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Vat Phou Champasak  
World Heritage Office

# Champasak Cultural Landscape Master Plan

*Approved on February 18th, 2016  
by the Champasak Provincial Government decision n°188,  
concerning the urban planning review of the Champasak World Heritage Site*





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Fig 1: Cover illustration. The sacred mountain. © M. Santoni.

# Content

<i>Preface</i>	<i>p. 5</i>
<i>Presentation</i>	<i>p. 7</i>
<b>1. Identification and characteristics of the Champasak Cultural Landscape and its surroundings</b>	<b>p. 11</b>
<i>Introduction: The Champasak Cultural Landscape</i>	<i>p. 11</i>
<b>1.1. Creation of the Champasak landscape</b>	<b>p. 11</b>
1.1.1. <i>The first settlements up until the great Angkorian period</i>	<i>p. 12</i>
1.1.2. <i>The Laotian settlements and the landscape discovered by 19th century explorers</i>	<i>p. 16</i>
1.1.3. <i>Recent changes in the landscape</i>	<i>p. 21</i>
<b>1.2. UNESCO listed heritage site</b>	<b>p. 27</b>
1.2.1. <i>Goal and demarcation of the classified area</i>	<i>p. 27</i>
1.2.2. <i>The cultural landscape as a classification category</i>	<i>p. 30</i>
1.2.3. <i>The integrity of the classified property</i>	<i>p. 35</i>
<b>2. Issues and scope of the Master Plan</b>	<b>p. 39</b>
<i>Introduction: A broader interpretation in line with current issues</i>	
<b>2.1. The heritage included in the Master Plan</b>	<b>p. 40</b>
2.1.1. <i>Consideration of the historical and landscape criteria</i>	<i>p. 40</i>
2.1.2. <i>Integration of contemporary heritage</i>	<i>p. 45</i>
2.1.3. <i>The cultural landscape as a palimpsest</i>	<i>p. 50</i>
<b>2.2. Consideration of development issues</b>	<b>p. 52</b>
2.2.1. <i>Development dynamics and challenges</i>	<i>p. 52</i>
2.2.2. <i>Management issues and levels</i>	<i>p. 57</i>
2.2.3. <i>Outline of the core area related to the buffer zone</i>	<i>p. 59</i>
<b>3. Measures relating to the protection and enhancement of the cultural landscape</b>	<b>p. 63</b>
<i>Introduction: A planning system adapted to issues related to the site</i>	
<b>3.1. Measures for guiding the urban development of Champasak</b>	<b>p. 64</b>
3.1.1. <i>Road traffic supervision</i>	<i>p. 64</i>
3.1.2. <i>Organisation of urban development</i>	<i>p. 66</i>
3.1.3. <i>Enhancement policy of the classified site for sustainable tourism</i>	<i>p. 72</i>
<b>3.2. Management and implementation of the Master Plan</b>	<b>p. 74</b>
3.2.1. <i>Legal framework</i>	<i>p. 74</i>
3.2.2. <i>Translation of the Master Plan into the Land Use Plan</i>	<i>p. 75</i>
3.2.3. <i>Management and participation</i>	<i>p. 83</i>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>p. 85</b>
1. <i>Calendar of the revision procedure of the urban planning documents</i>	<i>p. 85</i>
2. <i>Provincial Government approval of the revision</i>	<i>p. 87</i>
3. <i>Regulation of the Land Use Plan for the classified area</i>	<i>p. 89</i>
4. <i>Order of the Provincial Government on the monitoring of works</i>	<i>p. 95</i>
<b>Table of illustrations</b>	<b>p. 99</b>
<b>Realisation and credits</b>	<b>p. 102</b>



## Preface

*The historic site of Champasak is an important cultural center in Laos, known for its heritage and traditions. Its importance for the ancient Khmers has led to its recognition as UNESCO World Heritage in 2001. Being the second most important religious site in the country, the annual festival of Vat Phou receives over 100,000 pilgrims. This historical and religious monumental complex is set in a unique landscape and environmental framework that attracts visitors all year round.*

*These properties provide an opportunity for guiding the development of the area in a sustainable way, while promoting tourism and in doing so creating jobs and income for the local people. At the same time, however, increased construction and the heavier traffic need to be organised to avoid damage to the site's integrity.*

*It is with this intent that the Master Plan was developed, in order to best combine the need to protect the heritage of the classified area and enhance the site while promoting the development of touristic activities with respect for the environment. The culmination of this document is the result of five years of work, of coordination between the ministries, and consultation with involved districts and villages, under the supervision of the Provincial Heritage Committee.*

*The authorities wanted its focus to be pragmatic, with issues discussed promptly, and treated appropriately at every level, from province to the villages. They made sure that the principles are described using specific solutions, leading to concrete action plans and set out in an easy-to-use and adaptable document for the inhabitants.*

*The completion of this Master Plan marks the outcome of the review of the planning of the Champasak site since the early 2000s. Now, the authorities dispose of the right tools to implement the validated guidelines and to effectively enforce them.*

*The Provincial Government would like to thank the many experts who have given their advice, and more generally all those who participated in the creation of this revision. That their work may now serve as a reference guide for the sustainable preservation and the development of the Champasak World Heritage Site!*



**Boualinh VONGPHACHANH**  
Vice-Governor of Champasak Province  
President of the Provincial Heritage Committee



## Presentation

### 1. Goal of the Master Plan

*The Champasak Cultural Landscape Master Plan is a policy document aimed at articulating both cultural and urban development policy, in order to promote the coordination of the various relevant ministries and local authorities.*

Its objective is the protection and enhancement of the heritage landscape, including both built and natural physical heritage (architecture, archaeological sites, natural and agricultural areas).

The measures in this document do not address other aspects of cultural heritage, such as movable and intangible heritage<sup>1</sup> (traditions, music, tales, legends, religious celebrations...).

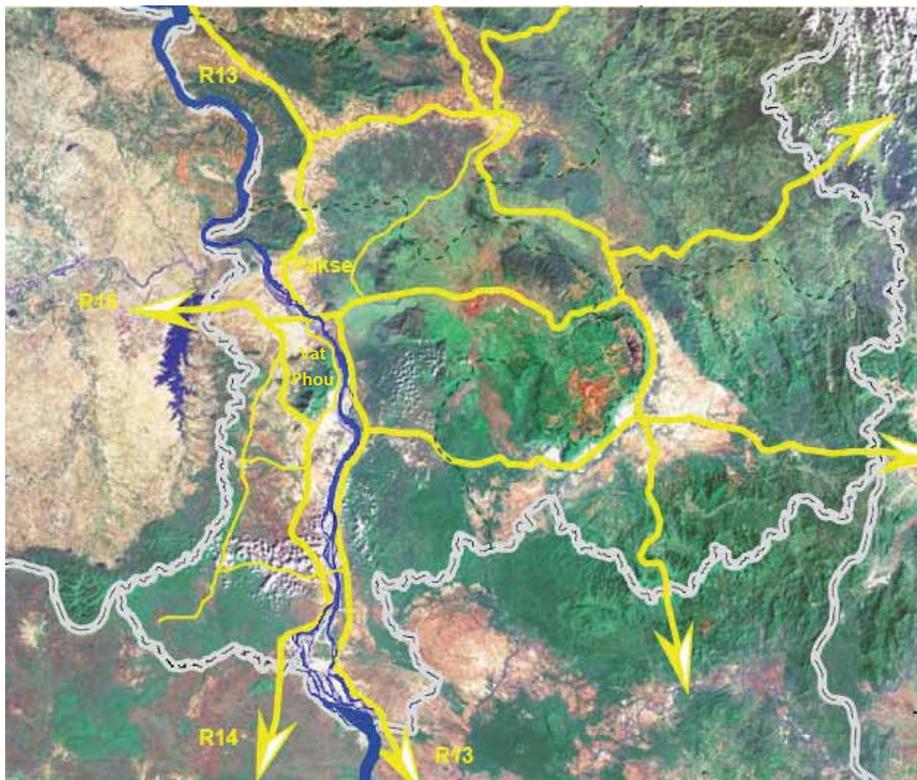


Fig.2: Map of the physical geography of southern Laos<sup>2</sup>, on which the road scheme is highlighted in yellow.

1. The valorisation of traditional tales and legends falls under a special programme supported by the Unesco.
2. Source of the map: Bounathavy Sisouphanthong & Christian Taillard, *Atlas of Laos*, 2001.

## 2. Geographical scope

The Master Plan covers an area of 1,200km<sup>2</sup>, ranging from Pakse to Ban That. Located in the center of it is the World Heritage Site, classified in 2001, covering 390 km<sup>2</sup> (the area within the thick red line on the picture below).



Fig.3: Aerial view of the scope of the Master Plan depicting main zoning and roads.  
Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

## 3. Legal effects

This revised version of the Master Plan was approved by decision Nr. 188 of the government of Champasak province, dated February 18th, 2016 (see appendix 2). The guidelines set out in this Master Plan ask for Land Use Plan and detailed plans to be made at a finer scale.





## Identification and characteristics of the Champasak Cultural Landscape and its surroundings

### Introduction: The Champasak Cultural Landscape

The temple of Vat Phou and its surroundings represent an important cultural heritage of southern Laos. The heritage has various facets. Functioning as a religious centre for the Buddhist population, the remains also have a historic importance. They show one of the first major urbanised areas in Southeast Asia. The more recent temples and buildings of the former capital of the Kingdom of Champasak also have their place in Lao heritage. The site also houses a relatively well protected local life, on the rhythm of traditional festivals and enjoying a natural and scenic environment, making it an appreciated place for living and tourism.

These characteristics refer mainly to the cultural and landscape dimensions of the site. They can both be summarised in the notion of cultural landscape. In the case of Champasak, this concept brings together various components (natural, agricultural, urban and religious). Heritage is also found at different scales, from the general geography of the site, to even the smallest traces of remains. It is the result of different historical layers, so that one could speak of the superposition of several cultural landscapes.

Some elements of this heritage enabled the site to be listed as World Heritage Site in 2001. Other aspects have a specific local value. This chapter aims to describe the components of this heritage, and to identify the areas that need to be protected.



Fig.5: The arrival in Champasak by boat from the left bank (RN 16). Crossing the river at Phaphin village was the traditional way of access before the new road 14A was installed.  
© L. Delfour.

## 1.1. Creation of the Champasak landscape

### 1.1.1. The first settlements up until the great Angkorian period.

Other than the Vat Phou monument, very few vestiges are still standing. For these, the UNESCO site classification file relies mostly on traces which are still visible on the ground. The landscape which was created by ancient human settlements in Champasak is still mostly unknown. Excavations have only been able to explore a tiny part of this heritage.

We are certain that pre-Angkorian settlements were concentrated along the river. The Ancient City went into decline as of the 9th century when new developments took place near Vat Phou, at the foot of the mountain. We also know that following the decline of the Khmer Empire, from the 14th century, the population once again migrated back to the river. It is, however, difficult to reconstitute this evolution more precisely for the moment.

The historic landscape of Champasak is the result of more than one thousand years of intense sedentary human occupation. This occupation was subject to population movements and changes which historical research has only begun to study.

Fig.6: Pre-Angkorian temple lintel, photographed at its place of discovery, in a rice field in Ban Vat Louang Kao, in the Ancient City. © M. Santoni.



It is far easier to understand the organisation of the main monuments and their relationship with mythology. The west-east axial composition, running from the mountain to the baray and the symbolic role of the river on the horizon, place the Vat Phou monument squarely in a religious and legendary context. We can also see this axial organisation in the Ancient City monuments, as well as at Nang Sida and even beyond the classified heritage site, in such places as Nong Din Chi – on Phou Malong mount - and Ban That. This symbolic aspect of the site's organisation has been placed at the forefront of UNESCO considerations. The factor which unites these different sites in a cultural landscape is above all their contribution to a common imaginary universe.

On the other hand, the historic process of these sites and the evolution of their relationship in time is extremely complex<sup>3</sup>. Certain edifices superpose on previous monuments. This is especially true of the Vat Phou summit sanctuary itself. The villages which were built during the Monarchy were partly built on top of pre-Angkorian structures, as in the case at Vat Lakhon. Recent buildings such as Vat Pa, on the island of Don Daeng, or Vat Phanon Tai, are built with materials from the old pre-Angkorian structures.



Fig.7: The village temple Vat Lakhon was probably rebuilt numerous times. Its basement has foundations dating from several different periods, the oldest being the pre-Angkorian age.  
© J-C Castel.

Our understanding of the site's history has evolved as more discoveries are made. At the beginning, epigraphical research in the 1920's led to the understanding that an Ancient City existed. This came to light with the first aerial photographs taken of the site in 1954. The existence of a large organised space around Nang Sida Temple only came to light in the 1990's.

Recent excavations at the Vat Sang'O temple, located one kilometre north of the Ancient City, have shown that it was more than just a temple. Indeed, it has come to light that this was a settlement which may prove to be the oldest known to date.

Relations between these two settlements on either side of the Houay Sahoua River, as well as links between the Ancient City and Vat Phou are still unknown. We know that there were still people living in the Ancient City when Vat Phou was at its height, although we have yet to find an access or route which would attest to functional links between the two sites.

The site surrounding Nang Sida temple is also rich in traces of settlement and hydraulic works. The complex organisation of the site, its statute and links with the rest of the territory are still under investigation.

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3. "This landscape was continuously modified and changed during the period of its use in response to environmental, economic, social and political change." Source: Nomination dossier for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List, May 2000. p.14.

This site opens onto the as yet unexplored Angkor Road. The analysis of a stele, discovered in 2013 during restoration work led by the Indian Team, has shown that it came from Angkor. It was probably brought to Vat Phou by this road. Champasak's historic landscape is part of a much larger ancient economic space which is now being studied on both sides of the border.



Fig.8: The two main archeological sites in Champasak: To the east (right on the photo), the Ancient City, and the site of Vat Sang'O above. To the west, the Vat Phou complex and urban development in southern direction, around Hong Nang Sida and along the road to Angkor, of which we can distinguish the beginning (bottom left). Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.



Fig.9: Above: A well-preserved section of the road from Angkor. © Y. Phethani.



Fig.10: Right: "The archeological area of Vat Phou, from the south"<sup>4</sup>.

4. Drawing by Pierre Pichard (EFEO), extracted from: *Laos, restaurer et préserver le patrimoine national*. Colloque EFEO 1996. Ed. des Cahiers de France. Vientiane, 1999. p89.



### 1.1.2. The Laotian settlements and the landscape discovered by the 19<sup>th</sup> century explorers

After the decline of the Khmer Empire, the villagers abandoned the inland ancient sites and developed new settlements that have created the pattern of the riverine that is still visible today. They created a new way of living dependant on rice culture in each village and based on two major beliefs of both animism and Buddhism.

