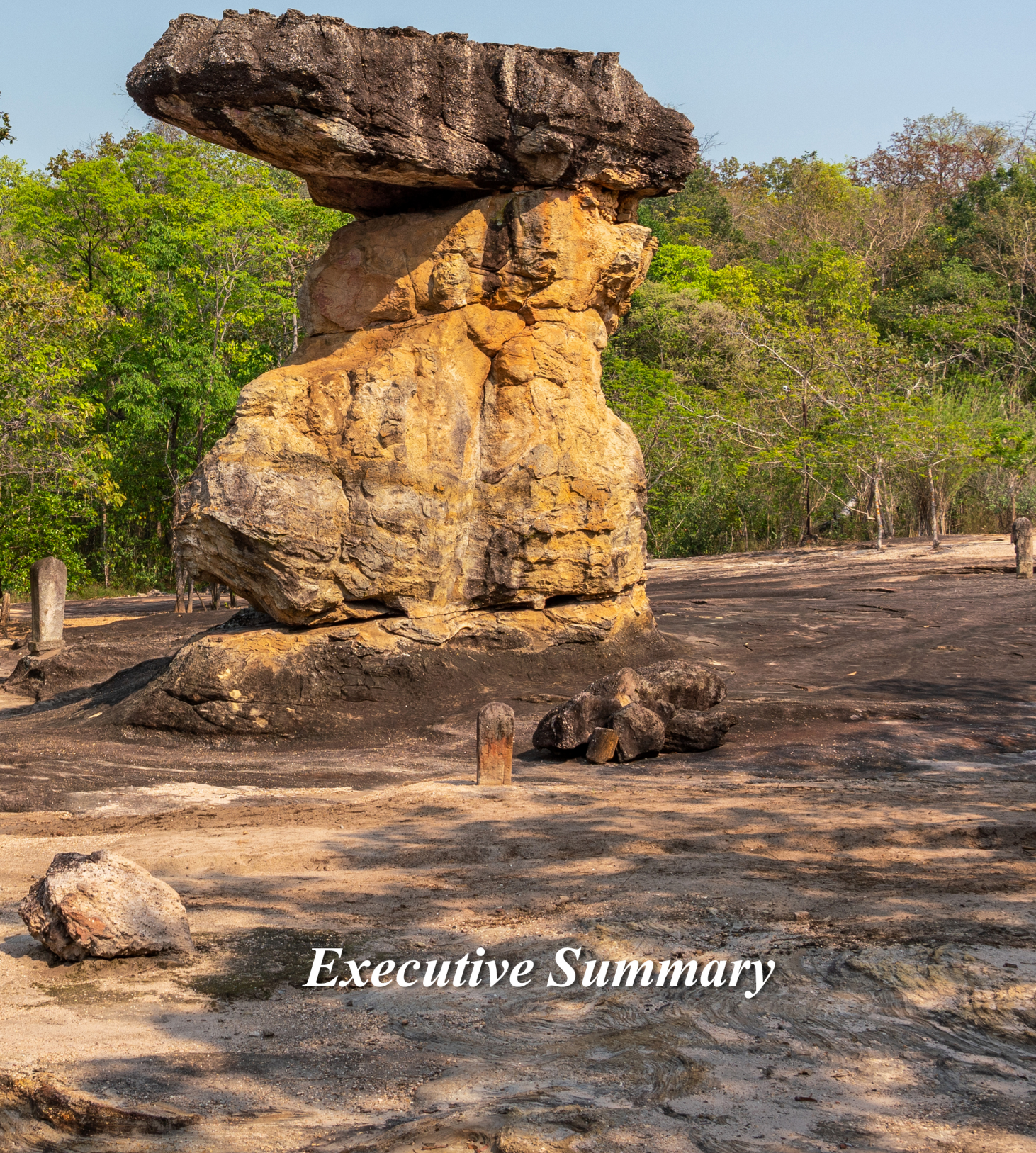


World Heritage Nomination
Phu Phrabat Historical Park



Executive Summary

World Heritage Nomination
Phu Phrabat Historical Park

Executive Summary

Submitted by

The Government of the Kingdom of Thailand 

AD 2023

Executive Summary

- **State Party:** Thailand
- **State, Province or Region:** Udon Thani Province, Thailand, Southeast Asia
- **Name of nominated property:** The Phu Phrabat Historical Park
- **Geographical coordinates to the nearest second:**

