

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/EG/1507/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 19 December 2023

Ms Supranee Khamyuang
Deputy Permanent Delegate, Chargé
d'Affaires a.i.
Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of
Thailand to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15

World Heritage List 2024

The Phu Phrabat Historical Park (Thailand) – Interim report and additional information request

Dear Madam,

As prescribed by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies are requested to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2024. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation procedure.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to the “Phu Phrabat Historical Park” was carried out by Mr. John Peterson (USA/Philippines) in August 2023. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organisation and implementation of the mission.

On 4 October 2023, an additional information letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, comparative analysis, protection and management of the nominated property, and maps. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 3 November 2023 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2023, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2024. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2024.

We thank you and your Delegation for your availability and your participation in the meeting held on 24 November 2023 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting.

While the ICOMOS Panel considered that the “Phu Phrabat Historical Park” might have the potential to meet the requirements for Outstanding Universal Value, this has not yet been demonstrated.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

The Sīma stone tradition of the Dvaravati period

ICOMOS discussed at length the issue regarding the specific characteristics that define the Sīma stone tradition of the Dvaravati period. It was also debated the extent of these specificities or facets expressed by the nominated property and whether the nominated property alone is the best representative of this tradition. To complement its understanding of the Sīma stone tradition in the Dvaravati period, ICOMOS would appreciate if the State Party could provide more information on what the main characteristics of the Sīma stone tradition of the Dvaravati period are, in general, as well as beyond the nominated property, and what specificities or facets of the nominated property best illustrate these characteristics. To better understand the panorama of the Sīma stone tradition in the Dvaravati period, in addition to the information already provided by the State Party in the nomination dossier and the additional information sent in November 2023, ICOMOS would be pleased to receive more detailed information on the Sīma stones at Muang Fa Daet, including the number, distribution, date, and authenticity in terms of locations, and a more detailed description of the Fa Daet Sung Yang School of Art as reflected by these stones.

Continuity of traditional practices in the nominated property

Local communities still use the nominated property for their religious practices. ICOMOS would appreciate to receive an account of specific religious practices that are carried out within the nominated property, with a description of the particular functions of the areas marked by the Sīma stones in these religious activities. The modification of the rock shelters, together with the erection of the Sīma stones surrounding some of them, suggests that forest monastic activities have occurred in the past. ICOMOS would like to know whether any documentary evidence or inscriptions still survive that would tie the past forest monastic tradition to the nominated property. ICOMOS would also like to know whether this tradition can still be seen in the component parts. Regarding the use of the nominated property for religious activities, could the State Party please specify what official approval must be obtained for the practice of such activities?

Carrying capacity

Considering the potential growth in visitor numbers, ICOMOS would be grateful if the State Party could clarify whether the carrying capacity of the nominated property has been established and used as a tool for visitor management. In addition, what measures will be undertaken to protect the sacredness of the nominated property, as well as the religious practice of the local communities, from disturbance by tourism?

Protection of the rock paintings

Based on photographs included in the nomination dossier and provided with the technical evaluation mission report, it seems that the rock paintings suffer from water running over their surface, washing away the pigments. ICOMOS would be grateful if the State Party could provide information on whether protection measures have been adopted for the rock paintings, and if so, which ones, as well as what monitoring measures are in place to assess their condition.

We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation procedure.

We would be grateful if you could provide **ICOMOS** and the **World Heritage Centre** with the above requested information by **28 February 2024 at the latest**, the deadline set out in paragraph 148 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* concerning additional information on nominations to be received. Please note that any information submitted after this statutory deadline will not be considered by ICOMOS in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee.

It should be noted, however, that while ICOMOS will carefully consider any additional information submitted within the statutory deadline, it will not be possible to properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or a large amount of new information submitted at the last minute. ICOMOS would therefore be grateful if the State Party could keep its response concise and respond only to the above requests.

We thank you for your support of the World Heritage Convention and the evaluation procedure.

Yours faithfully,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to The Fine Arts Department
 The Office of National Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning
 UNESCO World Heritage Centre