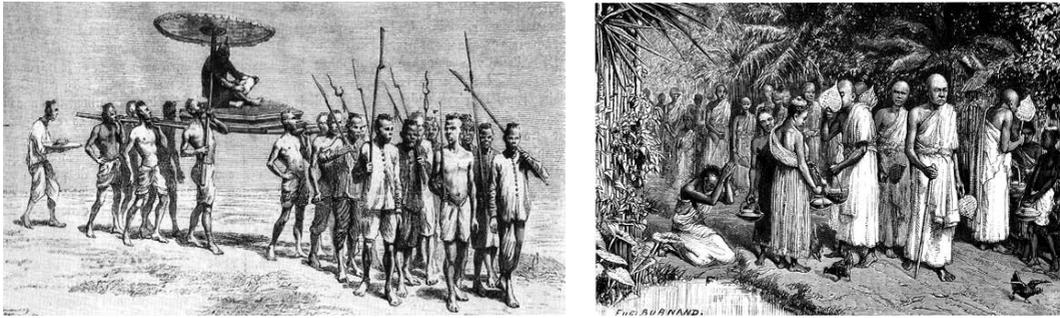


Fig.12, 13: Left, the cortege of the king of Bassac (old name of Champasak)<sup>5</sup>. Right, almsgiving ceremony in Bassac<sup>6</sup>.

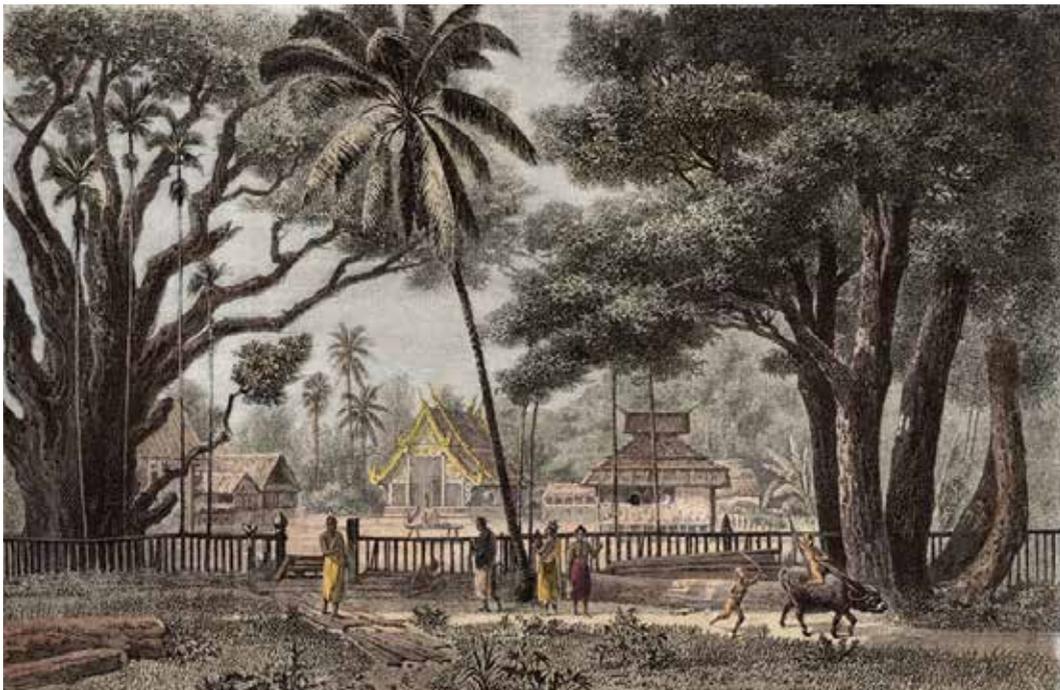


Fig.14: The royal pagoda of Bassac in the late nineteenth century<sup>7</sup>.

5. Drawing by E. Burnand based on a sketch by J. Harmand. Jules Harmand. *Le Laos et les populations sauvages de l'Indo-Chine. Le tour du monde*, 1877, pg. 241.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Drawing by E.Tournois, based on a watercolour by L. Delaporte. François Garnier. *Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine*. Paris, Hachette, 1873, pg. 197.

The origin of the Laotian settlement in Champasak in the earlier time has been told in folklores and legends of the great ancestors, for example the legend of Prince Kammatha who was believed the patron of Vat Phou sanctuary construction, and the story of Yakoo Kihom, the monk who was believed the early founder of Champasak Kingdom.



Fig.15, 16: Left, illuminated pirogues and fireworks displayed on the Mekong River during the Bassac festivities in 1866. Right, statue of a guardian in Vat Phou, dated 12th century, venerated by the locals as the legendary Prince Khammatha. © S. Salom-Goumis.



Fig.17, 18: Left, a visit by the King of Bassac to the Mekong Exploration Mission in 1866<sup>8</sup>. Right, a dry torrent in the Bassac mounts<sup>9</sup>.

8. Original black & white drawing by L. Delaporte from life. Coloured at a later date. François Garnier. *Op. Cit.*, p. 202.

9. Drawing by L. Delaporte. François Garnier. *Op. Cit.*, p. 193.



Fig.19: Panorama of the Mekong River Valley, from the top of the Phou Salao mount, at the time of the Mekong Exploration Mission.

When the first explorers arrived, Champasak was one of three kingdoms born of the breakup of Lane Xang in the 18th Century. The Champasak royal capital was moved several times, from the Ancient City in the south to Phaphin in the north, which is today the entrance to the Classified Site. Each settlement in turn became a Ban – a village built around a Vat, sometimes on the ruins of an ancient pre-Angkorian site. The writings of the explorers let us rediscover the traditional landscape as it existed before the establishment of modern roads. The first means of transport was the pirogue. The landscape was experienced above all from the extensive hydrographic network which runs all throughout the region of Champasak. The itineraries used by the explorers were in rhythm with the rainfall. Seasonal changes determine crops and vegetation as well as accessibility.

Jules Harmand<sup>10</sup>, for example, described how while coming up the river from Khong Island, he visited Ban That before coming to Bassac – the old name given to Champasak. Etienne Aymonier then went on to write that as he travelled north he was the first to notice the existence of antique remains at Phou Malong<sup>11</sup>. These writings contribute to our understanding of Champasak region's cultural landscape.



Fig. 20: The chain of Bassac mounts seen from Don Daeng Island<sup>12</sup>.

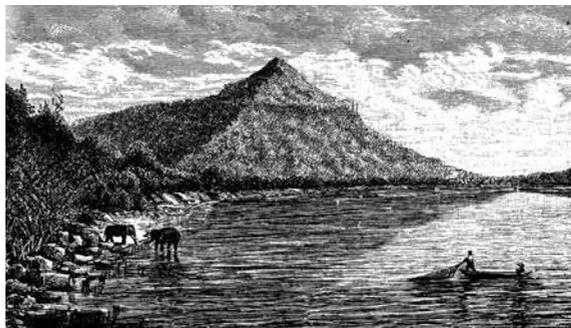


Fig. 21: View of the Phou Malong mount<sup>13</sup>.

10. J. Harmand, *Notes de voyage en Indo-Chine*. Chap. I, Annales de l'Extrême-Orient I, 1879, pp. 329-332.

11. Et. Aymonier, *Le Cambodge II*, Les provinces siamoises, chap. VII, Ed. E. Leroux, Paris, 1901, pp. 157-175.

12. Drawing by A. Herst, based on a sketch by L. Delaporte. Francis Garnier. *Op. Cit*, p. 183.

13. Drawing by E. Tournois, based on a drawing by L. Delaporte. Francis Garnier. *Op. Cit*, p. 195.

The route connecting the villages along the river was already in existence to the right of Bassac, at least between Ban Phaphin and the Houay Phabang River, as can be seen on the map drawn up by Francis Garnier<sup>14</sup> during the Mekong Exploration Commission. The present morphology of Champasak as a linear city dates mostly from that time.

Bassac was surrounded by thick and inextricable bushes<sup>15</sup> In order to get to Vat Phou the explorers had to go through a zone of thorny bamboo<sup>16</sup> which still exists today at the exit to the west of the Ancient City. They then went on for two kilometres through rice paddies<sup>17</sup> along a path which is still partly visible and which brought them to Ban Nongsa village, to the south of the temple. The region surrounding the site and the mountain flank were covered with thick forest at that time<sup>18</sup>. Visitors did not discover the Vat Phou landscape as they do today when they arrive in front of the sanctuary axis. At that time, they arrived from the south, opposite the broad side of the *baray*, and entered the site from the side, which must have contributed to the element of surprise.

While climbing up to the sanctuary they could appreciate the remarkable view of Vat Phou built on the scarcely wooded sandy plain, criss-crossed by small streams<sup>19</sup> From there, “nothing could stop the view of the Bassac forests and mountains, along the majestic winding river<sup>20</sup>.”

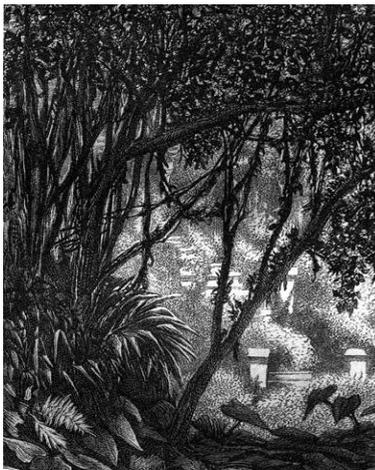


Fig.22, 23: Left, the overgrown staircase of Vat Phou, in the state as it was discovered by Jules Armand in 1877<sup>21</sup>. Right, inside the sanctuary, as discovered in 1866 by the Mekong Exploration Mission<sup>22</sup>.

14. Francis Garnier, *Atlas du voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine*, 1873.

15. Etienne Lunet de Lajonquière, *Inventaire descriptif des monuments du Cambodge*, Book II, Chap. II, Ed. E. Leroux, PESEO, 1907, pgs. 65– 89.

16. Etienne Lunet de Lajonquière, *Ibid.*

17. Louis de Carné, *Voyage en Indo-Chine et dans l'Empire Chinois*, E. Dentu, Paris, 1872, pg. 87.

18. Francis Garnier, *Op. Cit.*, pg. 186.

19. Etienne Aymonier, *Op Cit.*

20. Etienne Aymonier, *Op Cit.*

21. Drawing by E. Burnand, based on a sketch by J. Harmand. J. Harmand. *Le Tour du monde*, 1877. *Op. Cit.*, pg. 3.

22. Drawing by E. Therond based on a sketch by L. Delaporte. Coloured at a later date. Francis Garnier, *Op. Cit.* pg. 191.

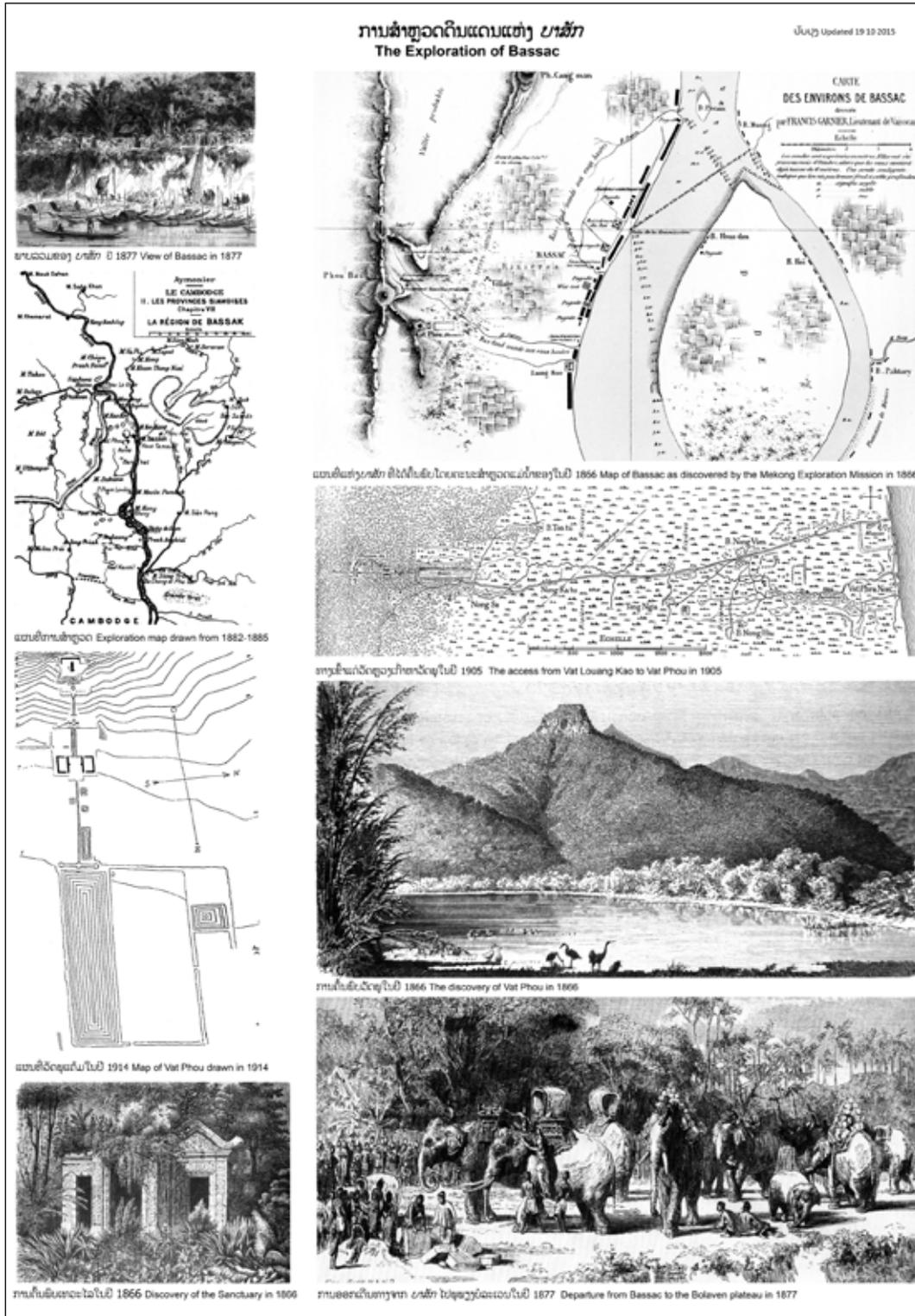


Fig.24: The exploration of Bassac. Panel presented at the Heritage Interpretation Centre of the Vat Phou Museum.

### 1.1.3. Recent changes in the landscape

During the 20th century the Champasak landscape was subjected to important civil engineering projects, namely road construction and agricultural work.

The Vat Phou plain became a military base during the American War. The American army built an airport north of Thang Khop junction, right in the middle of the large perspective one sees from the terrace of Vat Phou. A military camp was also set up in the Ancient City, spreading out as far as Vat Sang'O. In the beginning of the 1950s, the army built the road which today cuts through the Ancient City all the way to Thang Khop, before heading south toward Dontalat. Any vestiges in its path were flattened by bulldozers and the land was dug out to build basins and embankments for the army's water supply. The military occupation and the creation of the road left a permanent scar on the Ancient City.

Other military facilities were also settled by the royalist army, in the southern section of the Vat Phou area. A second landing zone was placed along the path which now leads to Nang Sida Temple; and some buildings, the ruins of which we can still see, were erected in this area<sup>23</sup>.