The Phu Phrabat Historical Park nominated serial property consists of two associated cultural heritage sites as outlined in the table below:

No.	Name of the component part	Region(s) / District(s)	Coordinates of the Central Point		Area of Nominated Component of the Property (ha)	Area of the Buffer Zone (ha)	Map N°
			Latitude	Longitude			
001	The Phu Phrabat Historical Park	Ban Phue District	17°43'51.81"	102°21'22.56"	575.976	568.078	Map1-4
002	The Sīma Cultural Site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban	Ban Phue District	17°37'49.79"	102°19'54.76"	9.979	30.728	Map1-6
Total area (in hectares)					585.955	598.806	

Textual description of the boundary(ies) of the nominated property

The Phu Phrabat Historical Park nominated serial property consists of two associated cultural heritage sites – the Phu Phrabat Historical Park and the Sīma Cultural Site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban. It is located 12 kilometres west of Ban Phue District, Udon Thani Province in Upper Northeast Thailand. It has an area of 585.955 hectares.

It is located at the height of 360 metres above the average sea level and surrounded by mixed and deciduous dipterocarp forest. It is on a steep slope with a west-east orientation that creates a large valley with an undulating plain. The plain is used as agricultural land. Outside the forest is agricultural land and residential area.

The Phu Phrabat Historical Park is situated in the Pha Khuea Nam National Reserved Forest on the Phu Pan Mountain Range. It geographically features a large stone courtyard and numerous peculiar rock shelters formed in the Cretaceous era or around 135 million years ago by ice-melted water erosion on the Phu Phrabat. Such events formed many rock shelters with unusual shapes. These rocks are composed of thick layers of grey sandstone, medium-to-coarse sized sedimentary rocks and thick layers of sandstone with gravels. The Sīma Cultural Site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban is located approximately eight kilometres south of the Phu Phrabat Historical Park, also on the Phu Pan Mountain Range.

The Phu Phrabat Historical Park and the Sīma Cultural Site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban have been registered as ancient monuments in accordance with the Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museum, B.E.2504 (1961) and the Amended Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museum (No.2), B.E.2535 (1992). Both cultural heritage sites have demonstrated well-preserved cultural connections and have strongly presented their Outstanding Universal Value. They have retained their integrity and authenticity at the highest level.

Natural boundaries of the Pha Khuea Nam National Reserved Forest have been used as boundaries for the nominated property's buffer zone. The forest area has been registered as the national reserved forest, hence, has been protected under the Act of National Reserved Forest B.E.2507 (1964). The area is also protected under the Agricultural Land Reform Act B.E.2518 (1975) and the Ministerial Regulation regarding the Enforcement of Unitary Town Plan of Udon Thani Province B.E.2560 (2017).



The aerial photograph of the Phu Phrabat Historical Park, in the Pha Khuea Nam National Reserced Forest

