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Republic of Iraq
Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities
State Board of Antiquities & Heritage
World Heritage Department
State of Conservation Report
Babylon
In response to the extended 46th session of the World
Heritage Committee, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia 2023
Decision: 45 COM 7B.139

By
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Baghdad
September.2024



Babylon SOC

2024

Property name: Babylon

State party: Iraq

Governorate of Babil

(N32 32 31.09 E44 25 15)

Date of Inscription: 2019

Criteria: (iii) (vi)

Property: 1,054.3 ha

Buffer zone: 154.5 ha

ID Number: 278 rev

In Response to Babylon Decision (45 COM 7B.139)•

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision 44 COM 7B.14 adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Notes the progress made by the State Party in continuing conservation activities and in augmenting the management and presentation of the property;
4. Reiterates its requests to the State Party to:
 - a) Develop and finalize the comprehensive conservation plan for the property, and within this, address the various risk factors identified in the risk map previously provided. This should include proposals of concrete measures towards their effective reduction and mitigation as well as the establishment of a priority intervention scheme for the most urgent conservation measures needed,
 - b) Augment the Management Plan to include the comprehensive conservation plan so as to allow the management team to focus on priority, emergency interventions, and providing detailed implementation-oriented guidance as well as quality indicators for its successful implementation,
 - c) Research further the relationships between the Neo-Babylonian capital and its wider landscape, in particular towards the Euphrates River, and based on the outcomes of this research, consider further extending the buffer zone in order to address actual and potential future challenges which can be identified in the wider setting of the archaeological city,
 - d) Communicate to visitors the three-dimensional boundary concept and the explicit exclusion of 20th century additions from the property;
5. Reminds the States Party to inform the World Heritage Centre in due course about any major development project that may negatively impact

the Outstanding Universal Value of a property, before any irreversible decisions are made, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

6. Welcomes again the willingness of the State Party to host as soon as possible a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission to assist the State Party to develop a phased action plan for the conservation of the property;

7. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

Executive Summary

This report addresses all the actions that were implemented for the period from August 2023 to August 2024 at Babylon property, as well as responding to the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee in its 45th session held in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2023).

This report also includes the current maintenance work at the Ishtar Gate and the Temple of Ninmakh, which is being implemented by the World Monument Fund in cooperation with the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage and the Babylon Antiquities Inspectorate, which has made clear progress in these sites.

No maintenance work has been carried out on the identified archaeological buildings by the Iraqi government, although some studies and bills of quantity have been prepared and are awaiting ICOMOS experts to give advice before the implementation.

This report also includes future and planned work to develop the property and rehabilitate it as a tourist destination to receive visitors and provide them with the best services. These plans will be presented to the World Heritage Committee to make review and give comments.

With reference to point (4) of Decision that reads:

4. Reiterates its requests to the State Party to:

a) Develop and finalize the comprehensive conservation plan for the property, and within this, address the various risk factors identified in the risk map previously provided. This should include proposals of concrete measures towards their effective reduction and mitigation as well as the establishment of a priority intervention scheme for the most urgent conservation measures needed,

a- Archaeological maintenance and preservation work is still ongoing by the World Monument Fund (WMF) at the work sites that were identified by the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage and the World Monument Organization after conducting studies, surveys, comprehensive documentation, data collection, and preparing all requirements to start maintenance work, as follows:

- First, Ishtar Gate

- Completing the restoration work on the damaged original bricks and repairing cracks in the bricks and original animal carvings.
- Completing the work of stitching the building joints using mixtures of materials selected by international experts in maintenance and restoration field.
- Completing the work of changing the topography of the land around the gate to allow rainwater to flow away from the gate walls.
- Completing the work to flatten the gate walls from above to ensure that rainwater does not fall on the facade of the walls.
- Continuation of work to replace damaged bricks at the bottom of the walls as well as previous maintenance bricks with bricks of specifications identical to the original gate bricks in terms of shape, size, color and other specifications.

- Significant progress in the rehabilitation work of the northern entrance to the gate, as the completion rate has reached more than 95% according to the specifications and agreed upon in principle.



Cleaning and stitching the joints between bricks



Still damp from installation, a portion of the east flank masonry underpinning was completed before technicians undertake joint pointing. Once dry, the masonry becomes an improved complement to the dimensions, color, and texture of the historic masonry above. September 21, 2023.