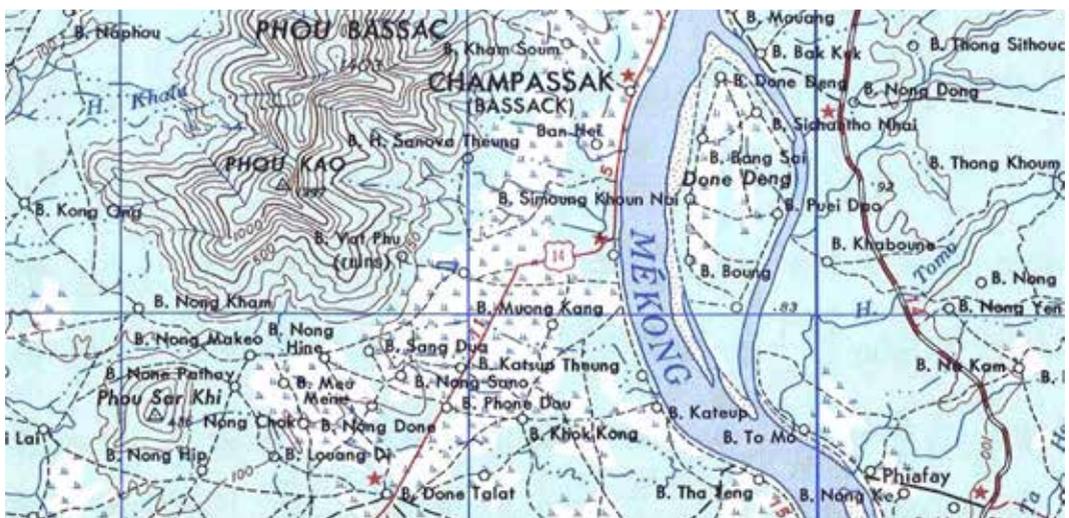


Fig.25: Extract from the general staff map of the US army from 1954 (ND 48-7, series L509), on which we clearly see the road Nr 14, connecting Champasak to Dontalat, drawn while occupying the Ancient City. At that time (data collected between 1951-1952), the road extension providing the new axis to Vat Phou did not yet exist.

The road, which passes through the Ancient City, was extended from Thang Khop junction to create a new access road to Vat Phou. It arrives right in line with the sanctuary. At the same time, Prince Chao Boun Oum built a sala on that line, on the terrace leading to the baray and a large arch at the foot of the monument. He also built structures north of the baray to house his guests. The new access road to Vat Phou was designed to be a majestic point of entry, located in the extension

23. "The whole area up to the Vat Phou baray has been severely disturbed in the past by mechanical leveling for the constructions of barracks for the Lao Army". Nomination dossier for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List, May 2000. p.31.

of the monument's historic perspective and destined to welcome the King and his court as they arrived from the east. During the Angkorian period, however, figures of authority most probably came from the south using the Angkor Road, describing a perpendicular axis. This has been extrapolated from the location of the Thao Tao temple, the vestiges of a Khmer hospital dating from the 12th Century, which was thought to mark the entrance to the urban zone.

It can thus be seen that the new road had a catastrophic effect on the approach to the site's landscape and on the symbolic meaning of the monument itself since the monument was designed to end at the *baray*, which represented the primordial ocean and the origin of the world. This terminus was highlighted by Etienne Lunet de Lajonquiere in 1907 when he described the site. Surveying from west to east, from the sanctuary to the *baray*, he concluded by saying of this latter: "One can understand how majestically it rounded out the site we have described".



Fig.26: Extract from the state map of the major geographical service of the Lao PDR in 1983, based on aerial photographs from 1981. The new entry axis to Vat Phou is visible. We can also see the airport, located north of the intersection of Tang Khop, above Ban Phonsao'E village. The path along the river to the south and leaving Ban Meuang Kang is dotted black along the shore. At that time, the dam had collapsed and the artificial lake had not yet been refilled.

The new extension of the axis beyond this limit goes against the grain of the site's historic and religious meaning. It turns the page of ancient Khmer heritage and brings the site into line with the more recent history of the Champasak monarchy. The airport structure and the sala, the archway and the structures built by the Prince have since been dismantled. All that remains is the new road system, including the airport transformed into a road track, along which new constructions continue to rise.



Fig.27: The Vat Phou temple (bottom) and the new access road, created in the mid 50s, arriving just in front (photo taken from the west, over the mountains). The picture was taken after the enlargement of this road, which took place in 2011. At the same time, a new visitors' parking was built at the entrance of the monument, visible just above the northern Baray (left on the picture). In the upper left corner of the picture, we see the old airport runway (diagonal), now a road. Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe

The landscape was transformed by new roads as well as by those which have disappeared. The road which extended out from the Ancient City toward the south, along the river, slowly sank into the Mekong as the banks eroded. All that remains is a small path that would allow the informed trekker to discover a historic area dotted with temples and other remarkable structures, such as the Vat Phanon sim or the Vat Meuang Kang library. A new access road was built behind the buildings, but the perception of the site from the back is not the same.



Fig.28: 1907. Diagram designed after the map produced by Etienne Lunet de la Jonquiere. Source: ENSAV, 2015.



Fig.29: 1958. Diagram designed after an aerial picture of 1958 (I.G.N.) Source: ENSAV, 2015.



Fig.30: 1981. Diagram designed after an aerial photograph by Lao National Geographic Dept. Source: ENSAV, 2015.



Fig.31: 2014. Diagram designed after a Google Map satellite photo. Source: ENSAV, 2015.

Fig.28 to 31: Evolution of the vegetation cover and constructions in the monument zone from 1907 to 2014.

In the 1990s, the natural and agricultural landscape was modified by large hydraulic infrastructure work. A new landscape comprised of rice paddies was created with the implementation of a modern system of irrigation which used petrol pumps to bring water from the Mekong to the plain which is the opposite of how traditional irrigation systems functioned.

The restoration of the dam and redevelopment of the artificial lake, in the early 2000's, also probably flooded a certain number of ruins. In total, more than 1,000 ha of agricultural land were created by this new irrigation system. Their location near urban areas is leading to an increasing number of land use conflicts.



Fig.32: At the foot of the mountain, rice fields and the lake are part of the composition of a remarkable landscape, after major hydraulic work was finished. On this photograph, we can see a modern irrigation channel in the foreground and a part of the lake can be seen in the back. © J-C Castel.

The Champasak landscape is therefore a complex system which changes with the seasons and comprises several components:

- Historic sectors of the ancient landscape,
- Village sectors which have partly been built over ancient sites containing pre-Angkorian vestiges,
- Preserved natural sectors,
- Ancient agricultural sectors, and
- New agricultural sectors which are the fruit of recent hydraulic work, and are currently being threatened by urban growth.



Fig.33, 34: A landscape of contrasts between dry and wet season. Images showing the frame of the rice fields. Source: ENSAV, 2015.

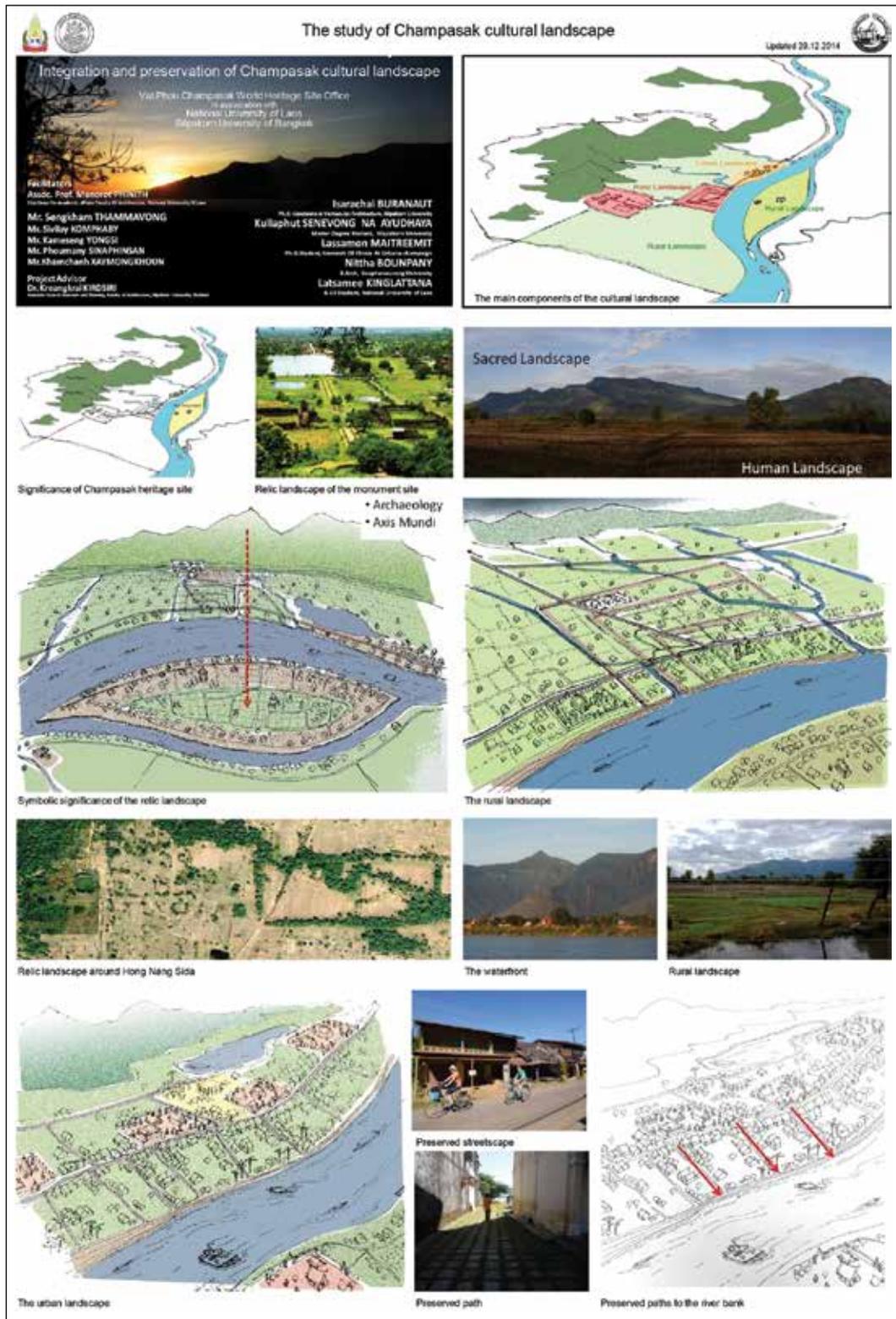


Fig.35: The study of Champasak cultural landscape. Source: Lao National University & Silpakorn Bangkok University, 2014.

## 1.2. UNESCO listed heritage site

### 1.2.1. Goal and demarcation of the classified area

#### 1.2.1.1. Goal of the classification

The purpose that justifies the international recognition of the site is identified in the title of the classification : « Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape». The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV), which is the reference document setting out the reasons why the site is on the World Heritage List, specifies the period considered by the “Ancient settlements”: « *The remarkably well-preserved planned landscape illustrates a thousand years of development, from the 5th to 15th centuries AD* ».

The present Champasak cultural landscape is home to settlements from different eras. The World Heritage Nomination concerns only the period of the ancient Khmer civilisation<sup>24</sup>.

The UNESCO not only ranked the influence of the archaeological sites, but has also integrated the surrounding landscape as an integral part of the cultural landscape of the considered era. This landscape, centered on the Vat Phou complex, also includes other remains located nearby as well as the elements that play a key role in the symbolic and landscape composition, including the sacred mountain and the river<sup>25</sup>.



Fig.36: The sacred mountain is located at the heart of the cultural landscape of the listed site.  
© WHSO.

24. “The last major developments to the Champasak cultural landscape were in the 13th century, just before the collapse of the Khmer Empire.” Source: Advisory Body Evaluation: ICOMOS, September 2001.

25. “The complex is the focal point of a sophisticated cultural landscape centered on the Champasak Plain, taking in the Phou Kao (mountain) to the west, and the banks of the Mekong River to the east.” Source : SOUV, UNESCO.

The difficulty resulting from this classification is that the listed cultural landscape represents a landscape from an ancient culture, not to be confused with the current environment, such as the roads. The protection of this heritage needs to discern what could be characterised as part of the landscape of the Khmer era. The nomination dossier does not ignore this complexity of the site, nor does it ignore the scarcity of historical knowledge on this subject<sup>26</sup>. But it nevertheless tries to present the ancient Champasak landscape as a unitary and consistent complex. The enthusiasm and the communication aspect of the application promotes a simplified image<sup>27</sup>. However this brief description conceals the reality of a more complex territory, as urbanisation and development have experienced many changes during and after the Khmer era.

#### 1.2.1.2. Perimeter of the classified area

At the time of the classification, the classified property could not be precisely located since it encompasses many buried remains, whose presence was only detected by some outcrops at ground level. The plans attached at the moment of the classification only give an indication of the location of these traces.

The dossier of the classification then defined a large area called the *Champasak Heritage and Cultural Landscape Protection Zone*, encompassing the considered vestiges of the natural site and the elements taken into account in the cultural landscape. This protective perimeter delineates the classified site itself, while acting as a buffer zone around the remains and the protected natural feature<sup>28</sup>.



Fig.37: The perimeter of the classified site extends to the left bank of the Mekong. © D. Bazin.

26. Nomination dossier for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List, May 2000. p.31. *Op. Cit.*

27. “These features have been laid out in a careful planning of the landscape to reflect its sacred character as perceived by the builders of Vat Phou. The ancient builders used the natural linga of Phou Kao Mountain, with the Vat Phou Temple Complex at its foot, as the focus. Using an axial layout, they planned the other features of the landscape, such as roads, canals, baray, the urban settlements and many other temples and features incorporating the whole landscape”. Source: Nomination dossier. p 22. *Op. Cit.*

28. “As Zone 1 incorporates a large landscape in which all the main features can be viewed in context, no additional buffer zones are proposed” (Source : Nomination dossier p.11). *Op. Cit.* And also : “...the large historic cultural landscape that functions as the property buffer zone.” Source: SOUV.

This choice was determined by the landscape criterion. The selected perimeter includes the whole of Mount Phou Kao and the ancient remains and facilities included in the broader perspective of Vat Phou, to the east, to the left bank of the river, as well as those located towards the road from Angkor in the south. The scope was later clarified in detail, for practical reasons, relying on tangible physical boundaries (roads, rivers and shores).

The classified area covers 390km<sup>2</sup>, located mainly in the Champasak district and partly in Phathoumphon district. It has a population of 35,600 inhabitants, equivalent to more than half the Champasak district (data 2014).

### 1.2.1.3. Delineation of protected zones

The classification of the site approved by UNESCO in 2001 is accompanied by the establishment of a Management Plan that identifies four protected zones:

1. *Zone 1 : Champasak heritage and cultural landscape protection zone*  
Acts as a buffer zone, covering the entire classified site (390 km<sup>2</sup>).
2. *Zone 2 : Sacred environment conservation zone*  
Concerns the protected natural area of the sacred mountain (100 km<sup>2</sup>).
3. *Zone 3 : Archaeological research zone*  
Concerns the surrounding main research zones of the pre-Angkorian and Angkorian ruins (20 km<sup>2</sup>).
4. *Zone 4 : Monument management zone*  
Concerns the areas around the main monuments, including Vat Phou and Vat Tomo (2.5 km<sup>2</sup>).