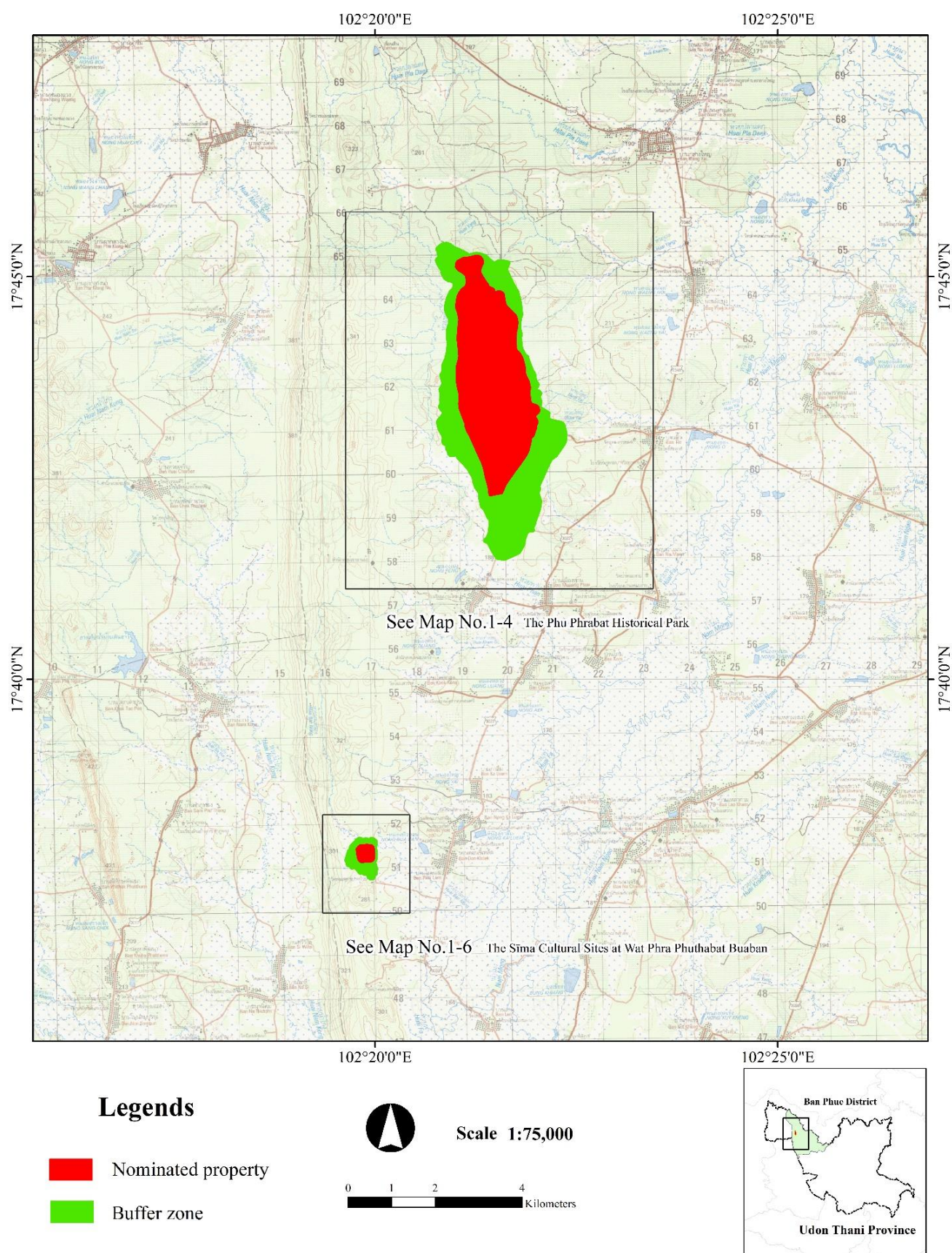


National Rock Shelter at the Phu Phrabat Historical Park

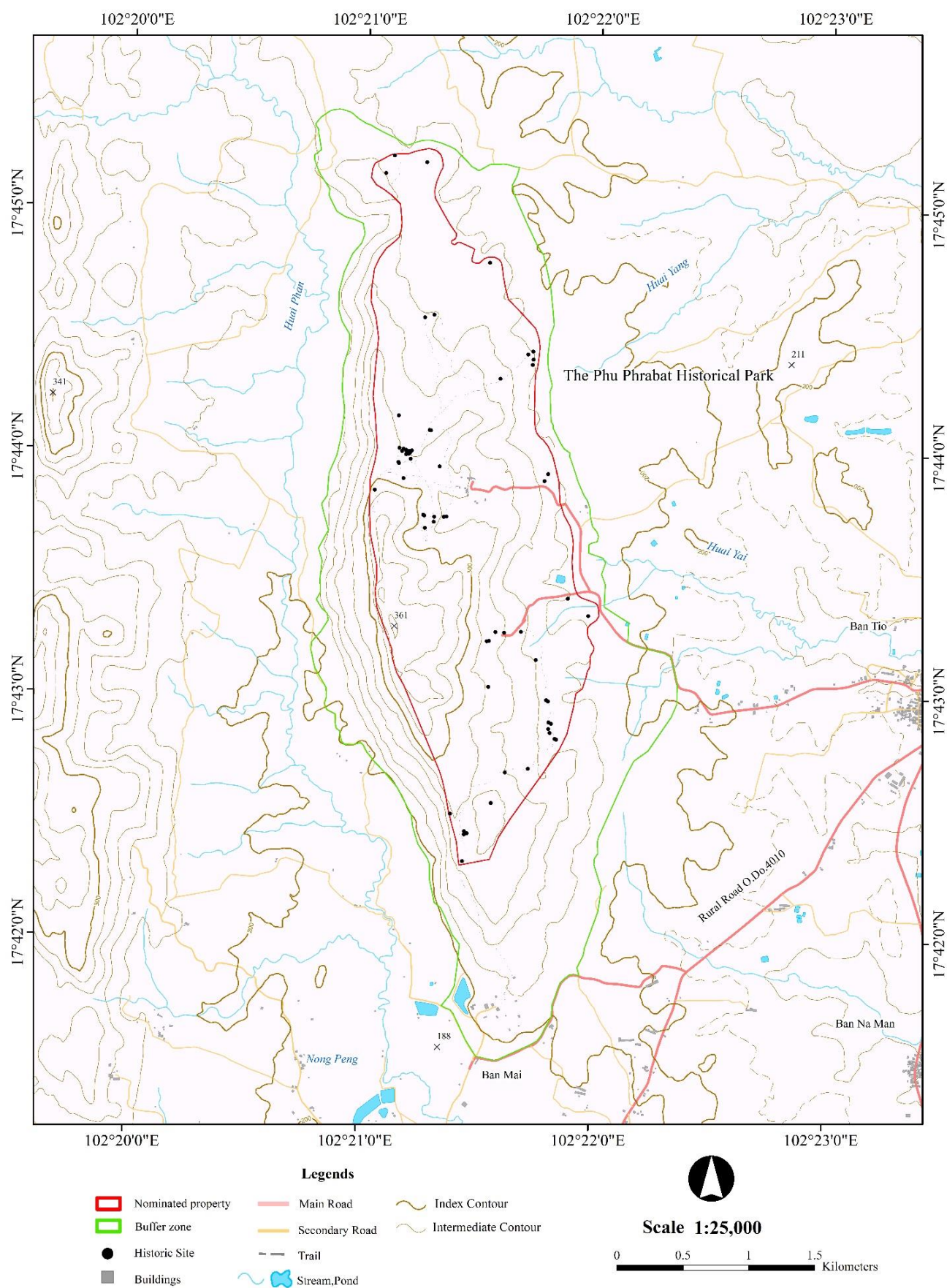
A4 or A3 size map(s) of the nominated property, showing boundaries and buffer zone (if present)



Map 1-1 Map of Thailand indicating Udon Thani Province in which the nominated serial property is located