Rebuilding damaged parts of walls



Changing the topography of the land around Ishtar Gate

Second: The Ninmakh Temple

The WMF organization is constantly working to document the Ninmakh Temple in the ancient city of Babylon in order to know the nature of the construction materials and their classification that were used in the maintenance of this temple during the nineties of the last century, in addition to knowing and distinguishing the original parts of the brick from the newly added bricks. The most prominent works carried out by the organization can be summarized as follows:

- Removing the mud mortar from the rooms and revealing the walls of the temple to know the original bricks from the bricks of previous maintenance as well as to reveal the rest of the modern building materials.
- Documenting the widespread damage in the servant rooms such as cracks, erosion and collapses.
- Treating some holes and damages in the surface of the temple so that they do not cause rainwater to enter the brick walls of the temple.
- Preparing mixtures according to the required proportions and measurements to produce bricks for the purpose of building walls and with specifications identical to the old ones in terms of size, shape and all specifications.
- Carrying out the mud mortar works for the interior and exterior walls of the temple.
- Manufacturing and preparing the wooden mold for the arches.

- Training a cadre of employees of the Babylon Antiquities Inspectorate to distinguish the layers of mortar with which the walls are coated and distinguishing the original bricks from the modern ones and training them the scientific methods followed in the maintenance of earthen buildings.



Removing mud paint and revealing the original parts of the walls



Manufacture the adobe according to the specifications of the original adobe used in the temple



Clay coating the walls of the temple



Building the falling walls



Making a wooden mold for building the arch

Third: The Lion of Babylon

The completion of restoration work on the Lion of Babylon base and the surrounding area.

Pilot project for upgrading of the tourist infrastructure - Lion of Babylon - Details of the process



Preparation of the concrete



Additive for concrete of the foundations



Preparation of the reinforcement of the foundations



Use of a vibrator for the foundations



Reinforcement for the new base design as a cage



Fourth: Cylindrical tower (circular cylinder)

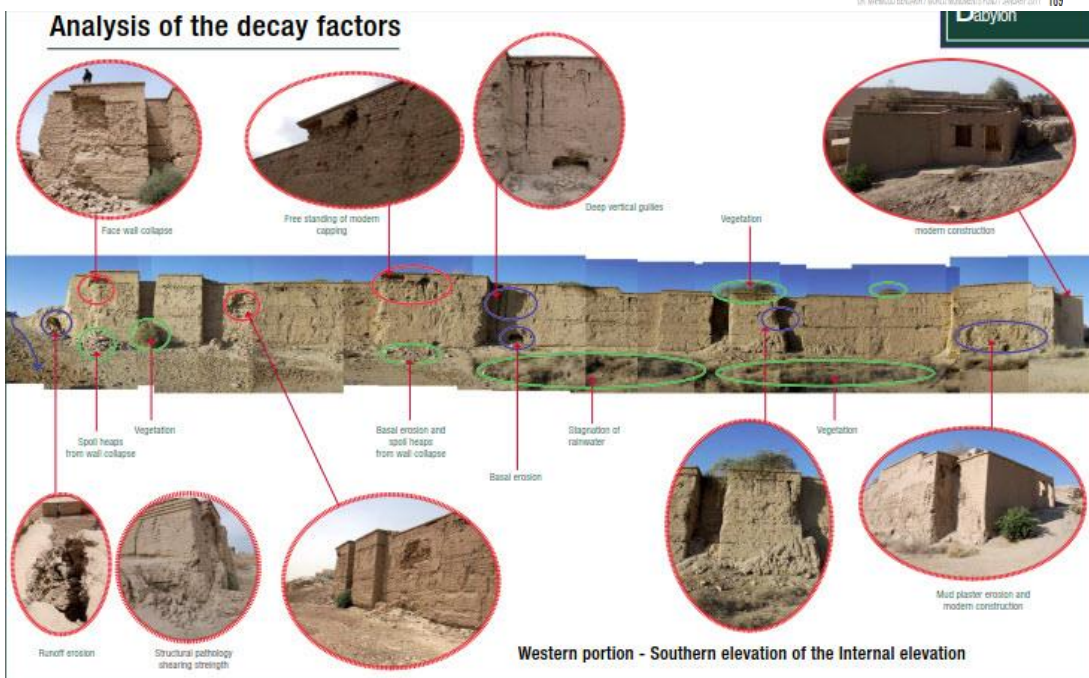
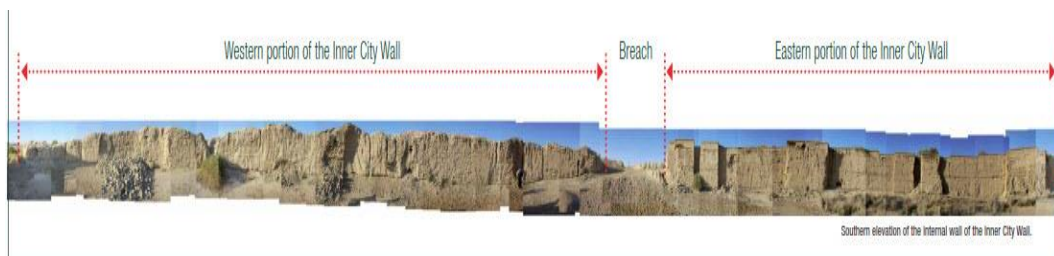
Completion of restoration work on the cylindrical tower north of Ishtar Gate
Gate



