

THAILAND

Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns



II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1991

Organisation Responsible for the Report

- 6th Regional Office of Fine Arts, Sukhothai Province, Bureau of Archaeology, Fine Arts Department
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- Si Satchanalai Historical Park
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II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C i, iii

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
The historic town of Sukhothai and associated historic towns are comprised of three archaeological sites of great value for national and regional history: the Sukhothai Historical Park, Si Satchanalai Historical Park, and the Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park.
As examples of ancient city planning, both Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai represent seats of political power and religious dominance. Kamphaeng Phet, being a garrison town to the south, would provide lessons for military and strategic studies.
The architectural style of Sukhothai religious structures reflects Khmer and Sinhalese influences as well as its own unique contribution. The Sukhothai style of the Buddha's statues and images is often referred to as "the finest of Thai Buddhist art".

"A legal problem arises in the case of the Sukhothai Historical Park from the desire of people living within the borders of the park to own their land. However, this does not affect the property, which has been previously registered as World Heritage."

Status of Site Boundaries

- Borders and buffer zone of the property are considered adequate.
- However, the Sukhothai Historical Park faces a legal problem arising from the desire of people living within its borders to own their land. This does not, however, affect the property, which has previously been registered as WH.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage value is considered to have been maintained. No changes are foreseen.
- In the case of the Sukhothai Historical Park, the Fine Arts Dept. has set up a committee called 'The Committee for the Consideration of the Permit for Housing Construction within the Sukhothai Historical Park'. The Committee's duty is to consider the style, height, and suitability of buildings which the locals and the private sector propose to build in the area and which may affect the WH property.

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- Management of the property is governed within the framework of two national laws: (i) 'Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and Nations Museums' B.E. 2504 (1961), amended in B.E. 2535 (1992); (ii) 'Regulations of the Fine Arts Department Concerning the Conservation of Monuments' B.E. 2528

Present State of Conservation

- "After receiving the World Heritage status in 1991, more excavations and restoration of monuments have been conducted in the area as more than a hundred archaeological sites outside the city wall of Si Satchanalai had not been properly studied. In 1992-2002, excavations and restorations had been practiced in more than 25 sites. The demarcation of the historical park area covering the area of 45 sq. km. was also conducted. The problem Si Satchanalai is facing concerns the communities around the historical park. The original community

which does not negatively affect the World Heritage area will be maintained and developed. There will be a construction control in the near future. The community negatively affecting the World Heritage area will be relocated to a more suitable location.”

- “Some of the plans are being implemented, for instance, the excavation to study the characteristics of building remains, which is controlled, documented, and reported by archaeologists. The experts on architecture, archaeology, conservation, and scientists from the Fine Arts Department and other sectors will conduct the analysis and design restoration plans.”
- At Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park, “there is a plan to relocate the local communities to the area which will not affect the landscape.”

Staffing and Training Needs

- The Sukhothai Historical Park employs 140 people, 123 of which are temporary employees. The Si Satchanalai Historical Park employs 71 people. The Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park employs 92 people.
- In 2003, studies will be conducted to devise and improve implementation plans concerning mainly: (i) excavation, archaeological research and restoration of ancient monuments; (ii) development, conservation of landscapes and control of land use; (iii) development of information and education services; (iv) promotion of tourism and local communities
- The Park still needs architects and/or landscape architects to manage the site considering the recent expansion and the increase in the number of tourists over the last few years.
- The Park also lacks exhibition and retail buildings, guides and electronic devices for exhibition and marketing purposes.

Financial Situation

- “The limited budget allocated by the Government is insufficient to protect, conserve, and revive the site and is being used mainly for tourism management. Even though the site also receives some funding from local private agencies, the funding is still low and could not be used to obtain successful results.”
- The Sukhothai Historical Park has received financial assistance from American Express Co Ltd. for the cleaning of Phra Ajana Buddha Image.
- No figures supplied.
- * International Assistance from WHF: none.

Access to IT

- Neither the Sukhothai Historical Park nor the Si Satchanalai Historical Park provide IT facilities, whether for staff members or visitors.
- The Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park has opened a website and allows visitors to access computers and accessories in their Tourist Information Centre (3

PCs, a laser printer, an ink-jet printer, a modem, a UPS, and a touch-screen computer)

- None of the historical parks uses GIS.

Visitor Management

- There has been an increase in tourist numbers in the three sites over the last few years, causing an expansion of commodities in the vicinities.
- Tourist facilities within the three sites include: tourist information centres, site museums, restrooms, parking lots, restaurants, souvenir shops, leaflets, maps, guidebooks.
- A ‘Plan on the Conservation and Development of World Heritage Sites’ has been implemented to respond to an increasing tourism. The old Master Plan will be improved and a new Master Plan devised through brainstorming sessions between various agencies.

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- Construction of tourism-related buildings and infrastructures in the areas close to the three sites
- Deterioration of monuments due to natural factors such as tropical climate, underground water level, and earthquake.

Counteractive Plans

- For plans concerned with tourism management, see II.4 – Visitor Management
- In order to prevent natural disasters and to deal with them adequately, an emergency plan has been set up, as well as preparation to act against possible damages.

II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- The Fine Arts Dept. has set up monitoring measures as follows: (i) a security system to prevent looting, illegal land use, and any other actions which would violate the site regulations; (ii) “threat-based inspections” by archaeologists & technicians; and (iii) conservators to monitor the situation once or twice every year.

Monitoring Indicators

- “The Fine Arts Dept. is in the process of improving the standards of the actual monitoring system in the historical parks.”

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- As the historic town of Sukhothai and associated historic towns are the finest example of early Thai art and architecture as well as a testimony of the nation building process of the Thai Kingdom, Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai, and Kamphaeng Phet's conservation and promotion are of utmost importance to the Thai Government and people.
- "The upcoming project is to develop historical parks in the area outside the city walls. The timeframe for the management of the Sukhothai and Kamphaeng Phet Historical Parks is ten years whereas the management plan of the Si Satchanalai Historical Park is being adapted."

*** *No State of Conservation Reports***