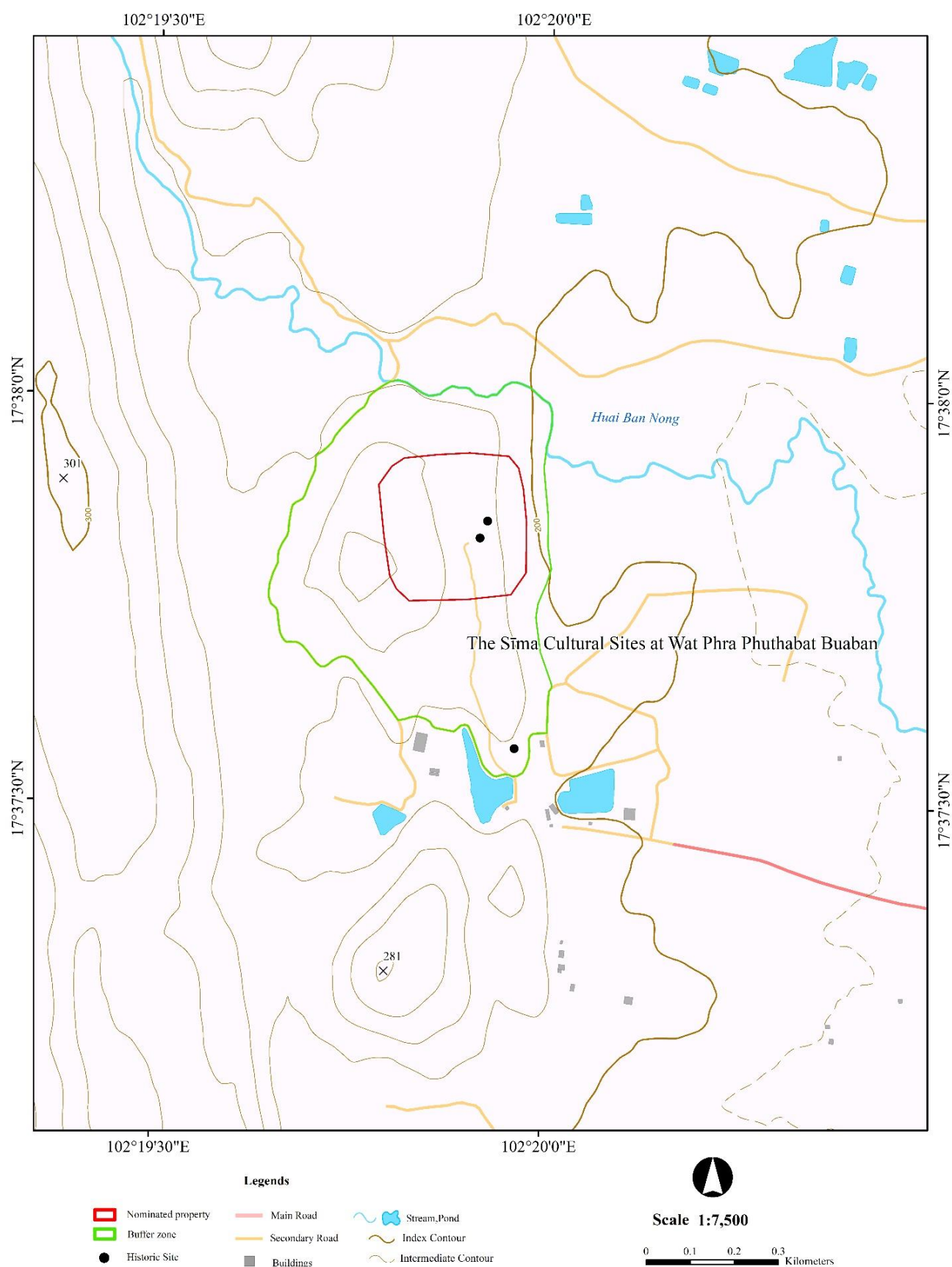
Map 1-2 Map showing locations of the nominated serial property and the positional relation between the Phu Phrabat Historical Park and the Sīma Cultural