Completion of the pavement, cleaning and repointing of the cylinder, as well as treatment of the top of the cylinder to avoid rain water penetration
Cylinder of Al-Madura - Ishtar Gate

Fifth: The inner wall west of Ishtar Gate

- Completion of data collection about the wall and old maintenance work.
- Detailed technical documentation of the wall.
- Cleaning the bush near the fence.
- Carrying out floor adjustment around the wall to ensure the flow of rainwater away from it.
- Carrying out reinforcement work for parts that are about to fall.
- Carrying out roof maintenance to prevent rainwater from penetrating.
- **We welcome the arrival of specialized experts to develop an action plan for carrying out future maintenance work.**





Completion of the frames as a test and training by the BCAT



Installation on the site



Detail in the structure

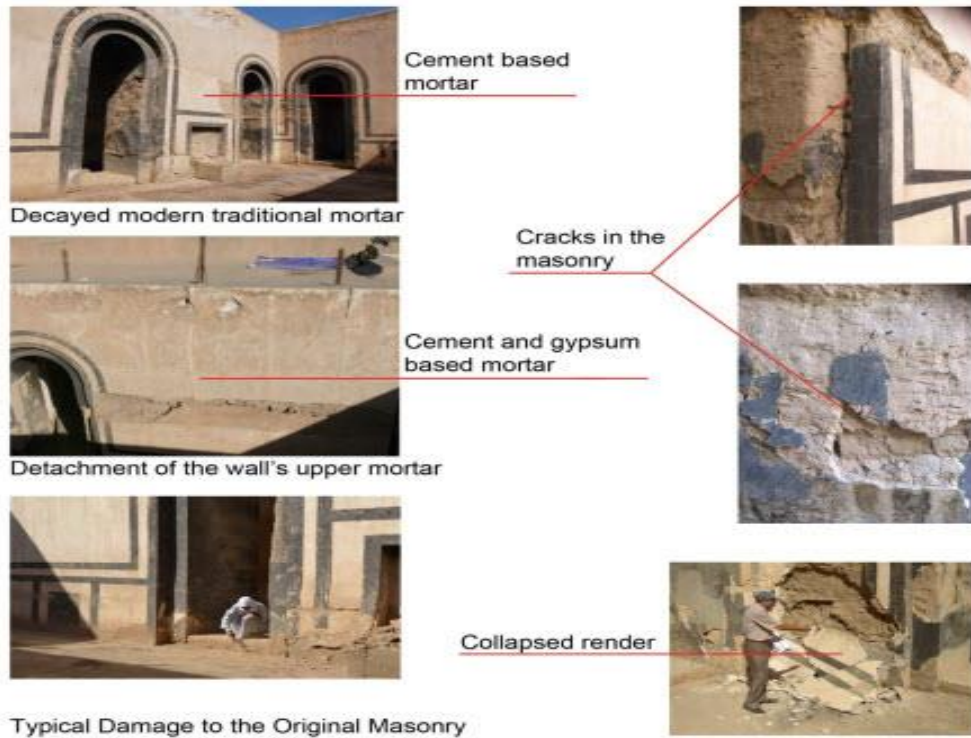


Fixing the base in the ground

Sixth: Nabu-sha-Khare Temple

- Completion of data collection about the temple and old maintenance works.
- Detailed technical documentation of the temple.
- Reinforcement works for parts that are about to collapse.
- Cleaning and removing bush from the inside and outside.
- Adjustment works for the floor around the wall to ensure the flow of rainwater away from it.
- **We welcome the arrival of specialized experts to develop an action plan for future maintenance works.**