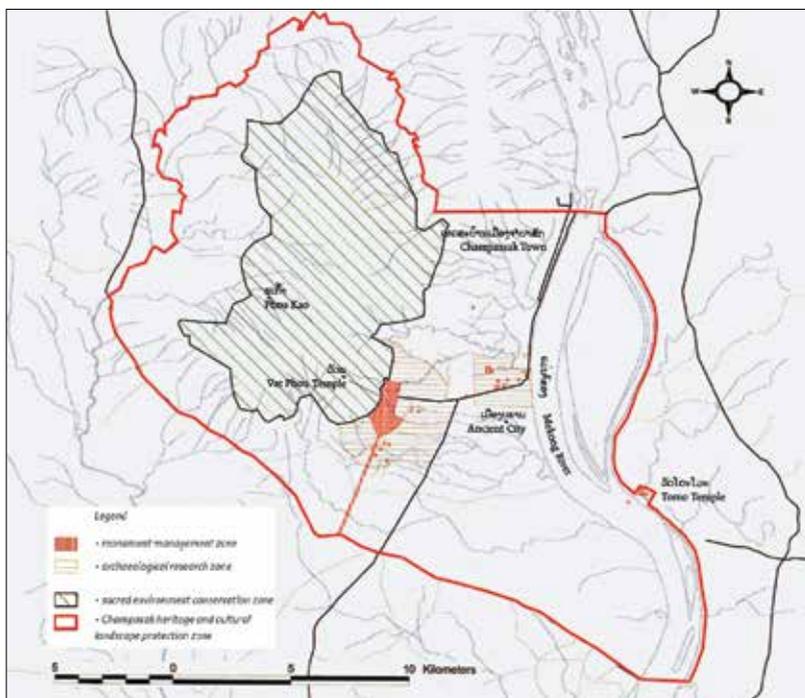


Fig.38: Champasak Heritage Management Plan protection zones

## 1.2.2. The cultural landscape as a classification category

### 1.2.2.1. The notion of cultural landscape defined by UNESCO

According to the categories of Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the property is classified as a site. It falls under the *cultural landscape category*, as can be found at the end of paragraph 39 of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. According to the 1992 World Heritage Committee: « *Cultural landscapes represent the combined work of man and nature.* » The Handbook for Conservation and Management - World Heritage papers 26 - specifies that: « *Cultural landscapes are those where human interaction with natural systems, over a long period has formed a singular landscape.*<sup>29</sup> »

The concept of cultural landscape refers not only to the visible landscape, but also includes the interpretation of the landscape through the symbolic representations and cultural practices associated with them.

The site is not reducible to each monument taken separately, nor one or the other religious or symbolic dimension. The uniqueness of the place results from the combination of its various components: a historical site, a landscape designed by man, symbolically implanted monuments, associated with religious practices and legends. The notion of cultural landscape includes all of these components.

### 1.2.2.2. The different categories of cultural landscapes

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the classified site does not explicitly define what a cultural landscape is under the categories adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 1992. But its reading provides enough information to be able to deduce the meaning. Subsequently, the World Heritage Site Office of Vat Phou Champasak has conducted specific studies to clarify the landscape features of the site, with respect to the following categories.

- **Category 1: Clearly defined landscape, intentionally designed and created by man.**

The Vat Phou monumental complex is a masterful example of this category<sup>30</sup>.



Fig.39, 40: Overview of the Vat Phou buildings. The drawing on the left was reported by Léon de Beylié<sup>31</sup>. Right : View of the ceremonial axis, from the east. © S. Fradelizi.

29. Mitchell Nora, Rössler Mechtild and Tricaud Pierre-Marie (eds). *World Heritage Cultural Landscapes. A Handbook for Conservation and Management*. World Heritage papers 26. UNESCO – WHC, 2009.

30. “The temple complex represents a masterpiece of human creative genius due to the high quality of its artistic work, and the integration of its symbolic plan with the natural landscape to create a physical manifestation of a Hindu concept of the perfect universe.” Source: SOUV, UNESCO.

31. Drawing by an Annamite. Léon de Beylié, *L'architecture hindoue en Extrême-Orient*. Ed. Leroux, Paris, 1907.

This landscape is characteristic of Khmer temples, which are designed in a pattern with alignments and typical terraces, following some well identified models.

**- Category 2: Evolved landscape. This category is divided into two sub-categories:**

*a. Relict (or fossil) landscape that has undergone an evolutionary process that has stopped in the past.*

Concerns the most ancient works of which the traces are visible at the site: walls of the Ancient City, reservoirs and quarries. The Angkor Road scattered with collapsed monuments, the old hydraulic system, also abandoned, are part of this category.

Traces of the fossil landscape particularly apparent in aerial photographs. Fig.41: right, the Ancient City (Vat Louang Kao), photographed by a Soviet mission in 1981.



Fig.42: Remnants of arrangements made during the Angkorian era, around the Hong Nang Sida temple, south of Vat Phou. Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

*b. Living landscape, maintaining an active role in contemporary society.*

The evaluation report for the nomination of the site as World Heritage states that the cultural landscape included stops in the 13th Century<sup>32</sup>. This date marks a limit to set the value recognised by UNESCO. From then on, the Vat Phou complex continued to evolve and has even undergone some transformations in the 20th Century, to accommodate the needs of visitors. It became a place renowned for its annual festival and it is still the subject of great religious fervor. It can therefore be considered a living landscape for the Lao heritage<sup>33</sup>. Other ancient places that have also undergone transformations such as Sisumang or Vat Lakhon, are also still the subject of religious practices and can be classified in this category, under their local cultural value.



Fig.43, 44: Vat Phou is the second most important religious pilgrimage in Laos, after That Luang. © S. Salom-Goumis.



Fig.45: At the annual full moon festival, the spectacle of the living legend of Vat Phou is interpreted by actors chosen from the inhabitants. © WHSO.

32. Source: Advisory Body Evaluation: ICOMOS, September 2001. *Ibid.*

33. Nomination dossier deposited by the Government of the Lao PDR for site grading application to UNESCO, briefly mentions the evolutionary nature of the cultural landscape and includes, for example, a picture of a temple in the 19th Century. Source: Nomination dossier for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List, May 2000. p 21.

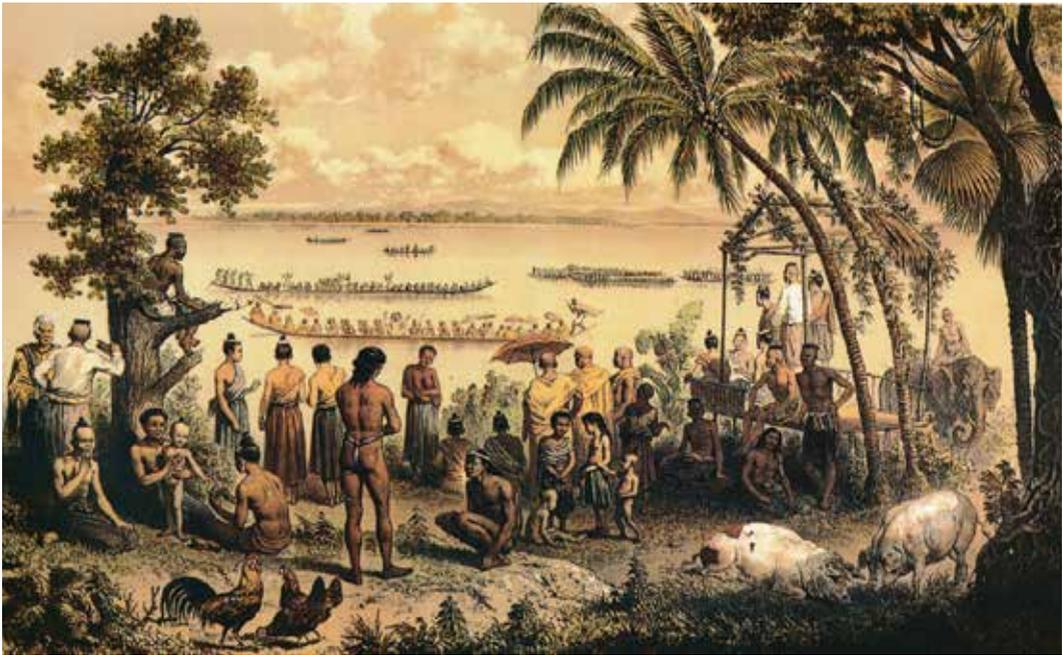


Fig.46: The local life is rythmed by the traditional festivals. Above an engraving of the canoes race in Bassac (drawing by Tofani based on a sketch by L. Delaporte).

**- Category 3: Associative cultural landscape.**

Concerns the natural elements (mountains, sacred spring, river) associated with a symbolic or religious significance, considered in the site development.



Fig. 47, 48: The top of Phou Kao mountain (*Lingapavarta*) and the Mekong River, assimilated to the Ganges in the ancient Hindu cult, give the landscape its sanctity. The Houay Sahoua stream (pictured right) carries water from the holy spring at the mountain to the Mekong River. The settlement of the ancient city where the stream flows into the river may be explained by the symbolic importance of this place. © L. Delfour, © D. Bazin.

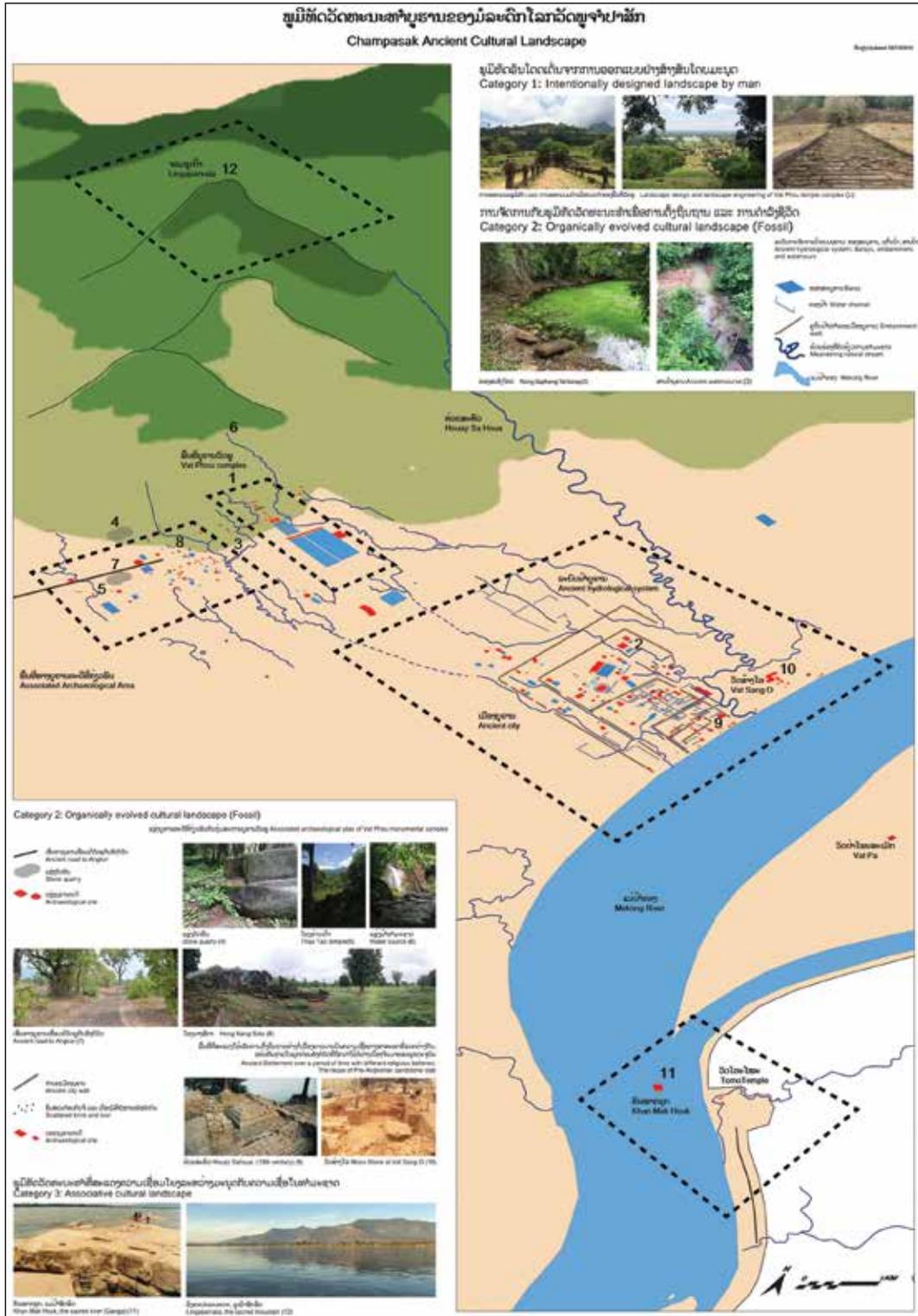


Fig.49: The ancient cultural landscape of Champasak, according to the categories established by the UNESCO. Panel presented at the Heritage Interpretation Centre of the Vat Phou Museum.

### 1.2.3. The integrity of the classified property

To be included on the World Heritage List, each nominated property must meet the conditions of integrity and authenticity. The site has been relatively unspoilt thanks to the fact that a significant portion of the population has left the site after the decline of the Khmer civilisation, and moved to the river bank. The Vat Phou complex and other ancient settlements located on the site still have a high level of integrity, except for the earthworks and equipment made by the army south of Vat Phou and north of Thang Khop village.

The sites near the river have suffered more damage related to river bank erosion and the development of roads, hydraulic works, and later made constructions. The classification dossier does not extend on this matter, and only evokes the problem of erosion.

At the time of the classification, the UNESCO did not elaborate on this and simply considered that, overall, the various components of the site showed integrity ranging from a « high » to « remarkably high » level<sup>34</sup>. This overall judgment conceals significant disparities. Subsequently, at the time of planning regulations preparation, the determination of the protection level for each part of the site was required to discern more precisely the degree of integrity of the different places.

This work, led by the World Heritage Site Office of Vat Phou Champasak, together with researchers, resulted in the completion of the map of integrity of the protected site, distinguishing five levels of integrity, from most integer, down to the most deteriorated:

1. *Level 1 : The sacred mountain*
2. *Level 2 : The natural and agricultural zones (excluding the recent irrigation)*
3. *Level 3 : The area of the Vat Phou monumental complex*
4. *Level 4 : The areas served by recent hydraulic works*
5. *Level 5 : The infrastructure areas and recent urban development*

The confrontation of the integrity levels with the presence of remains identified ten places where there is a current threat to the integrity of the classified cultural landscape (see map below).



Fig.50, 51: Several buried remains have been altered by the realisation of infrastructure projects. Above: elevation works and drainage of the existing road in the villages on the shore (left), conflicting with the foundations of a pre-Angkorian temple. The completion of the dam and artificial lake (right) submerged traces of remains previously identified, and created a new landscape. © E. Cameron, © D. Bazin.