Site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban



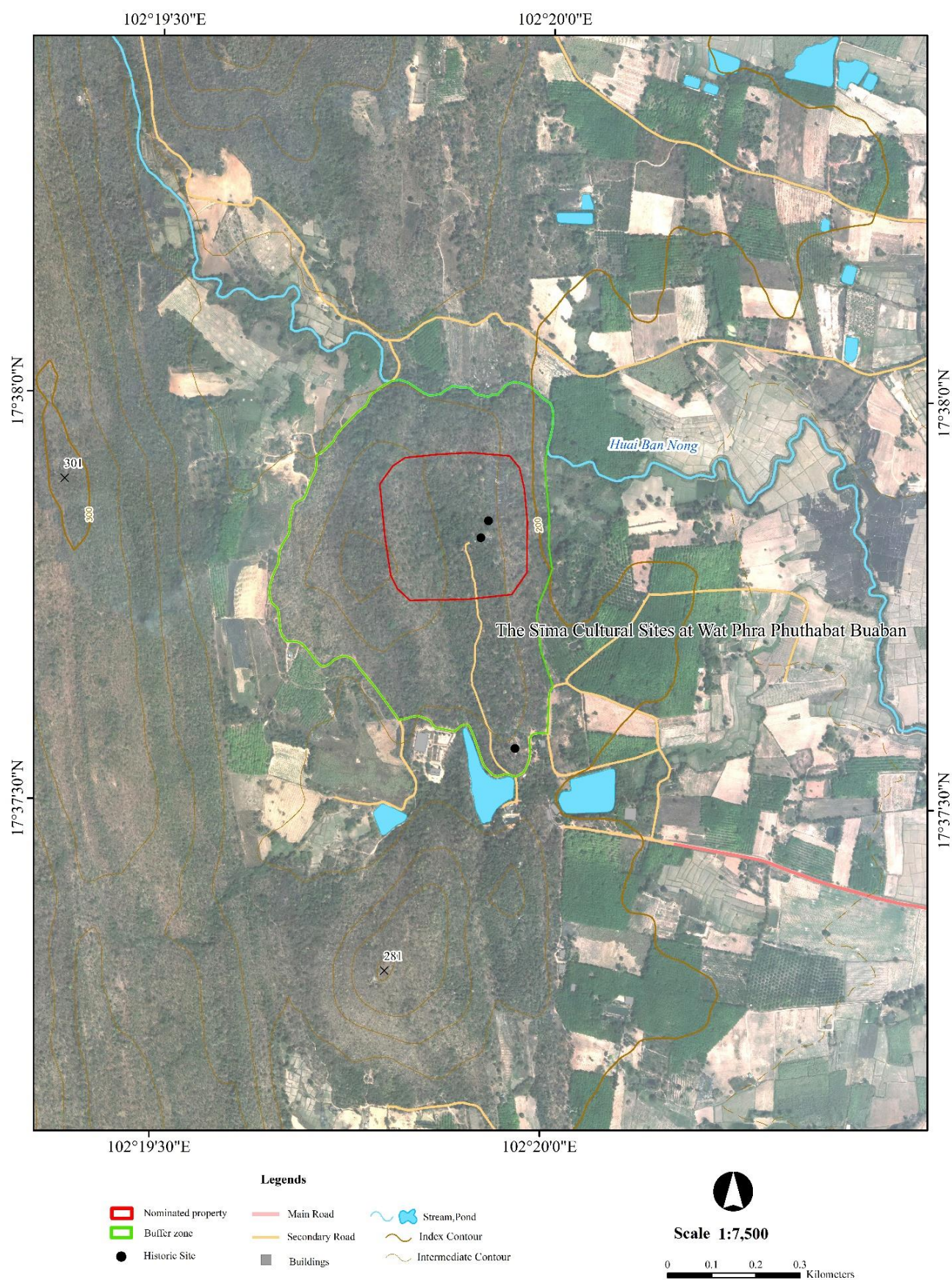
Map 1-3 Topographic map showing the nominated property of the Phu Phrabat Historical Park



