far beyond its borders with central rule (introduction of the King-God concept) and administration transferring the universality of the Sanskrit language to the distinct Khmer language.

It was a place where travelers and diplomatic missions from as far as China, India and Central Asia met each other and where a syncretism of Hindu and Buddhist religions was established through the introduction of tolerant and peaceful cults around Prahasiteshvara, Gambireshvara, Harihara and the Sakabrahmana.

The combination of these new and unique features would give life to a society that would form the basis for the much larger Angkor Empire a few centuries later. Many traits however, would live on till today.

(b) Justification for criteria

Criteria ii: The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape of Ancient Ishanapura has a **unique architecture** and **town planning**, which is a distinct adaptation of Indian influence, introducing for the first time the octagonal building and translating itself in new aesthetic forms, such as the flying palaces and medallions, carved on the brick walls of temples and enclosures, stone lintels and sculptures currently known as the “Sambor Prei Kuk Style”.

The **landscape design** was carefully crafted and engineered to the needs of this large capital with the simultaneous introduction of three hydraulic systems to manage and control the water flow, providing a continuous water supply throughout the year.

Criteria iii: The civilization of Ancient Ishanapura underwent deep influences from the Indian subcontinent in the form of social institutions, religion and art which were assimilated into indigenous customs, ideology and artistic expressions. The Chenla Empire was a centralized state featuring a tolerant syncretism of Hindu (Prahastishvara, Gambiresvara, Harihara and Sakabrahmana) and Buddhist religions, having a lasting impact on Southeast Asian society.

The religious complex was the largest pilgrimage center in Southeast Asia. All that remains architecturally of that civilization are its brick and stone structures, its spiritualism and language however, still live on.

Criteria vi: In Sambor Prei Kuk, we see the first official introduction of the Harihara and Sakabrahmana cults, both striving for the universal values of tolerance and peace. It also harbored the first inscription in Southeast Asia referring to the universal teachings of Buddhism.

Inscriptions also make use for the first time of the Khmer language next to Sanskrit referencing to its centralized system of rule, and introduction of the God-King concept, which will stay central in Cambodian society till the beginning of the 20th Century.

The bas relief of a lintel shows us one of the first representations of an orchestra and music instruments, of critical importance for the universal study of ancient and contemporary music.

Ancient Ishanapura thus embraced a language, religious ideas and concepts of governance of universal significance.

(c) Statement of integrity

The extent of the nominated property under Royal decree of 24 December 2014 (see annex VI) includes all the relevant historical, cultural, religious, secular, archaeological and environmental features and artefacts of the ancient complex, manifested through its moated city, three main temple complexes, hydraulic structures, monumental remains and pristine forested area from which the site bears its name. A LiDAR survey carried out early 2015 assists in illustrating the state of conservation of the site (page 19, *fig. 2.5*).

The ancient hydraulic structures (see annex V) are still in use today and a large number of decorative elements have remained in situ. Some of the masterpieces have been stored or are on exhibit in museums throughout Cambodia (see annex III).

(d) Statement of authenticity

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape continues to be used for the purposes of human habitation, agriculture production, commerce and religious worship.

Most of the ancient temple shrines are still in use for prayers and the ancient site is also considered a dwelling place for powerful ancestral spirits, for which special rituals are still organized several times a year.

Low density villages with traditional gardens and tree cover largely retain the pattern of settlement that would have existed in the historic urban complex.

This manifestation of continued old practices, assisted to maintain and preserve the archaeological and cultural landscape.

(e) Requirements for protection and management

The Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological and Cultural Landscape is strongly protected by the Royal decree (Preah Reach Kret) NS/RKT/1214/1488 dated 24 December 2014, and the Cambodian Heritage Legislation. Royal Degree NS/RKT/0715/810 dated 31 July 2015, establishes the organization and functioning of the National Authority for the Protection and Development of the Cultural Site of Sambo Pre Kuk. A Sambor Prei Kuk National Authority will be guided by a Management Plan.

Name and contact information of official local agency

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Kingdom of Cambodia
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