

SRI LANKA

Ancient City of Polonnaruwa

II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1982

Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Archaeological Survey Department (ASD)
Sir Marcus Fernando Mawatha
Colombo, and
- Central Cultural Fund (CCF)
212/1 Baudhaloka Mawatha
Colombo
Sri Lanka

II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C i, iii, vi

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
“After the destruction of Anuradhapura in 993 by Rajaraja, Polonnaruwa, a temporary royal residence during the 8th century, became, a capital. The conquering Cholas constructed monuments to their religion- Brahmanism- and especially temples to Shiva where admirable bronze statues, today in the museum of Colombo, were found. [...] It became covered, after 1070, with Buddhist sanctuaries of which the Atadage (Temple of the Tooth Relic is the most renowned. The apogee of Polonnaruwa occurred in the 12th century A.D. Parakramabahu I (1153-1186) created within a triple walled enceinte, a fabulous garden-city, where palaces and sanctuaries prolonged the enchantment of the countryside.”

“Authenticity has been enhanced by the conservation work financed by tourism, but at the same time, authenticity is threatened by tourism, uncontrolled building activity and souvenir vendors.”

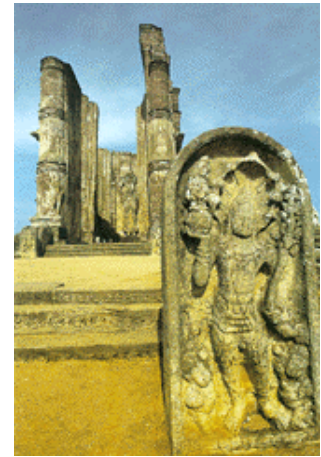
Status of Site Boundaries

- The borders and buffer zone of the property are not considered adequate. 3 areas are proposed as extensions to the property and one area as a buffer zone.
- Action is being taken to acquire the land of the proposed extension, to gazette the land under the Antiquities Ordinance, and to gazette the proposed buffer zone through the National Physical Planning Department.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity / Integrity

Status of Authenticity/ Integrity

- World Heritage values considered to have been maintained.
- Authenticity has been enhanced by the conservation work financed by tourism.
- Authenticity is threatened by tourism, uncontrolled building activity and souvenir vendors.



II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- The site is managed by CCF under the supervision of ASD. Traditional site activities are managed by the Buddhist institutions.
- A separate Heritage Foundation is proposed that would bring all the stakeholders into one management body.
- A Master Plan is to be prepared by ASD, CCF and the National Physical Planning Dept.
- “The Antiquities Ordinance (1956) needs to be updated to facilitate the management of WH Sites”.

Present State of Conservation

- “All interventions were carried-out according to the principles of the Venice Charter”.
- From 1981-97 the Cultural Triangle Project excavated, and conserved the principal monuments and complexes.
- CCF is continuing its programme of conservation.
- A visitor centre and museum has been established which also houses the Asian Institute of Museology.

Staffing and Training Needs

- ASD has a technical team on site.
- CCF has a Project Manager and technical team as well as artefact conservators, draughtsmen, photographers, security officers and gardeners.
- Staffing levels are considered inadequate.
- Professional training needs include: museology, GIS, IT and non-destructive investigation.

Financial Situation

- ASD receives funds directly from the Central Government. CCF is funded through admission charges. No figures supplied.
- Funding is considered adequate for routine management, but not for improvements such as site fencing and improving visitor facilities.
- The property has benefited from support of the UNESCO International Safeguarding Campaign, WFP and UNDP, and the Governments of the Netherlands, Japan, USSR, France and Norway.
- * International Assistance from WHF has been approved as follows: (i) 1989, US\$33,500 Training Assistance, Cultural Triangle; (ii) 1989, US\$25,500 Technical Assistance, Cultural Triangle.

Access to IT

- 3 PCs in use.
- There is Internet and e-mail access.

Visitor Management

- Foreign visitor statistics have been available since 1981 but were not provided. Before 1998, nationals were not charged admission to the museum, and since they do not systematically visit these premises, the number of tickets sold is not a reliable indicator of the number of visitors.
- Visitor facilities include: museum and information centre, bookstands, car parks, toilets, restaurants, pilgrims' accommodation, and floodlighting. Most of these facilities would benefit from upgrading.
- The visitor management plan needs to be revised to cover: visitor behaviour in places of worship, photography policy, visitor trails, and protection of the monuments.

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- Unplanned development pressures due to increasing encroachments for private housing.
- Pressures are seen to be decreasing inside the boundaries and increasing outside the boundaries.

Counteractive Plans

- Emergency planning focuses principally on the museum's security.
- Need to develop planning proposals to extend the boundaries and establish buffer zones.

II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- ASD and CCF officials make monthly site inspections to monitor progress.
- It is proposed to boost this process through independent annual technical audits and periodic peer-reviews.

Monitoring Indicators

- Current indicators are based on rates of new constructions, observed vandalism and unauthorised vendors.



Vendors encroaching on World Heritage property

- New indicators are proposed to include: (i) deforestation and land use changes in the buffer zones; (ii) construction of new roads (authorised and unauthorised); (iii) observed vandalism; (iv) increase of unauthorised vendors; (v) computer-aided monitoring of deterioration of the fabric of monuments.

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- "The major problem is the delay in extending the legal boundaries of the property to provide protection for newly found archaeological evidence."

- A key proposed action is the establishment of a Heritage Foundation to take over the site's management. This could be achieved within one year.
- Assistance from the WHF may be needed for equipment and training for GIS, improving the conservation and research laboratory, and professional training for field staff.

* State of Conservation Reports

1998 WHC-98/CONF.203/8 The Committee received the report of the December 1994 ICOMOS mission to Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya. It was recommended that the authorities submit a map of the property indicating the core and buffer zones, supplemented by information concerning levels of protection, and an inventory of monuments, buildings and landscape elements. Copies of legislation and management plans were also requested. A report by the Government on actions taken to address ICOMOS concerns and recommendations was requested for submission by September 1999.