

BANGLADESH

Ruins of the Buddhist Vihara at Paharpur



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II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1985

Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Department of Archaeology (DoA)
Ministry of Cultural Affairs
22/19 Khiljee Road, Mohammadpur
Dhaka 1207
Bangladesh

II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C i, ii, vi

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
"Situated on the heartland of Varendra, originally known as Sompur Vihara, Paharpur is undoubtedly the most spectacular pre-Islamic monumental complex in the south of the Himalayan region. It is conspicuous for its complicated sculptural decoration on basement walls with curved brick cornices, friezes of numerous terracotta plaques and stones representing the aesthetic glorious tradition of the illustrious Pala Art. It is the biggest single unit ancient Vihara so far discovered in the World."

Status of Site Boundaries

- Borders and buffer zone of the property are considered adequate.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

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

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- The property is managed under the powers of the Antiquities Act, 1976.

- In addition the DoA operates under the Antiquities Export Control Act, 1947, the Immovable Antiquities Preservation Rules, 1976, the Conservation Manual, 1923 and the Archaeological Works Code, 1938.
- There is no management plan but a new action plan is in preparation.
- A Master Plan for Bagerhat and Paharpur was developed jointly by UNESCO and UNDP in 1983.

"30 acres of the 67.5-acre site have been acquired by DoA. The old museum has been converted to a rest house and a new museum constructed."

Present State of Conservation

- "Replacement of damaged walls, reinstatement of terracotta plaques, removal of minor antiquities to the museum, excavation of the courtyard to reveal buried structures and remedy water storage, environmental development and improvements to security, visitor facilities, communication and documentation".
- 30 acres of the 67.5-acre site have been acquired by DOA. The old museum has been converted to a rest house and a new museum constructed. New boundary walls and roads constructed. Planting to control wind-blown dust. Improved surface drains and pumps to mitigate water logging problem.

Staffing and Training Needs

- 36 staff are employed on the site from Archaeological Engineer to cleaners.
- Staffing level is considered inadequate. There is a plan to recruit more guides and armed security guards.
- Training needs are identified in conservation, planning, administration and management.

Financial Situation

- The Government is the main source of funding. No figures supplied.
- Funding is considered inadequate.
- Support from the Government of Japan is acknowledged.
- * International Assistance from WHF has been approved as follows: 1986 US\$20,000 Technical Assistance, Drainage at Paharpur

Access to IT

- 1 PC on the site. No email or Internet access.

Visitor Management

- No visitor statistics supplied.
- There is a site museum, rest house, gardens and paths.
- There is an identified need for visitor facilities such as toilets and drinking water, restaurants, car parks and shops, guidebooks and improved visitor information.
- No visitor management plan, but the need to develop one is acknowledged.

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- Waterlogging,
- Salinity,
- Uncontrolled vegetation,
- Vandalism,
- Climatic conditions,
- Public trespassing and encroachment.

Counteractive Plans

- No emergency plan has been developed.
- Improvements have been made to the drainage system and a water storage tank will be moved from the courtyard of the monastery.
- The UNESCO International Campaign to Safeguard the Monuments of Paharpur and Bagerhat was launched in 1986 and held its fourth meeting in 1999.

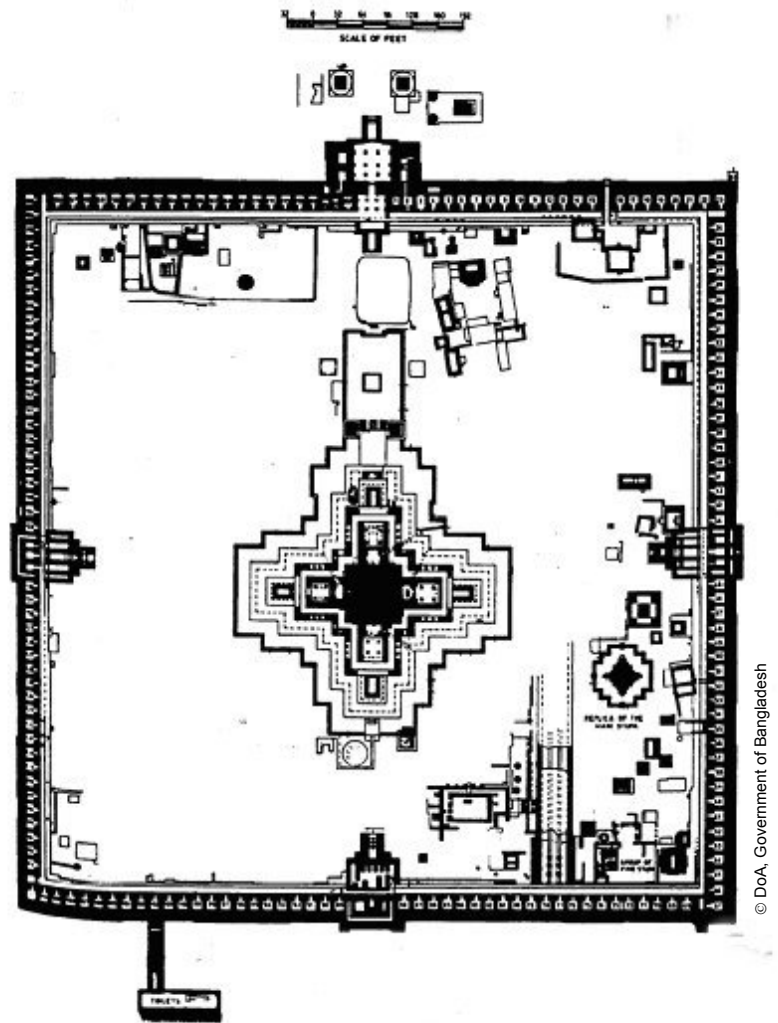
II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- A monitoring system exists which is implemented by the Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the Ministry of Planning, the Planning Cell of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and the Working Group of the International Safeguarding Campaign.
- Its key responsibility is to evaluate conservation and restoration works.

Monitoring Indicators

- Indicators identified for monitoring conservation and restoration works consist of fieldwork and report analysis.



Plan of Paharpur Monastery

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- The 17 recommendations of the joint UNESCO/ICOMOS 2002 mission are to be implemented (these relate principally to the management of historic terracotta plaques).
- The recommendations of the UNESCO expert mission in 2002 are acknowledged and adopted (these relate to the management of the terracotta plaques, site drainage problems, expert supervision of future interventions and improvement of the visitor environment and information).
- A Proposed Action Plan for the period 2002-07 is presented, at an estimated cost of US\$2.8 million to include: (i) training in conservation, restoration & planning; (ii) land development; (iii) construction of children's park, roads, boundary walls, rest house, living quarters, helipad, lighting, picnic area, shopping area, toilets & water supply system; (iv) repair, restoration & conservation of the monastery

and terracotta plaques; (v) employment of laboratory & support staff (vi) other expenses such as the purchase of communication equipment, a vehicle, publishing & gardening.

- Support of WHF may be required for implementation of the Proposed Action Plan.

* State of Conservation Reports

2002 WHC-2002/CONF.202/17 The Committee received the report of a reactive monitoring mission in April 2002. Most of the 1,000 original brick plaques, which adorned the vihara had been removed. The removed plaques were stored, but the mission was unable to examine them. New plaques including imaginary decorations have been placed on the vihara and the entire lower section of the wall has been replaced. According to the authorities, the removal and replacement of plaques was an accepted practice in the 1983 Master Plan.

The mission was informed that UNESCO's Division of Cultural Heritage approved all actions taken until recently. World Heritage Centre was seeking further information from the Division of Cultural Heritage and the authorities.