
Old Town of Ghadamès (Libya) No 362

1 Basic information

State Party

Libya

Name of property

Old Town of Ghadamès

Location

Tripolitania Region

Nalut District

Inscription

1986

Brief description

Located in the pre-Sahara between the Great Erg sand sea and the Al Hamada El-Hamra stone plateau, Ghadamès is constructed around the Ain al-Faras spring (locally called *ghusuf*), within an oasis. The old town's circular shape, the layout of its built fabric, and the design of its buildings have been influenced by climatic conditions and water management arrangements. The settlement is integral to the surrounding palm groves. Ghadamès' domestic architecture features a vertical division of functions, where the ground floor is used to store supplies, the first floor is for the family, and, at the top, open-air terraces are reserved for the women. The overhanging upper floors and terraces create a sort of underground network of passageways.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

9 March 2022

2 Issues raised

Background

No map of the property was provided when the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List but, in 2018, within the process of boundary clarification, the State Party provided a map for the property which was limited to the built-up area of Ghadamès (38.40 ha) and did not include the oasis. No buffer zone was established at the time of the property's inscription.

Modification

The proposed modification to the boundaries of the property is the outcome of a reflection process undertaken by the State Party in dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, the attributes conveying

it, and the conditions of integrity and authenticity. This process also led to the development of a retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value that recognises the Old Town of Ghadamès and its surrounding oasis as one integral entity, as the oasis has been crucial for the establishment and flourishing of the settlement. Hence, there is now the need to ensure that the boundaries of the property properly reflect the 2021 approved retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

The delineation of the newly proposed and enlarged boundaries of the property has been determined based on subsequent generations of urban studies and plans, which have consistently identified Ghadamès with its oasis as one single entity worth being preserved. The boundaries of the proposed enlarged property coincide with the ring road running around the oasis and, as such, cannot be changed or modified.

The delineation of the buffer zone has also considered previous plans and protection projects. In particular, the proposed delineation of the boundaries of the buffer zone is based on the proposal for protection zones that was prepared by the Engineering Consulting Office for Utilities (ECOU) and the French CRAterre Institute for Brick Buildings under a contract with the Ghadamès City Promotion and Development Authority (GCPDA) in 2009. The proposal identified four zones and seven subzones, each with regulations developed to protect the specificities of each zone.

The delineation of the proposed boundaries of the buffer zone takes into account the protection zones put forth in 2009 but relies on physical and/or real estate boundaries when the limits of the 2009 protection zones did not consider tangible or juridical boundaries.

The property is covered by the General People's Committee Decision n. 290/1985 concerning the approval of the Urban Master Plan 2000 and by the provisions of the Law regarding the protection of museums, antiquities, old cities, and historic buildings n. 3/1994 and its executive regulations adopted by the General People's Committee Decision n. 152/1995.

The State Party also indicates that there are plans to amend the Law n. 3/1994 and the Law on Urban Planning to establish special regulations and procedures concerning the property and its buffer zone for effective protection.

The owners of properties and land plots located within the boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone have all been informed about the status of the area and the provisions of law that apply to their assets.

The management is guaranteed by the management body – the GCPDA, which was established by the General People's Committee Decision n. (401) of 1375 P.B. (2007) – through the aforementioned Law and its executive regulations, the Regulation for the land use

within the boundaries of the Old Town of Ghadamès, "The Property and its buffer zone" attached to the Decree establishing the GCPDA, issued by the GCPDA Chairman Decree n. 62/2019.

clarity of mandates and tasks in implementing the management of the property;

Collaboration among all relevant public, state and local, as well as private actors is mentioned by the State Party as a factor for effective protection. A ten-year management plan guiding the activity of the GCPDA complements the management system and addresses key issues such as safeguarding traditional construction techniques, impacts of climate change, planned maintenance of the historic water management system and risks caused by natural and human-driven affecting factors.