Map 1-4 Orthophoto map showing the nominated property of the Phu Phrabat Historical Park



Map 1-5 Topographic map showing the nominated property of the Sīma Cultural Site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban



Map 1-6 Orthophoto map showing the nominated property of the Sīma Cultural Site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban

Criteria under which property is nominated (itemize criteria)

The Phu Phrabat Historical Park is nominated under Criteria (iii) and (v) for inscription into the World Heritage List:

- **Criteria (iii)** to bear a unique exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living, or which has disappeared;
- **Criteria (v)** to be an outstanding example of a traditional building and architecture or human settlement, which is regarded as a representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment, especially when it has become vulnerable under the impacts of irreversible change.

Cultural Landscape

The property is nominated as a cultural landscape: YES

Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

a) Brief synthesis

The Phu Phrabat Historical Park and the Sīma Cultural Site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban are interrelated and connected cultural heritage sites. They are situated in Upper Northeast Thailand, in the Pha Khuea Nam National Reserved Forest on the Phu Pan Mountain Range, 12 kilometres west of Ban Phue District, Udon Thani Province in Thailand.

This area has been inhabited since the prehistoric period, about 3,000 years ago. This is verified by archaeological evidence of rock paintings depicting human figures, hand palms, animals and geometric patterns found at more than 47 rock shelters scattered around the Phu Phrabat Historical Park.



Pre-historic stone tools (Left) and Agate Stones (Right) found at Ban Phue District Udon Thani Province

Around the 7th – 11th centuries, during the Dvaravati period Buddhism arrived in Thailand and later spread to other regions including Northeast Thailand. During this time, a new local art style, the “Isan Dvaravati art,” was created. The Isan Dvaravati art blended with the local beliefs in establishing the sacred “Sīma stone” markers to demarcate the sacred area. The culture of demarcating the sacred area with the Sīma stones widely spread across Northeast Thailand and nearby regions. It became a cultural identity of the region and is not found in other cultures. This cultural identity is known as the “Sīma culture.” Monuments in the Sīma culture from the 7th – 11th centuries have been found at over 100 sites across Northeast Thailand.