34. Source: Advisory Body Evaluation: ICOMOS, September 2001.

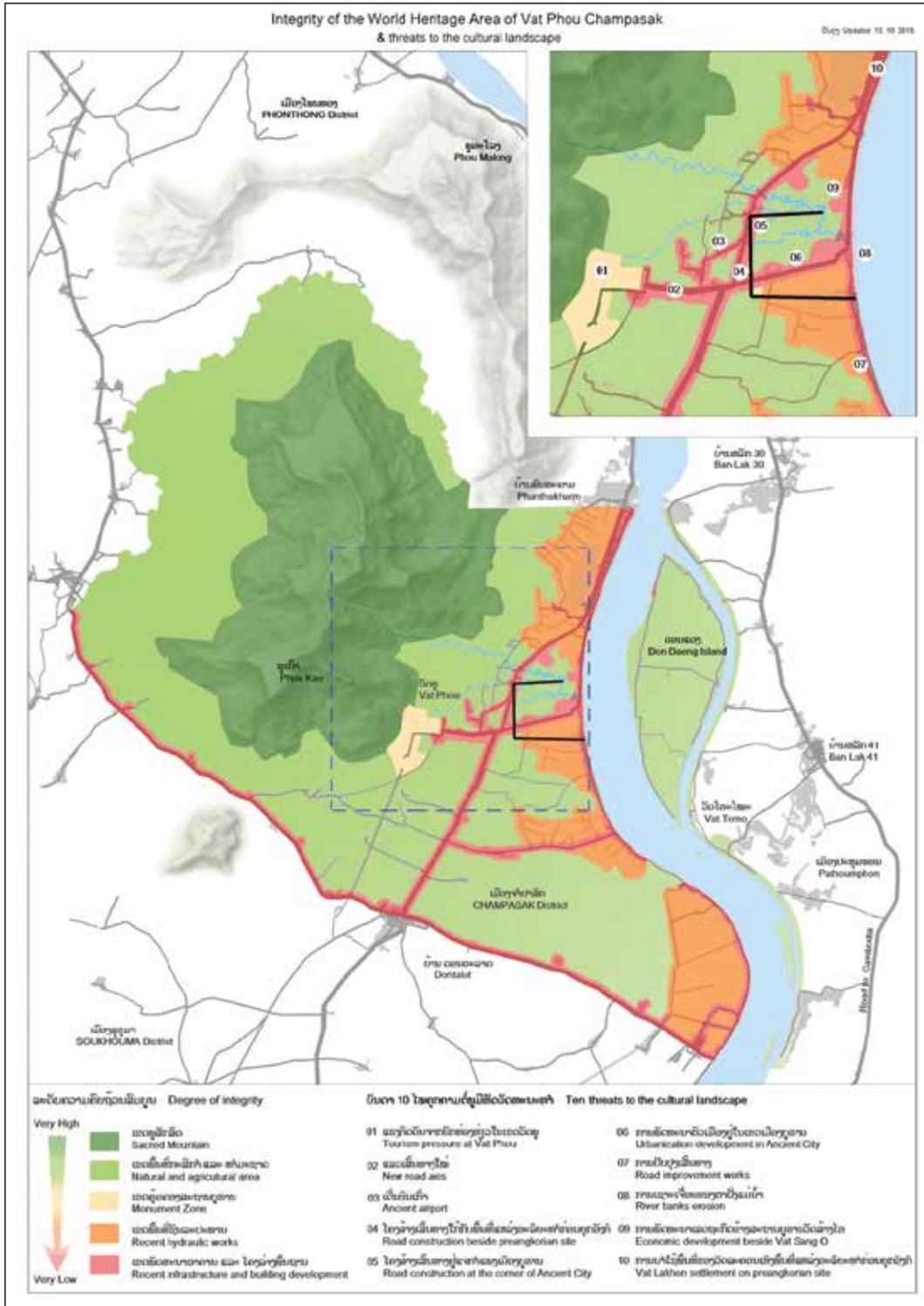


Fig.52: The integrity of the World Heritage Area of Vat Phou Champasak. Panel presented at the Heritage Interpretation Centre of the Vat Phou Museum.



Fig.53, 54: The fragile paved ceremonial road accessing to the sanctuary is under pressure from tourist traffic. The preservation of the site needs to be strengthened, especially during peak tourist periods, such as the annual festival (pictured right). © S. Fradelizi, © D. Bazin.



Fig.55, 56: An estimated quarter of the Ancient City was destroyed by erosion from the Mekong River and the Houay Sahoua stream. © M. Santoni, © D. Bazin.



Fig.57: Widening of the access road to Vat Phou. Photo taken in 2011. © D. Bazin.



Fig.58: Brickyard activity on the banks of the Vat Sang'O Temple. © D. Bazin.



## Issues and scope of the Master Plan

### Introduction: A broader interpretation in line with current issues

The initial assessments of the site's classification were mainly interested in the archaeological material and were limited to the small area, from Vat Phou to the Ancient City<sup>35</sup>. The classification project was developed in a pivotal period, when the UNESCO began to promote the new concept of cultural landscape, adopted in 1992. The preparatory work then experienced a gradual expansion of the scope of study, together with the concepts. This reflects the desire to replace the tangible heritage in its cultural context, in connection with the surrounding natural elements that give meaning to the development of this space. However, the classification is limited to the consideration of heritage from the Khmer period associated with the ancient Hindu religion. The recognition as a World Heritage site does not include the evolutionary aspect of this cultural landscape in the most recent periods and takes little account of the contemporary situation of the site and the growth of its population.

The Champasak Cultural Landscape Master Plan takes the heritage into account in a broader sense. It revisits the archaeological heritage in the light of inventories and recent research. It also integrates the local heritage, natural places, remarkable architecture, Buddhist cults, or places associated with local legends. It takes into account the cross-cultural heritage concept in line with the expectations of the population. It prioritises protection issues concerning the central area of the buffer zone, in order to guide the possibilities for development. It takes into account the need to manage economic issues (transport, tourism) to a larger scale than the listed site.



Fig.59: The arc of the mountains, where each vertex represents a divinity according to the legends, is part of the great cultural landscape of Champasak, included in the Master Plan. © D. Bazin.

35. As shown on the map annexed to the decree of the Government of Champasak Province of October 11, 1988, regarding the proposal to classify the site to UNESCO. The space considered covers an area of about 50 km<sup>2</sup>.

## 2.1. The heritage included in the Master Plan

### 2.1.1. Consideration of the historical and landscape criteria

#### 2.1.1.1. Recent surveys and research

- Middle Mekong Valley and transnational research

At the time of the classification of the site, attention was focused on the main visible remains of Vat Phou and those located in the immediate vicinity. The nomination dossier of the site presents less than ten monuments or remains. The master plan is based on inventories of the region. More than 400 ancient objects of the Khmer era (relics, artifacts, hydraulic works) are now listed on the right bank of the Mekong River, in Champasak province.

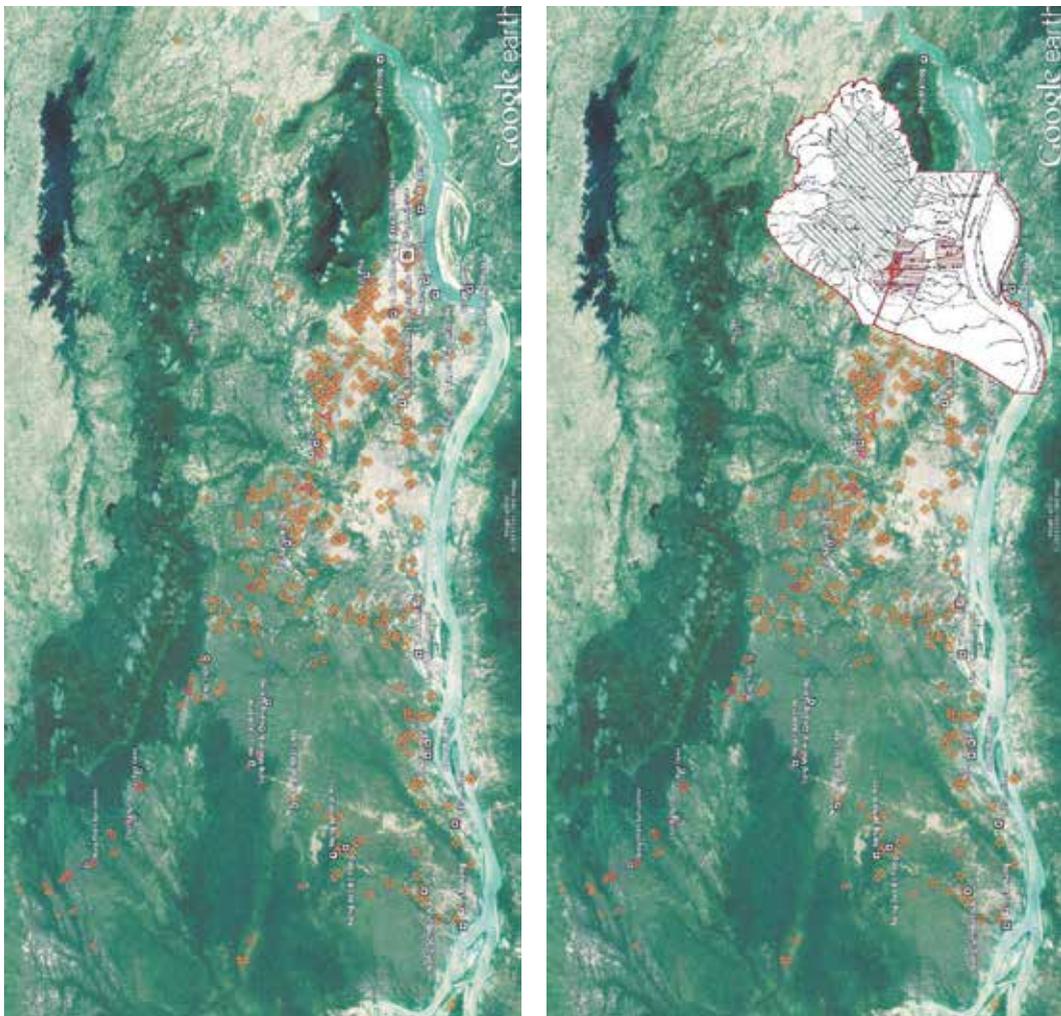


Fig.60, 61: Remains inventoried on the right bank of the Mekong River in Champasak province. Right: same map containing the scope of the classified site. Source: EFEO. Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

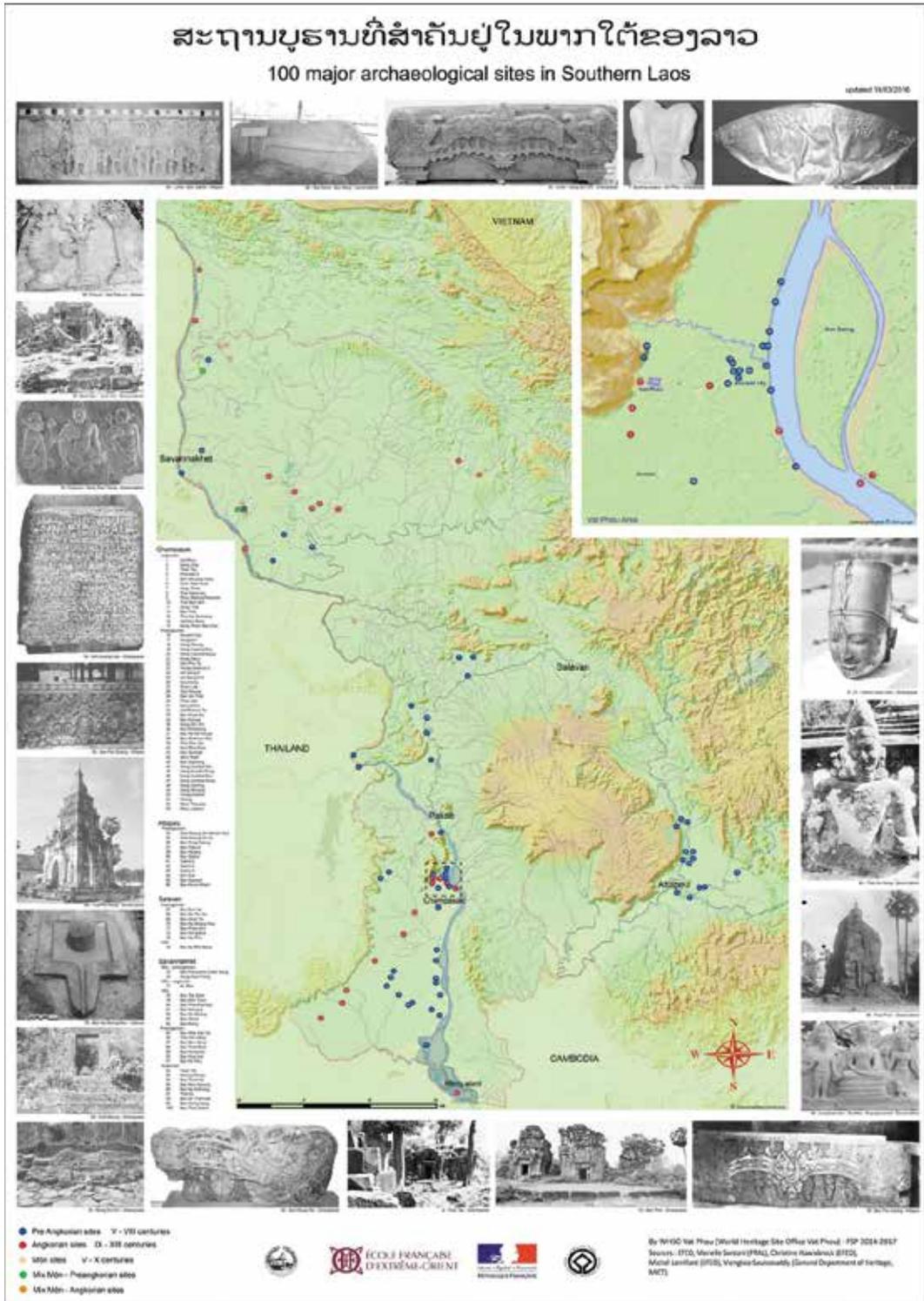


Fig.62: 100 Major archaeological sites in southern Laos. Panel exposed at the Heritage Interpretation Centre of the Vat Phou Museum. Source: EFEO. Image: © Openstreetmap contributors.

The inventories show that if the UNESCO primarily had held the historical dimension as a criterion of classification, the perimeter of the site would have probably been different and larger.

When the area of analysis is expanded, it appears that the oldest establishments in Champasak are part of an area whose remains extend over the four provinces in southern Laos : Savannakhet, Salavan, Attapeu and Champasak.

The latest research will focus on this heritage in a transboundary context, for example by addressing the old routes linking Angkor, or creating trade routes until Thailand or Vietnam.

• *Research and excavations in the vicinity of the classified site*

Without taking into account the great historical areas mentioned above, the Master Plan nevertheless includes the surrounding territories whose links with the classified site have been highlighted by recent research.

In the north, the excavations carried out since 2014 on the pre-Angkorian temple of Nong Din Chi, on Mount Phou Malong, reveal that it might appear to be the ancestor of Vat Phou, because of the similarity of its composition.



Fig.63: Mount Phou Malong, here seen from near Pakse, is a historic landmark for travelers from the north, similar like Phou Kao. © J-C Castel.



Fig.64: The temple of Nong Din Chi: photograph taken during the 2015 excavations. © WHSO.