ICOMOS notes that the Decree n. (62) adopted in 2019 refers to delimitations of the property and of the buffer zone which are outdated. Therefore, the decision should be modified to reflect the revised delineation of the boundaries as presented in the minor boundary modification request submitted in 2022.

ICOMOS further notes that the State Party has not clarified how the inter-institutional collaboration is guaranteed and regulated, and recommends that an agreement among all relevant actors be adopted to ensure their participation in key decisions concerning the safeguard and the future of the property.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription

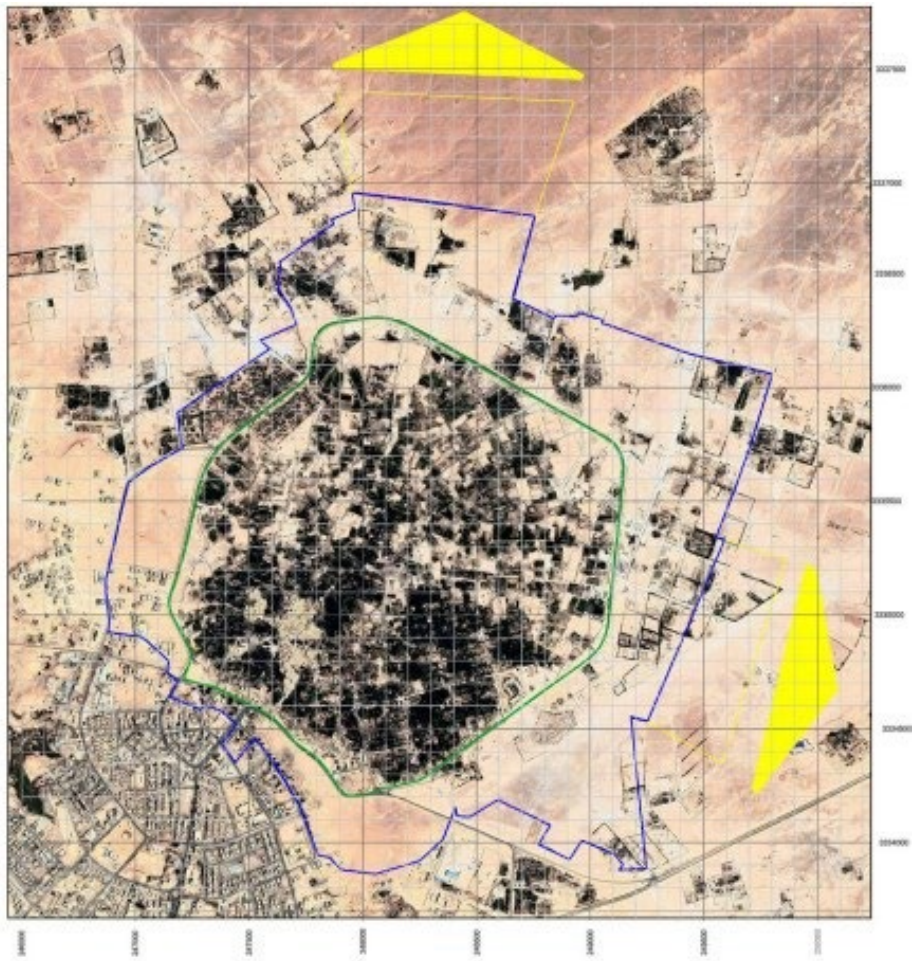
ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the Old Town of Ghadamès, Libya, be **approved**.

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Old Town of Ghadamès, Libya, be **approved**.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Amending the Regulation for the land use within the boundaries of the Old Town of Ghadamès, "The Property and its buffer zone" to integrate the modified boundaries of the property and its buffer zone,
- b) Developing the announced special regulations for the property and its buffer zone based on the Law n.3/1994 and the Law on Urban Planning as a matter of urgency,
- c) Developing and adopting an agreement among all relevant institutional actors involved at different levels in the protection and management of the property to guarantee their participation in decision-making and to ensure



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the proposed buffer zone (February 2022)