Seventh: Ishtar Temple

- Completion of data collection about the temple and old maintenance works.
- Detailed technical documentation of the temple.
- Reinforcement works for parts that are about to collapse.
- Cleaning and removing bush from the inside and outside.
- Adjustment works for the floor around the wall to ensure the flow of rainwater away from it.
- **We welcome the arrival of specialized experts to develop an action plan for future maintenance works.**

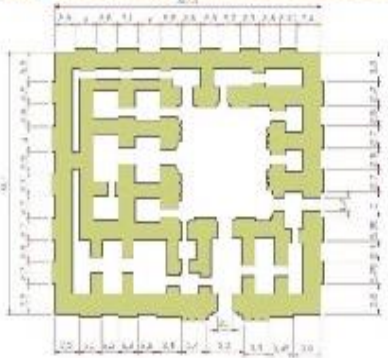
1. Poor site drainage



2. Decay of the wall base due to combined action of rising damp and salts (undercut)



3. Direct weathering on the surface and on the top of walls due to rain and wind



- All service buildings, the Babylonian Theater, streets, sidewalks, parking lots, visitors' path, signposts and all the work that was accomplished through "Babylon capital of Iraqi civilization" project, which was mentioned in our previous report, were rehabilitated as planned in the site management plan.

Factors affecting the structural condition of the archaeological buildings in general

- Poor drainage of rainwater from the site.
- Deterioration of the structural condition of the base of the walls due to the effect of moisture and salts.
- Salt efflorescence and crystallization.
- Erosion factors resulting from rainwater and wind.
- Deterioration and corrosion resulting from the incompatibility of materials used in restoration.
- Structural problems resulting from poor quality restoration work and materials used.

- Problems of draining rainwater from roofs and lack of regular maintenance.
- Lack and absence of periodic maintenance.
- Growth of weeds, grasses and trees in and around archaeological buildings.

b- Augment the Management Plan to include the comprehensive conservation plan so as to allow the management team to focus on priority, emergency interventions, and providing detailed implementation-oriented guidance as well as quality indicators for its successful implementation,

In order to improve the site management plan, the focus was on priorities and emergency interventions for the purpose of preserving the safety of the site and protecting it from risks, as follows:

- Placing signs on the main roads leading to the archaeological city to inform the neighboring residents and visitors that Babylon is a world heritage property.
- Allocating financial amounts by the Iraqi government, in cooperation with the Babylon Antiquities Inspectorate, to acquire privately owned lands within the site's boundaries.
- Continuous field visits to the residential areas adjacent to the site and preparing inventory lists of all nearby houses and identifying the trespassers among them, and inform the Mayors of the regions, the Antiquities Police and the local government of Babylon to reduce the encroachments.
- Encouraging residents to be partners in protecting the site and the surrounding environment and allowing them to benefit from the activities of visiting and tourism.
- Intensifying the efforts of the legal department by filing lawsuits, as this department played a prominent role in resolving the lawsuit against the trespassers.

- Rehabilitating the infrastructure within the site (water, electricity, rest areas for visitors, and all services) in order to provide the best services to visitors.
- Preparing members of the Antiquities Police in order to enhance their role in protecting and preserving the site, as well as their distinguished role in dealing well with visitors, guiding them and protecting them.
- Enhancing the skills of the archaeological guidance cadre in order to achieve the best services for visitors and providing a detailed explanation of each of the archaeological landmarks to achieve the best management of local and foreign tourist groups, school trips and families.
- Involving many archaeologists and employees of the Babylon Antiquities Inspectorate in excavation missions inside and outside Babylon Governorate, as well as with foreign excavation missions for the purpose of developing skills and increasing experience and preparing them to conduct future excavation work within the Babylon site.
- Activating the role of protecting the prominent archaeological buildings, where the guards were directed to be present near the buildings through fixed and mobile protection points, as well as monitoring the buildings through the work of a monitoring center and a modern camera system.
- Allocating financial amounts by the central government and the local Babylon government to rehabilitate Babylon as a tourist destination and provide services to tourists, especially during holidays and festivals.
- Holding many workshops to develop the capabilities of employees in all specialties through local and foreign experts by the World Monument Fund WMF.
- Intensifying the efforts of the Engineering Department with the help of archaeologists with expertise in preparing initial quantity bills for the maintenance of archaeological buildings for the purpose of presenting them to world heritage experts and recording their notes and ideas and amending the

lists before starting maintenance and restoration work, so we demand the acceleration of sending experts for this purpose.