In the south, traces of the ancient occupation existing around Hong Nang Sida and the Angkor road were previously placed on a map created by the Italian cooperation team. This area is now the subject of renewed interest, prompted by research that explores in particular the relationship with Angkor.

The towers of That Sam Pang, in Ban That village, marked the symbolic opening of the site in the direction of Angkor. The inclusion of this sector in the Master Plan also allows the integration of parts of the old road that can be visited and are in good condition.

The Ban That site is also important for the stele<sup>36</sup> which was discovered and which was one of the first steles studied. The interpretation of the visual landscape is based on a historical cultural space, revealed by the epigraphy. Ban That stele is part of a set of complementary sources with that of Vat Phou and that of Vat Louang Kao.

36. Inscription K.364

### 2.1.1.2. Consideration of landscape criteria

The map of the 100 major archaeological sites in the southern Laos clearly demonstrates that there is a particular concentration of monuments in the Vat Phou area. In the nomination dossier of the classified site, the choice was made to retain the same cultural landscape so as to link the remains to their environment, thus giving an identification criterion to that particular site, which distinguishes it from the rest of the Angkorian and pre-Angkorian space in the southern Laos.

The concept of the cultural landscape establishes a bridge between the historical and landscape criteria that led to demarcating the area as a World Heritage Site. Although historical research today promotes approaches on a larger scale, the definition of the site from a landscaping criterion provided a sustainable criterion for the classification, which remains relevant and does not seem to conflict with the expansion of historical research.

Much like the UNESCO, the Master Plan considered that the cultural landscape approach appears adequate to unite heritage components and establish a coherent development policy for the site.

The Master Plan situates the landscape in a broader context than that of the strict heritage site. It also takes into account the greater landscape, including the arc of the mountains and distant views from the river system and the old road from Angkor.

It also incorporates the latest research conducted in the vicinity of the classified site, including Phou Malong in the north, to Ban That in the south. These places have an landscape importance for the views they offer to travelers going to Champasak. The tales of the explorers remind us that travelers on the territory used the reliefs as benchmarks. Mount Phou Kao, with its very particular shape, is not only a sacred place, but also a major landmark from Ban That throughout the Angkor Road. Its twin, Phou Malong, could play the same role for travelers from the north, from the confluence of the Mekong and the Sedona, to Pakse.



Fig.65: The towers of That Sam Pang, in Ban That. © D. Bazin.

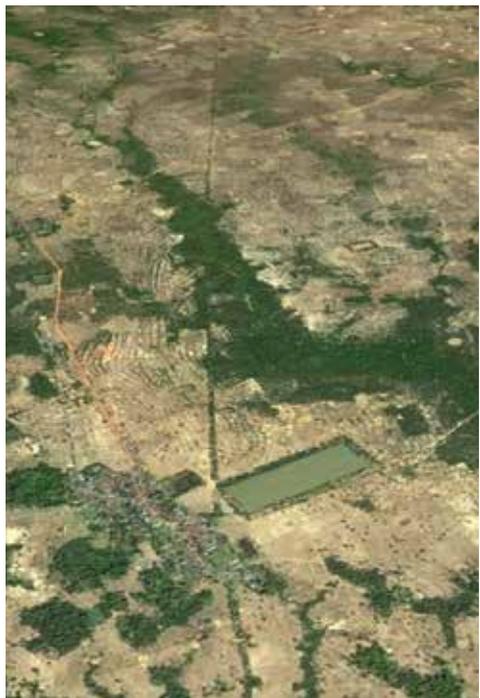


Fig.66: Aerial photograph showing the Angkor Road, bordered by trees, from the corner of the great baray of Ban That. The axis, almost perfectly straight, joins Vat Phou (located over the top of the photo). Image : © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

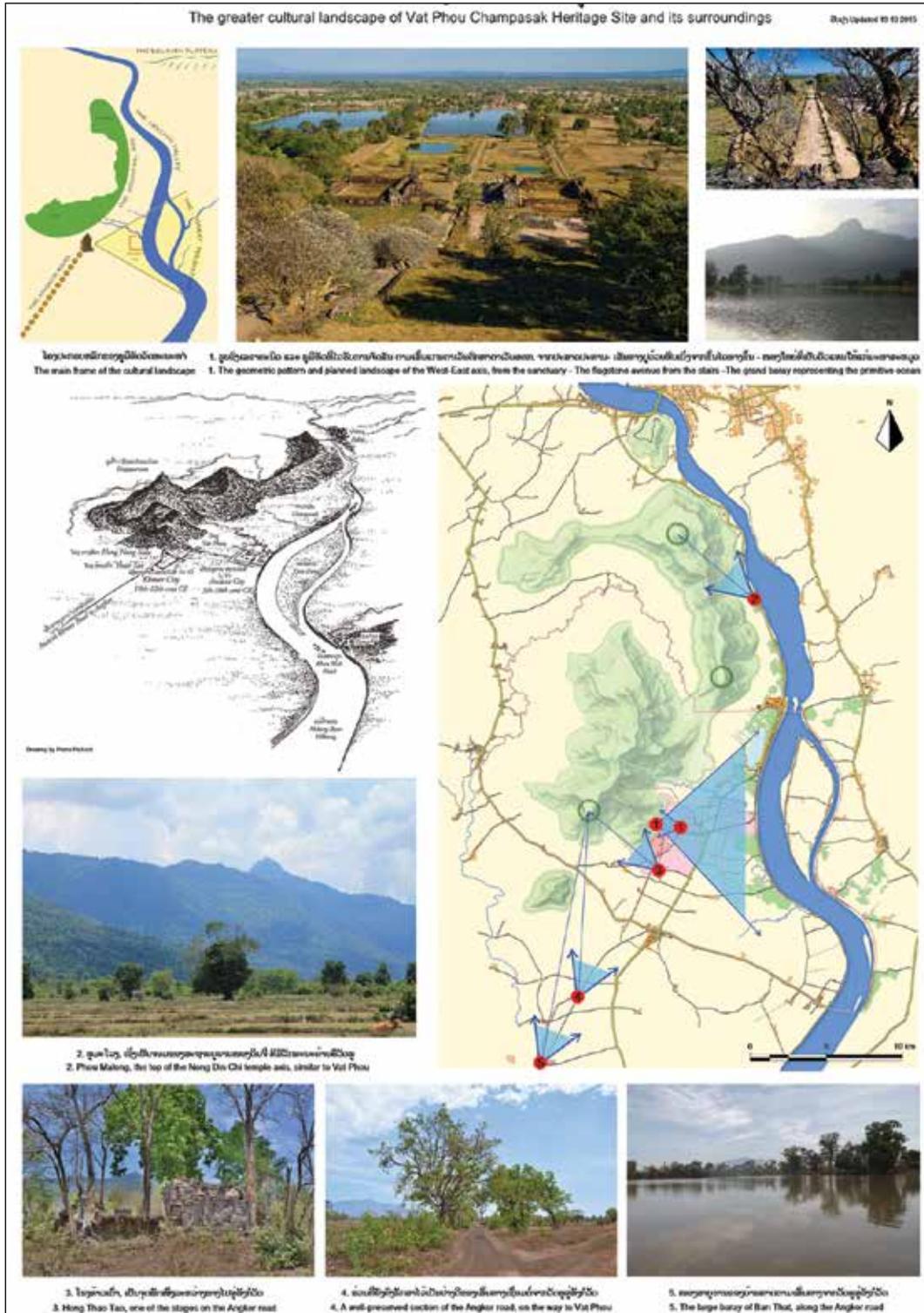


Fig.67: The greater cultural landscape of Vat Phou Champasak heritage site and its surroundings. Panel exposed at the Heritage Interpretation Centre of the Vat Phou Museum.

## 2.1.2. Integration of contemporary heritage

### 2.1.2.1. Local heritage of the villages

The heritage listed by the UNESCO is limited to the legacy of the Khmer civilisation, including the natural features of the mountain and the river for their symbolic value.

Other more recent heritage elements that are included in the classified perimeter, such as the princely residences, the traditional wooden architecture, or the buildings from the French era, also have a significant value in local history, although their value is not exceptional enough, nor universal, so they have not been included by UNESCO in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the classified site.

However, they are all part of the cultural heritage claimed by the people and local institutions, and are fully taken into account in the Master Plan.



Fig.68 à 72: In Champasak, traditional and French architecture coexist. © L. Delfour, © S. Fradelizi, © S. Salom Goumis, © J-C Castel.

The villages strung out along the right bank were the resorts of the kings of Champasak. All there, characterised by temples and interspersed with rice fields, constitute a unique landscape in which we discover the viewpoint on the river on one side and the mountain on the other. They are home to sacred places and architectural relics of the past of the former capital of southern Laos.



Fig.73: Vat Meuang Kang, seen from the river. From left to right: kuti, vihara, library, sala, kuti. The library (central monument), which houses sacred text rolls, is the only building of this typical architecture still standing in Southeast Asia.

In practice, it is not possible to protect the site only in reference to its ancient Hindu history. The population considers the sacredness of the site mainly through its contemporary Buddhist religion. The history of the Lao Kingdom, religion, and local beliefs, constitute a ‘whole’ heritage which local communities identify with, and it contributes to the attractiveness of the site for tourists. The Master Plan seeks to protect this whole with different degrees, depending on the level of importance and the integrity of each place.



Fig.74, 75: Along the river, the Buddha of Sisumang, under the *ficus religiosa* – called the Buddha tree -, is a sacred place, worshipped by the locals. This place is located on pre-Angkorian ruins. The terrace was constructed with raised panels, removable, allowing the eventual realisation of the excavation of the site. © J-C. Castel.

### 2.1.2.2. Natural and agricultural heritage

Some natural elements such as Mount Phou Kao and the river area are considered by the UNESCO for the symbolic value they bring to the classified cultural landscape. The Master Plan protects natural areas also for their ecological or agricultural value. The entire mountain range is fully preserved and affected by the policy against fire and against deforestation. Some inaccessible natural areas have become ecological reserves, which are used in particular to breed birds. This is the case for the artificial lake of Champasak and the island of Don Phakam. Many botanicals are protected, also the trees listed around Vat Tomo. The inventories of natural heritage are incomplete; knowledge is still partial and needs to be developed.

The geography of the Champasak region was always a space conducive to growing rice. The rivers that descend from the mountains irrigate the plain. This forms a basin, which can be flooded, before rising along the strip of land along the river, along which have developed the dwellings and the current access road. The landscape was transformed with the creation of new irrigated areas located on the bank, that allows for the harvest of two rice crops per year.

Some recent landscape changes, such as the creation of the lake and the new rice fields, fully contribute to the quality of the current landscape of Champasak and are also protected by the Master Plan. The pressure of urbanisation tends to encroach on the land of the newly irrigated rice fields. The Master Plan protects these areas as much as possible, both to avoid undermining the public investment in the irrigation system, and to preserve jobs related to agricultural activity, and also to maintain the quality of the rice fields that lead to the edge of the river.

The Master Plan incorporates the elements described above in an enlarged sense of the contemporary cultural landscape, complementary to the former cultural landscape classified by the UNESCO.



Fig.76, 77: The rice fields of Champasak. © Y. Phethani, © J-C. Castel.

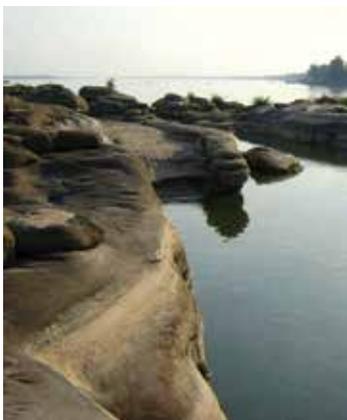


Fig.78, 79: The natural areas of the Mekong. The islands of Don Phakam (left) and Don Daeng (right). © D. Bazin, © J-C. Castel.

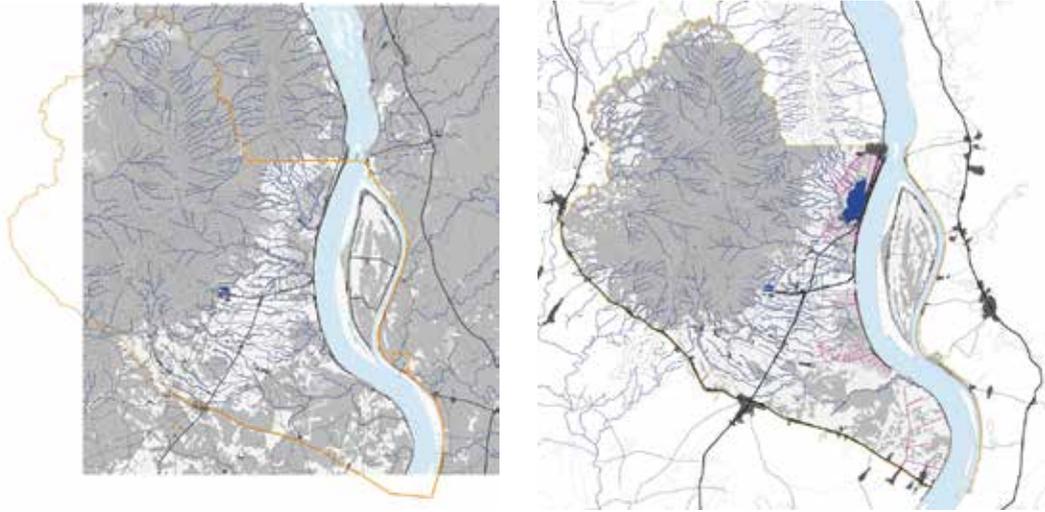


Fig.80, 81: Comparison of river systems between 1965 and 2015. Source: ENSAV, 2015.

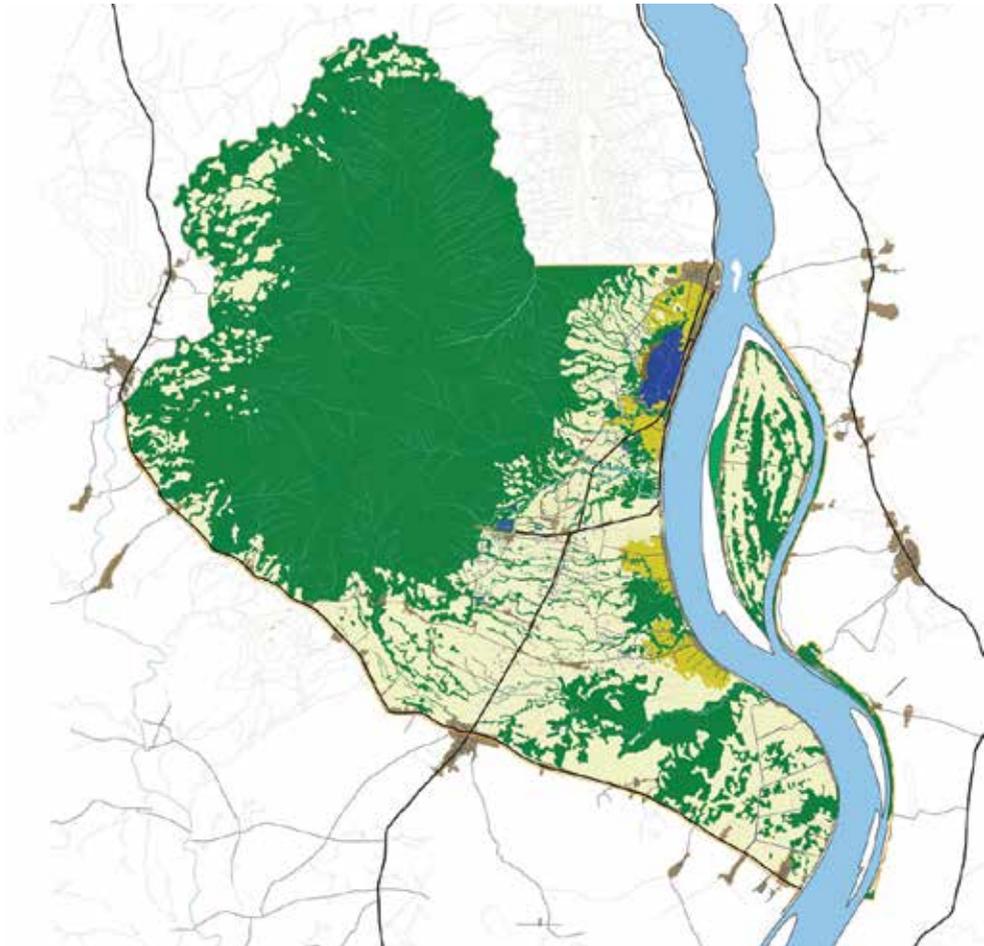


Fig.82: Vegetation within the classified site. Source: ENSAV, 2015, after Google Maps.