Rock painting at Tam Khon, the Phu Phrabat Historical Park



Rock painting at Tam Wau, the Phu Phrabat Historical Park



Rock painting at Tam Sung, the Phu Phrabat Historical Park

At the nominated property, the Sīma stones are found around the natural rock shelters and the stone courtyard. Also found at the natural rock shelters are traces of evidence that clearly demonstrate rock modification to create living spaces and venues used for performing Buddhist ceremonies. Modification and improvement of the natural rock shelters on a mountain to create venues suitable for performing rituals in Theravada Buddhism is unique to the nominated property. The nominated property is an outstanding cultural landscape that clearly illustrates the combination of works done by natural and human interactions. Its significant and distinguished features are still visible in the modified rock shelters and the Sīma stones. The functions of these features remain unchanged and they continue to be used for Buddhist ceremonies by local communities. There are no other similar cultural sites in Thailand and Asia that display such distinctive evidence exhibiting the Sīma culture like the nominated property.

The nominated property has been recognised as the sacred cultural landscape area. It has been in continued use during the following periods, beginning in the prehistoric period to the Sīma culture in the Dvaravati period (the 7th – 11th centuries), the Khmer culture (the 11th – 12th centuries), the Lan Chang (the 15th – 19th centuries) and the present Rattanakosin period. Continuity of the area use is associated with its sacredness derived from the Buddhist belief that the Buddha once visited this sacred cultural landscape area. This belief led to the notion to create several Buddha's footprints to symbolise the Buddha's visits to the sacred places at the nominated property.

The Sīma culture displaying at the nominated property has been an integral part of Buddhism in Thailand for centuries. Its attributes, including forms and functionality of the Sīma stones and beliefs in creating the Sīma stones and the Buddha's footprints, have been transmitted over time from the Sukhothai to Lanna and Ayutthaya periods and the present time. The Sīma culture has also spread into Thailand's neighbouring countries, including Laos PDR and Cambodia.



The Sīma culture, the Phu Phrabat Historical Park



The Sīma stones of Group Two with sculptures depicting the Vessantara Jataka, at The Sīma cultural Site at Wat PhraPhuthabat Bua Ban

b) Justification for Criteria

Criteria (iii): The Phu Phrabat Historical Park and the Sīma Cultural Site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban are an excellent representative of over 100 sacred sites exhibiting the Sīma culture in Northeast Thailand. The Sīma cultural sites at the nominated property are the only sites in Thailand and Asia that are situated on a mountain. They demonstrate the combination of Theravada Buddhism's beliefs in the sacred area and demarcation of the sacred area involving establishment of the Sīma stones around the rock shelters and the stone courtyard to determine boundaries of the sacred area used for performing Buddhist rituals.



Rock painting at Ku Nang U-Sa, the Phu Phrabat Historical Park



Rock painting at Ku Nang U-Sa, the Phu Phrabat Historical Park



Modified natural rock shelters and surrounded by eight Sīma stonest, at Ku Nang U-Sa, the Phu Phrabat Historical Park

Criteria (v) : The Phu Phrabat Historical Park and the Sīma Cultural Sites at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban have been the sacred cultural landscape places on the Phu Pan Mountain Range for more than 3,000 years. This is evidenced by the prehistoric rock paintings at the rock shelters and the Sīma stones that were established around the rock shelters to demarcate the sacred area in Theravada Buddhism, combining with local beliefs in the nature. These together have created an outstanding identity of the nominated property that is not found elsewhere in Thailand. People from this community accepted Buddhism around the 8th – 9th centuries. They adopted Buddhist beliefs with their primitive beliefs in the sacred cultural landscape area and natural rock shelters, and modified the rock shelters to use for different purposes. Modifying the natural rock shelters into various forms to be used as either the residential/living area or the Buddhist ceremonial venues occurred in conjunction with employing the Sīma cultural beliefs. This is attested by the 23 outstanding, modified rock shelters either with or without the surrounding Sīma stones located in the same area. For example, the Kok Ma Noi ancient monument that is surrounded by the Sīma stones and the Kok Ma Tao Baros ancient monument does not have any surrounding Sīma stones. These features demonstrate different purposes to modify the rock shelters. The rock shelters could be either the main ceremonial component or parts of the ceremonial component used for performing Theravada Buddhist rituals. Hence, the nominated property is the only cultural heritage sites in Thailand and Asia that strongly exhibit the beliefs in the sacred cultural landscape place and the Sīma culture that is reflected through the rock shelters on the mountain modified for the Buddhist purpose.