- Intensifying meetings and visits between the Babylon administration and the Babylon Governorate and joint cooperation in order to reach the best results.

c- Research further the relationships between the Neo-Babylonian capital and its wider landscape, in particular towards the Euphrates River, and based on the outcomes of this research, consider further extending the buffer zone in order to address actual and potential future challenges which can be identified in the wider setting of the archaeological city,

Further research into the relationships between the new Babylonian capital and its wider capitals in the landscape

Although most of ancient Babylon lies underground, large areas of the city have been left exposed to atmospheric influences, most of which date back to the work of Goldfy and some to the work of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage. The details known about the city of Babylon are less than 10% of the area of the city due to the lack of systematic surveys and excavations of the area, especially in the areas spread north of the Processional Street (Almawkib Street) or those located on the banks of the river.

Regarding the survey of areas of Babylon city and the study of the urban and natural landscape of Babylon city, it is a matter of great importance because of its potential to expand the scope of research and to identify archaeological-historical facts by clarifying the cultural aspects mentioned in the cuneiform texts, such as the suburbs mentioned above, especially in areas that have not witnessed any previous excavation work.

There is a German group consisting of Dr. Helen Kress from the Pergamon Museum and Dr. Dirk from the University of Frankfurt, with the membership of the Swedish Dr. Olof Pedersen, who is currently working as a consultant for the WMF organization working on the maintenance of both the Ishtar Gate and the Ninmakh Temple in Babylon. In cooperation with the WMF organization, this group of international experts wants to conduct surveys in Babylon and the surrounding areas. This cooperation, if established, will lead to the formation of a much better knowledge of the inner city areas, especially the outer city surrounding the city walls. Everyone knows that no systematic archaeological surveys have been conducted yet in Babylon or the area linking Babylon to Kish and Borsippa.

There are many buildings and areas that need to be investigated and excavated, the most important of which are:

1- The Procession Street (Almawkib Street)

It is one of the main streets in the ancient city of Babylon that connects the city to the religious celebrations house (the Akitu House). Part of it is excavated north of the Ishtar Gate, reaching the lion statue, as well as the southern part of the gate and to the end of the southern palace.

As for the unexcavated part, it is located north of the lion statue and up to the Akitu House, which is located on the eastern hill, as well as the southern part of the street, which extends southward from the end of the southern palace, passing through the temple area and deviating westward to the bridge. Part of it is visible and extinct, and the other part is not excavated.



(Almawkib Street)

Green color (excavated), Yellow color (unexcavated)



North of Ishtar Gate (uncovered)

South of Ishtar Gate (uncovered)



The covered part of the Procession Street (Almawkib Street)

2- The Tower of Babylon and the surrounding walls

The Tower of Babylon (Ziggurat) is considered one of the important religious buildings. It is currently a hole in the ground as a result of the theft of the bricks with which it was built in previous years. As for the surrounding walls (the walls of the holy area), they need to be excavated and uncovered.



3- City walls

As for the inner and outer walls, they are not excavated. As for the gates located on the inner wall, which number nine gates, only two of them have been uncovered, namely the Gate of the god Mardukh and the Gate of Ishtar, and they are under maintenance by the World Monument Fund Organization. As for the entrances to the outer wall, they have not been uncovered and their locations have not been clearly identified, so they need to be excavated, uncovered and identified.



4-Temples

Only three temples (Nabu-sha-Khare, Nanmakh and Ishtar) have been investigated and excavated and they need a scientific maintenance plan. The rest of the temples need to be preserved and excavated, such as the Esagila Temple, the Ninurta Temple, the Ninub Temple and others. The Esagila Temple, which is the temple of the god Mardukh, the god of the city of Babylon, is considered one of the most important temples in the ancient city of Babylon. It was previously excavated, but currently the temple is extinct and is in dire need of complete excavation.