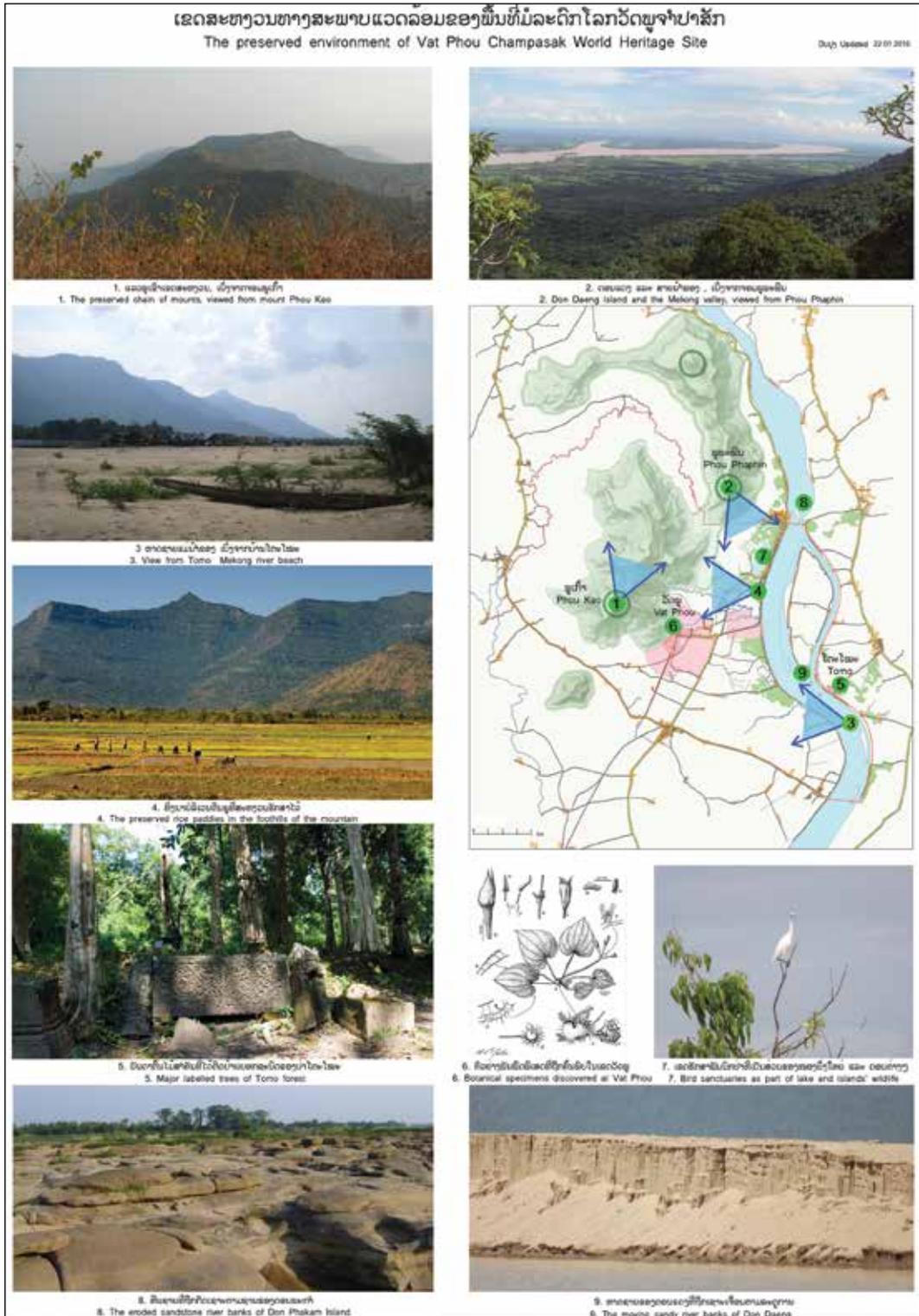


Fig.83: The preserved environment of Vat Phou Champasak. Panel exposed at the Heritage Interpretation Centre of the Vat Phou Museum.

### 2.1.3. The cultural landscape as a palimpsest

A simplified representation of the overall cultural landscape of Champasak addressed by the Master Plan can be given by the image of a palimpsest, containing several historical layers.

At a minimum, we can distinguish (newest to oldest):

- The contemporary heritage, marked by institutionalisation and communication regarding the classified site and entry into a global tourism market, incorporating new cultural and environmental components.
- The heritage of the modern era, characterised by typical architecture and infrastructure, in which we can include the buildings of the French era, and the major post-revolutionary hydraulic works.
- The historical heritage of the villages that has developed over the Lao monarchy, organised around Buddhist temples.
- The ancient Khmer settlements, as well as elements of the natural site associated therewith.

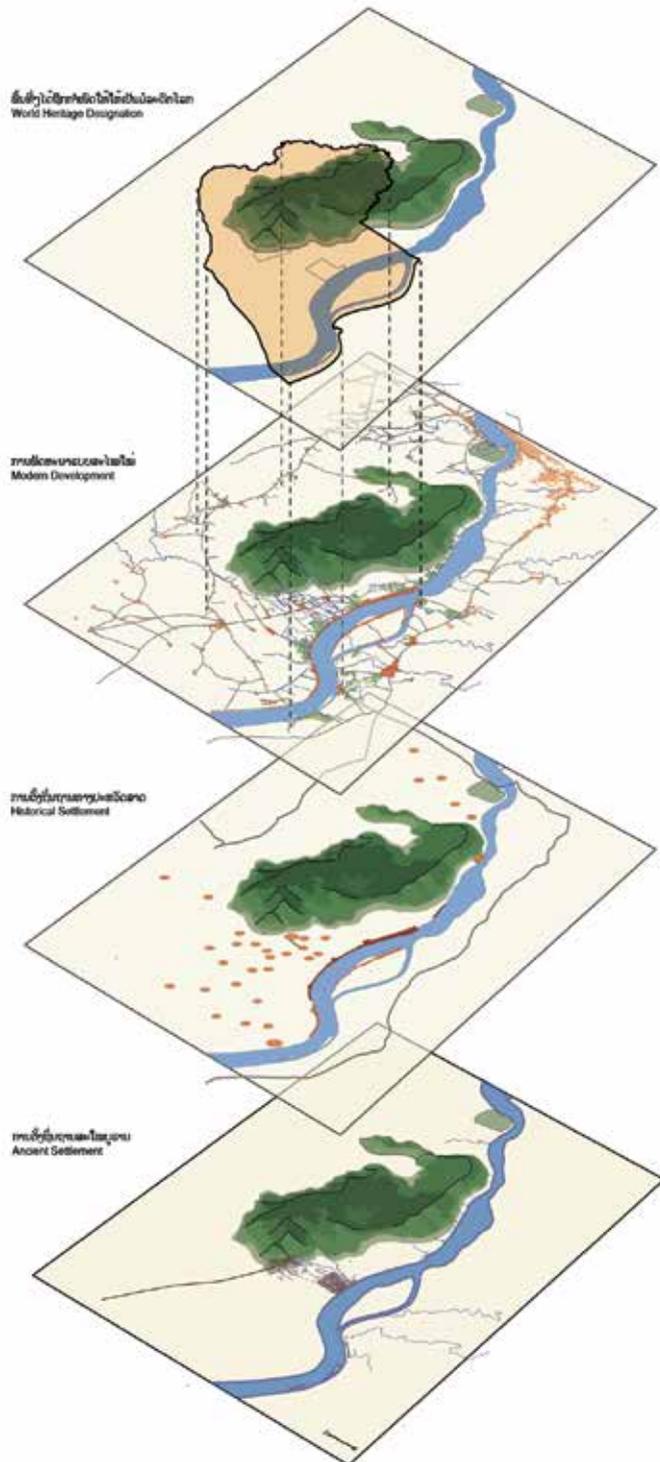


Fig.84: The historical palimpsest of Vat Phou – Champasak.



## 2.2. Consideration of development issues

### 2.2.1. Development dynamics and challenges

#### 2.2.1.1. Actualisation of the issues

Development issues were not greatly addressed at the time of the classification of the site<sup>37</sup>. The expectations expressed then on the impacts of growth particularly focused on the modernisation of agriculture<sup>38</sup>. Other risks were briefly reported in relation to the risks concerning the development of industrial zones<sup>39</sup>, as the pressures that might arise related to the development of tourism. The Master Plan permits a re-evaluating and updating of these initial approaches.

Regarding agriculture, the largest transformation of the landscape, announced in the nomination dossier, was the creation of a new irrigation system. This transformation, achieved throughout the 90s, was well advanced at the time of the approval of the classification by the UNESCO. Since then, the completion of the 14A route has called for the need for adaptations of certain channels and the installation of a new drainage system. It has also been observed that the increase in acreage was accompanied by a decrease in the density of trees on the plain<sup>40</sup>. The mechanisation of the agriculture is expanding.

Regarding the industrial sector, the Master Plan guides corporate facilities outside the classified site. The unsolved problem of the brick factory remains, located just outside the area of the Vat Sang'O monument. The most delicate problem is that of anticipating the change of agricultural facilities. Under the effect of the expansion and modernisation of activities, the traditional agricultural landscape may quickly come to resemble an industrial zone. An example of this are the recently built barns near the old airport that harbour intensive farming activities.



Fig.86: Modification of the irrigation system driven by the completion of the 14A road.



Fig.87: Mechanisation of the rice harvest. taken south of Vat Phou. © J-C. Castel.

37. The nomination dossier cites the total population and only announced that the « increased prosperity and higher expectations for living standards are leading to pressures for new housing types and for more facilities. » Nomination dossier. pp. 58-60. *Op. Cit.*

38. Nomination dossier. p. 58. *Op. Cit.*

39. *Ibid.*

40. Source: ENSAV. Nov. 2015.

## 2.2.1.2. Tourism development

### 2.2.1.2.1. National and regional context

In constant growth for a decade, since 2010, the tourism sector has become the second source of income in the country, behind the mining sector and before the electricity market<sup>41</sup>. More than 51% of this income is generated by international tourists from outside of the ASEAN region, while they represent only 14% of total visitors.

These international tourists thus represent a priority market for Laos in terms of economic benefits. Champasak province is the third most visited province in the country.

The number of visitors to the province is increasing every year. It experienced an increase of + 4.75% between 2012 and 2013 and of + 8.5% between 2013 and 2014. The places that attract the most visitors are the Four Thousand Islands, Vat Phou, and the Bolaven Plateau.

A 2010 survey shows that three quarters of the visitors, to register their visit to Vat Phou, are visiting other parts of the country, including multiple sites. The development of tourism in the preserved area must be understood at least at the regional level, in complement with other tourist sites in the country.

### 2.2.1.2.2. Local context

The situation in Champasak district and Vat Phou contrasts with the general trend. The number of visitors to Champasak town has not increased since the opening of the 14A road in 2011. This site does not currently experience the need for new hotels. The facilitation of road access benefits hotels and tour operators who organise tours from Pakse, offering round half day tours, or making only a brief stop at Vat Phou, before continuing the trip to the Four Thousand Islands.

A recent study confirms that only 0.7% of the surveyed visitors spend a night in Champasak town<sup>42</sup>. Visitors spend an average of two nights on the Four Thousand Islands, one to two nights in Pakse and one night on the Bolaven Plateau<sup>43</sup>.

Faced with competition from other tourist spots, Vat Phou is witnessing a decline in visitors. The number of visitors from outside Asia is satisfying, but the number of Asian visitors has been decreasing for two years<sup>44</sup>. The increase of the price of

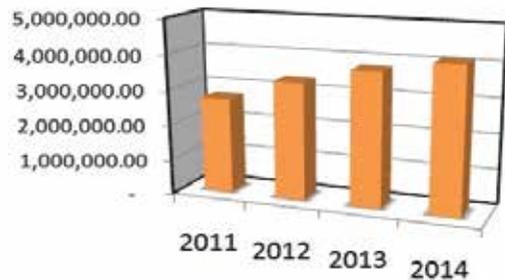


Fig.88: Evolution of the number of visitors in Laos (2011- 2015).

41. Source: Statistics reports 2013 and 2014. Department of Development and Tourism, Ministry of Information, Culture & Tourism.

42. Source: Swiss Contact. Study conducted in 2015 with a panel of 300 tourists divided into 3 groups: organised trips, individual travellers, and Thais.

43. The visits of the Thai neighbors, who represent a quarter of the visitors, are shorter: on average three days, including two nights only in Pakse.

44. Data from the sale of entrance tickets to Vat Phou.

the entry ticket can be a factor in explaining this decline. When the price of the toll road is added, the final cost leads some tour operators to not include the site in their itinerary.

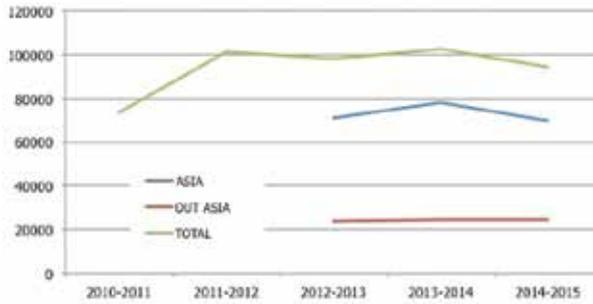


Fig.89: Number of visitors at Vat Phou Temple (2010-2015).

	Number	%
Farmers	14 554	62
Workers	5 254	22
Entrepreneurs	299	1
Business jobs	1 380	3
Informal sector	3 043	13
TOTAL	23 647	100

Fig.90: Distribution of private employment of residents of the classified site<sup>45</sup>.

