

SRI LANKA

Ancient City of Sigiriya



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 ii, iii, iv

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
“One of Asia’s major archaeological sites, Sigiriya presents a unique concentration of 5th century urban planning, architecture, gardening, engineering, hydraulic technology, art and poetry. Centred on a massive, Pre-Cambrian inselberg rising 200m above the surrounding plain, Sigiriya’s setting is one of considerable natural beauty and a distinctive cultural landscape of great archaeological, historical and ethnographical value. Lying between the historic capitals of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruva, the Sigiriya plain still retains much of its forest cover and many of its present rural settlements and hydraulic systems date back to the first millennium BC. [...] The most significant remains today are from the construction of a new royal capital at Sigiriya by Kassapa I in the 5th century AC.”

Status of Site Boundaries

- Since inscription to the World Heritage List, the surrounding area has revealed a rich and complex archaeological and cultural landscape which is threatened by development pressures. The borders and buffer zone of the property are therefore not considered adequate.
- An extensive new buffer zone has officially been gazetted.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage values are considered to have been maintained, no changes are foreseen.

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- The site is managed by CCF under the mandate of ASD. CCF contracts academic and technical experts for consultancy services and government departments are engaged for project management and implementation. CCF manages its own funds and generates funding locally and internationally.
- A Board of Governors including ASD, CCF, local government officials and religious interests meets twice per month.
- The Sigiriya Heritage Foundation Act, 1998, should be established and implemented.
- A Master Plan is awaiting funding for implementation. The Plan focuses on development pressures in the surrounding area and seeks to “harness economic development to achieve the objective of conserving and protecting the heritage values of the site.”

Present State of Conservation

- All the monuments have been consolidated since inscription.
- Works have been carried out to reveal the historic spatial organisation and landscaping of the site.
- Water supply and visitor facilities have been improved.

Staffing and Training Needs

- CCF has a Project Manager and technical team on site, as well as artefact conservators, draughtsmen and photographers.
- Staffing levels are considered adequate. The need to train a new generation of researchers, conservators and heritage managers is recognised.

Financial Situation

- A small grant from the Government is augmented by income from visitor admission charges. However income is shared between the sites of the Cultural Triangle and fluctuates depending on national tourism.
- Funding is considered inadequate. No figures supplied.
- The property has benefited from the UNESCO International Safeguarding Campaign, WFP, and the governments of West Germany, Sweden and USA.
- * 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

- 1 PC in use.
- There is no Internet and e-mail access.

Visitor Management

- Approx 550,000 visitors in 2001 of whom approx 25,000 were foreign tourists.
- Basic visitor facilities are available on site, accommodation, domestic airport and railway station are within reach of the site.
- Priority is to provide a visitor information centre and museum.
- A Sustainable Tourism Master Plan is in preparation in conjunction with the Tourist Board.
- Inscription has had a positive impact on visitor numbers and generated funding for the site.

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- "Inscription helped to mobilise an international lobby to uphold conservation values. A recent example was the successful campaign to prevent the expansion of a major military airport in close proximity to the site."
- Urbanisation of the buffer zone,
- Uncontrolled activity of vendors and guides,
- Pressure to increase visitor carrying capacity,
- Rainfall and other environmental damage,
- Natural decay of rock surfaces,
- Ongoing maintenance needs of the historic water system,
- Inadequate refuse management,
- Graffiti,
- Inadequate site information for visitors.
- Unauthorised development in the buffer zone is increasing.



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Visitor pressure in Sigiriya

Counteractive Plans

- Risk preparedness plans focus on visitor safety and site security.
- There is a 3-phase plan for the re-location of unauthorised settlers by mutual consent.
- Establishment of the Heritage Foundation will enhance co-ordination between relevant agencies.

II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- ASD and CCF officials hold monthly site meetings with representatives of the Departments of Wildlife Conservation and Forestry, Urban Development Authority and Pradeshia Sabas to monitor progress.
- It is proposed to boost this process through independent annual technical audits and periodic peer-reviews.
- There is a need for equipment to monitor encroachments of the buffer zone, and for renewal of the site fencing.

Monitoring Indicators

- No indicators have been identified.
- Indicators are proposed based on the identified threats: (i) Numbers of visitors and vehicles on site; (ii) Environmental impact of solid waste disposal; (iii) Number of unauthorised encroachments; (iv) Amount of graffiti; (v) Visitor survey on educational quality of the visit.

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- Management should be strengthened by implementing the Sigiriya Heritage Foundation Act. This is foreseen to be achieved by 2005.
- Assistance from the WHF may be needed for establishing the visitor centre and museum, digital archives and for funding community development, poverty alleviation and the relocation of residents.

* 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.

2001 WHC-2001/CONF.205/5 The Bureau received the report of a reactive monitoring mission to examine the impact of a proposed extension to the military airport within 2km of the site. The proposal was found to undermine the character of the site posing a security risk and causing damaging noise and aerial pollution. The Bureau requested that the proposal be re-considered and that a report be submitted to the next Committee session.

2001 WHC-2001/CONF.208/10 The Committee heard that the Govt's report and decision on the proposed military airport had been delayed due to recent security incidents.