Modified natural rock shelters used for performing religious ceremonies, at Kok Ma Tao Baros, the Phu Phrabat Historical Park



Modified natural rock shelters used for performing religious ceremonies, at Chang Khao Nai Pran the Phu Phrabat Historical Park

c) Statement of Integrity (for all properties)

The Phu Phrabat Historical Park nominated property has all components that strongly demonstrate the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity. It is of an adequate size as to be suitable for World Heritage inscription. It excellently exhibits the features and attributes of the significant cultural heritage in a good condition. The two cultural heritage sites of the nominated property, the Phu Phrabat Historical Park and the Sīma Cultural Site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban, are related and connected. They are also recognised as the cultural landscape. Both cultural heritage sites strongly demonstrate the completed state and condition. As registered ancient monuments, their impact of deterioration processes is controlled under the Amended Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museum (No.2), B.E.2535 (1992). Their buffer zone is protected as the national reserved forest under the National Reserved Forest Act, B.E.2507 (1964).



The Sīma stones of Group Two, at The Sīma cultural Site at Wat PhraPhuthabat Bua Ban



Modified natural rock shelters used for performing religious ceremonies, at Heep Sop Nang U-Sa the Phu Phrabat Historical Park

d) Statement of authenticity for properties nominated under criteria (i) to (vi)

The Phu Phrabad Historical Park nominated property has maintained its authenticity at a very high level. Their positions, styles and materials used are original and intact. Over thousands of years, the nominated property has been slightly impacted by natural erosion and human activities in an attempt to add sculptural idols into the venues for ceremonial use. The load balancing rock pillars at two of the 23 Sīma cultural sites were chiselled off causing the uneven distribution of the top rock's weight. This led to a crack and collapse of the top rock. The remaining Sīma cultural sites at the nominated property are in their original condition and intact. As located on the mountain range and surrounded by mixed forest, the nominated property and its surrounding environment is well protected and conserved by the Royal Forest Department. The Fine Arts Department also announced the nominated property's area as the historical park. Hence, the following components of the 23 Sīma cultural sites have been well preserved.



Modified natural rock shelters used for performing religious ceremonies, at Wat Pho Ta the Phu Phrabad Historical Park



Modified natural rock shelters used for performing religious ceremonies, at Tam Phra the Phu Phrabat Historical Park

e) Requirements for protection and management

Both cultural heritage sites of the Phu Phrabat Historical Park nominated property have been protected by the Fine Arts Department, the Ministry of Culture, under the Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museum, B.E.2504 (1961) and its Amended Act (No.2), B.E.2535 (1964). As the nominated property and its buffer zone are located in the Pha Khuea Nam National Reserved Forest, they are also protected under the National Reserved Forest Act, B.E.2507 (1964) by the Royal Forest Department, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, to ensure its Outstanding Universal Value is retained at the highest level.

Additionally, the area outside the buffer zone has been announced as conservational, rural and agricultural land. This area is protected under the Ministerial Regulation regarding the Enforcement of Unitary Town Plan of Udon Thani Province, B.E.2560 (2017). This is also another mechanism to support protection of the nominated property.

The Phu Phrabat Historical Park Office manages both cultural heritage sites of the nominated property. It works closely with two local government agencies, responsible for the area where the nominated property is located. These two agencies are the Muang Pan Sub-District Administrative Organisation and Ban Klang Yai Sub-District Municipal Office. The Phu Phrabat Historical Park Office also provides advice and recommendations pertaining to basic conservation and potential impacts on the nominated property. In addition, it works in collaboration with the Royal Forest Department and local government administration offices in the forms of committees at the local, provincial and national government levels.



Tourist service centre the Phu Phrabat Historical Park



Public consultation and experts, the government agencies and the private sector in developing the collaborative implementation plan of the Phu Phrabat Historical Park and the The Sīma cultural Site at Wat PhraPhuthabat Bua Ban

Name and contact information of official local institution/agency/organization

Institution/Agency/Organization: The Fine Arts Department

Address: 81/1 Sri Ayuthaya Rd., Dusit, Bangkok 10300

Tel: +662-126-6252, +662-126-6271

Fax: +662-126-6271

E-mail: fad_whc@finearts.go.th, manager@finearts.go.th, fad@saraban.mail.go.th

Web address: <http://virtualhistoricalpark.finearts.go.th/phuphrabat/index.php/en/>