5- Tulul Imran

It is the area extending from the south of the Tower of Babel (the Ziggurat), which contains the Esagila in addition to the shrine of Imran bin Ali, reaching the inner walls to the south. This area is considered one of the largest areas in the city of Babylon and is in dire need of excavation.



•We welcome the arrival of specialized experts to develop an action plan for future maintenance work.

6- Residential area

This area is located south of the Ishtar Temple and was previously excavated, but is currently extinct and is in dire need for excavation.



7- Eastern Tell

This Tell is located on the eastern side of the Euphrates River and to the northeast of the procession street. A part of it was previously excavated and currently consists of sprawling mounds with large areas. It is in dire need of excavation and discovering its archaeological landmarks.



8- Juba Plateau

This plateau is located between the eastern Tell and the summer palace which has not been excavated previously.



9- Aljomjoma Tell

This Tell is located outside the walls on the southern side. This Tell was previously excavated and now needs excavation to reveal the archaeological landmarks.



10- The Palaces

The three palaces in Babylon city were excavated: the southern palace, whose full architectural features were revealed and preserved. The northern palace was previously excavated, but its full architectural features were not revealed. The summer palace, which is located north of Babylon city, was previously excavated, but is currently in dire need of excavation to reveal the rest of the features.



11- The Eastren Mitras

This area is located east of Al-Mawkab Street and north of the inner wall. This area is not excavated and needs to be excavated and exposed.



•We welcome the arrival of specialized experts to develop an action plan for future conservation, investigation and maintenance work.

d) Communicate to visitors the three-dimensional boundary concept and the explicit exclusion of 20th century additions from the property,

For the purpose of implementing this paragraph, the Visitors Center building (Information Center) has been rehabilitated to be the starting point for tourists and provide them with comprehensive information and a tourism and tour plan, as well as being an information center that provides all the paper and electronic data and maps that researchers and visitors need in order to form a clear idea about the site before touring it.

As for the additions of the twentieth century, we are waiting for a mission of World Heritage experts to help us deal with this issue.

As for Paragraph (5) that reads:

Reminds the States Party to inform the World Heritage Centre in due course about any major development project that may negatively impact the Outstanding Universal Value of a property, before any irreversible decisions are made, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

The Babylon site administration is still committed to implementing this paragraph by sending immediate reports, monthly reports and annual reports to the World Heritage Department at the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage in order to inform them of all the details about the site.

As for Paragraph (6) that reads:

Welcomes again the willingness of the State Party to host as soon as possible a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission to assist the State Party to develop a phased action plan for the conservation of the property;

We always welcome hosting an advisory mission from the Heritage Center/ICOMOS to visit the site and provide us with support and advice in order to protect and preserve the site.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party that may have an impact on the exceptional universal value of the property

Studies, collected Data, construction assessment, estimates, quantity bills and plans necessary to carry out reinforcement and maintenance works for many of the prominent archaeological buildings in the ancient city of Babylon have been prepared by the cadres of the Babylon Antiquities Inspectorate, and all of these projects will be presented to ICOMOS experts during their visit to the site in order to give their opinions and amend these projects according to their observations.

4. According to paragraph 172 of the guidelines,

The Babylon Antiquities Inspectorate and the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, with the assistance and funding of the Babylon Governorate and from the allocations of the Babylon Project, the Civilized Capital of Iraq, will do the following:

a- A project to prepare studies and designs for the purpose of converting the Presidential Palace (Saddam Palace) into a national museum, as stated in the paragraphs of the site management plan.

b- Rehabilitating the electrical network of the site, and the work includes equipping and installing lighting poles, putting electrical cables and installing new transformers instead of the old network implemented in the eighties of the last century.

c- Rehabilitating the tourist lake area, where the work includes covering the lake floor with a layer of materials that prevent water absorption to the ground and then lining with concrete as well as rehabilitation work on the shoulders of the lake by making walkways and installing lighting poles for the walkways.

These works are being implemented by the Ministry of Water Resources and as directed by the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Water Resources .



Ali Obaid Shalgham

State Board of Antiquities and Heritage/Head

25 /9/2024



Muthanna Abid Dawood

World Heritage Department /Director

24 /9/2024