The fear expressed by the villagers is rather that of a tourism development that generates waste and only little benefit to the local people. The classified site counts about 20,000 formal jobs in the private sector and 300 companies. About fifteen of these companies concern the tourism sector (hotels, restaurants). The local tourism industry is underdeveloped. The dominant activity of the classified site is agriculture, which accounts for two-thirds of the jobs.



Fig.91, 92: From Pakse, tour operators offer a round trip to Vat Phou in half a day. © J-C. Castel.

### 2.2.1.3. Impact of residential dynamics

The improved access to Champasak town mainly creates opportunities site for residential development. There are cases of new residents building their permanent or second homes near the Mekong River. But their number is still small, and it is hard to find any traces of gentrification and exclusion of local people by the arrival of the new affluent classes.

It appears that the main effect of residential development involves the dynamics of the local population itself, linked to the growth of the natural balance.

45. Estimation from 2014 data. Source: Office of Planning and Investment. Champasak District.

ບັນດາໝູ່ບ້ານໃນພື້ນທີ່ມໍລະດົກໂລກວັດພູຈຳປາສັກ  
 Villages within the World Heritage Area of Vat Phou-Champasak

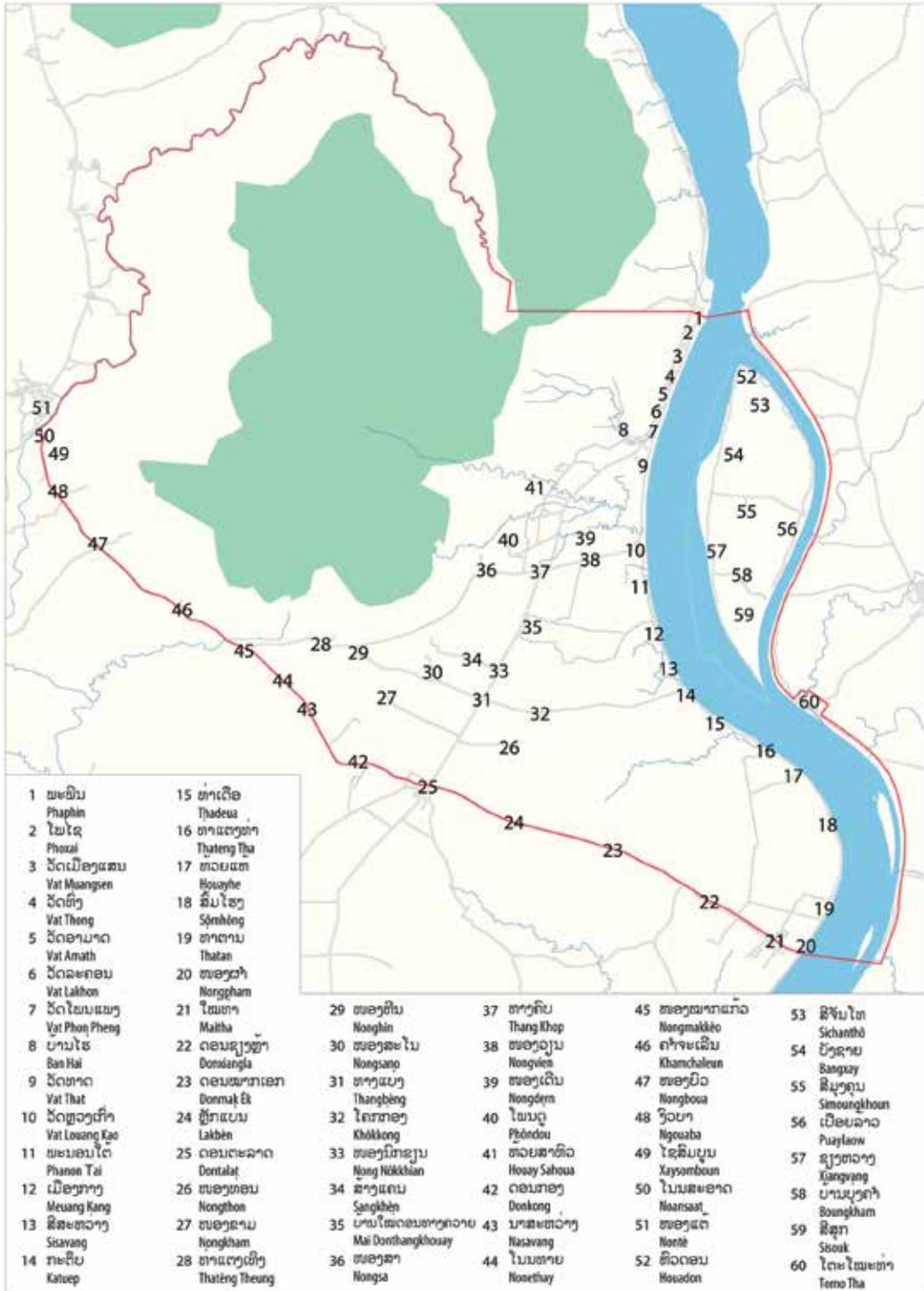


Fig.93: The 60 villages of the classified site.

Since the classification of the site, the number of inhabitants has increased by a third. In 2014, this population represented about 35,600 habitants<sup>46</sup>, distributed over 5,900 families.

The number of inhabitants has an average growth of 1.45 % per year, which would lead to a demand of about 85 houses annually. This estimation does not take the increase in living standards into account. All inclusive, the development of buildings in the classified site should produce about hundred additional homes per year.

The thirty existing schools in the classified site host 6,500 students<sup>47</sup>. About 700 new students join the primary classes every year. Half of the villages have a primary school and five of them have a secondary school.

The low level of education hinders local development. The level of education is satisfying when it comes to primary schools, but then decreases. One third of students leave school after finishing primary ; another third after college. Only the remaining third go to a high school.

The population and public facilities are spread over the whole area, which means that urban expansion occurs sporadically and is almost imperceptible over a short period. But over time, urbanisation will spread in a ribbon pattern, along the roads, and eventually the view of the site will change.

The economic growth is also reflected in the development of vehicles. The combined effect of improved pavements (enhancement, enlargement), the increase in traffic and the densification of the buildings along the roads, contributes to highlight the presence of infrastructure in the landscape.

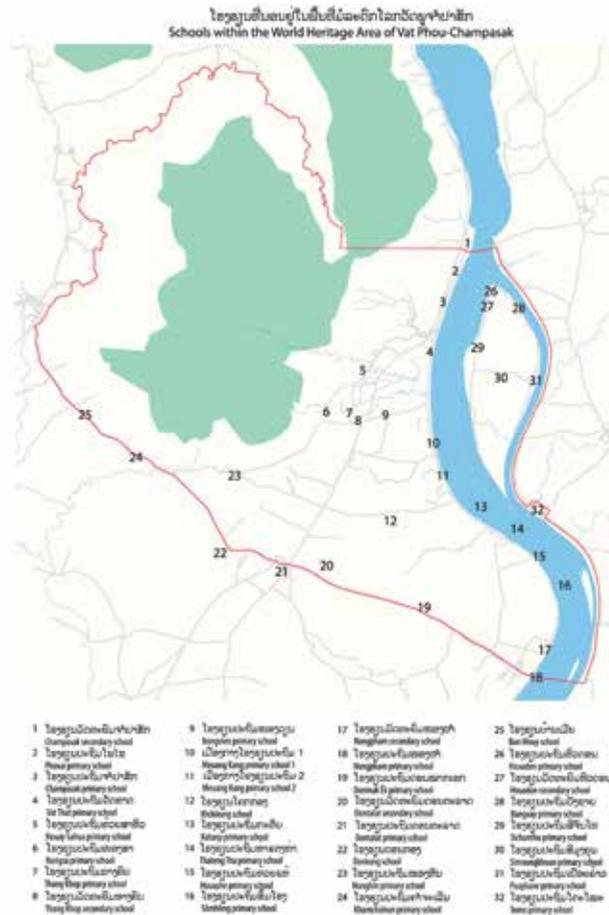


Fig.94: The 32 schools of the classified site.

46. Note on the calculation method of the population: data are from the official census figures of 2014, provided village by village. As a habitat generally develops along routes, and the borders of the classified site follow the middle of a road, the population of each village concerned is 50% within the site and 50% outside. Except for Dontalat, 3/4 of the inhabitants are counted outside the classified site, and only 25% inside the classified site.

47. Estimation from 2015 data. Source: Office of Education and Sports. Champasak District.

## 2.2.2. Management issues and levels

To address the previous issues, it is necessary to adapt the management levels to each of the issues concerned.

Thus, for example, the control of construction permits must be made as close as possible to the field, to be reactive, involving the affected villages. The new construction areas should be planned at district level, to prevent fragmentation in all villages. The issues concerning the impact of tourism development and management of transit traffic, on the other hand, can be set in consultation with the provincial and State authorities.

This approach is consistent with the 5 principles of cultural spaces of the Management Framework established by UNESCO which states that: « The management of cultural spaces is part of a larger space<sup>48</sup> ».



Fig.95, 96: The management of tourism and road traffic must be organised in coordination with the province and State authorities. © J-C. Castel, © D. Bazin.

The table below summarises the appropriate management level for each of the issues directly impacting the classified site:

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Main relevant authority</i>	<i>Relevant management area</i>
Road development	Ministry of Transport (MPWT) /Province	Area between Pakse and roads 13 and 16 to Cambodia and Thailand
Protection of archaeology	Ministry of Culture (MICT)	From Phou Malong to Ban That
Tourism development	Province	From Pakse to 4000 islands
Measures concerning the landscape (building heights)	Province/Districts	Buffer zone of the classified World Heritage
Opening of new building areas	Province/Districts	Buffer zone / Core area (to distinguish)
Measures of control of the building authorisations	Districts	Management by village groups under the district authority
Measures of awareness of inhabitants	Districts/Villages	Villages and/or village groups

48. Practical guide to the conservation and management of World Heritage cultural landscapes, p.36.

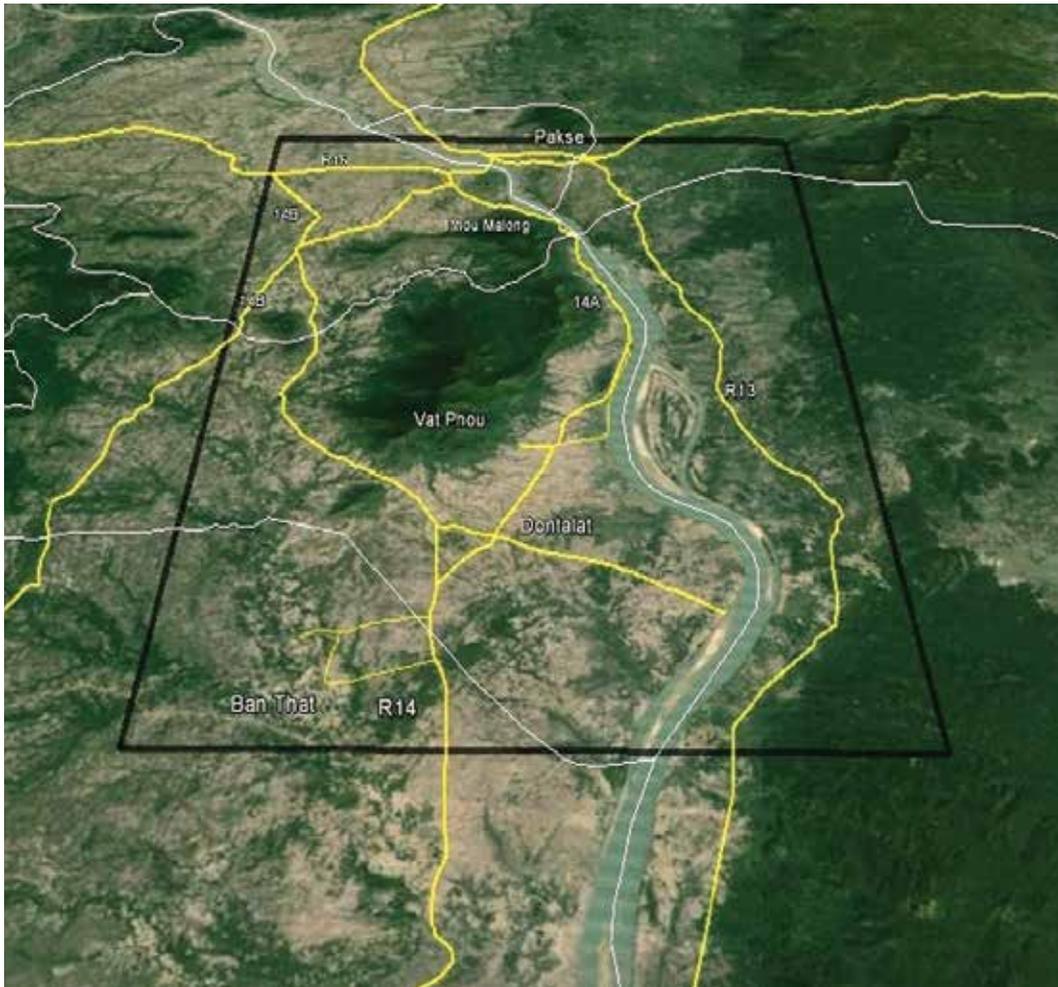


Fig.97: Determining the scope of the Master Plan. The main roads are highlighted in yellow; the limits of the districts are marked in white. Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

The largest perimeter, emerging from the table above, must include at least the territory delimited by the connection to Pakse and roads 13 and 16 to Cambodia and Thailand. This framework allows for the definition of the influence of the Master Plan.

**Finally, the space apprehended covers about 1 200 km<sup>2</sup>, that is to say, three times the surface of the protected site.**

Other issues are divided into subsets for each level of management, including primarily the perimeter of the classified site itself and its own zoning.

Moreover, the declination of the issues within the classified site has led to define a central zone with respect to the buffer zone, in order to discern more clearly the high heritage potential sectors of those with a low integrity level. This distinction is useful in order to clarify the rules relating to urban development.

### 2.2.3. Outline of the core area relative to the buffer zone

#### 2.2.3.1. Issues and criteria

If it is possible to explain to inhabitants that construction possibilities are highly constrained in the area near Vat Phou and the Ancient City, the application of a uniform rule in the newer parts located in the periphery of the site copes with incomprehension and rejection from the population.

The expert mission of UNESCO-ICOMOS, in February 2015, has suggested studying several hypotheses, and may eventually lead to reconsider the borders of the classified site<sup>49</sup>.

Without going that far, the solution proposed in the Master Plan simply offers:

- To clarify the boundary between the core area and the buffer zone, so as to adjust the protection rules and the construction possibilities and other opportunities.

- To, at the same time, keep the borders of the classified perimeter, which remains relevant when applying some common requirements to landscape the whole site.

This work to identify the core area, distinct from the buffer zone, is based on the decomposition study of different strata of the landscape, from the earliest times to the present, combined with the consideration of the integrity of the site. The result establishes an important clarification between the different heritage components of the site:



Fig.98: Aerial view from Mount Phou Kao on the area (toward the east): the borders of the classified site (thick red line), the central zone (purple line), the archeological research zones (thin red line), the roads (in yellow). Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

49. Joint Reactive Monitoring Mission – 17-21 February 2015 – Mission report. pp.27, 28.

- The core area is defined as the heart of the classified site, bringing together the basic elements in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property. These components are:

- *The Vat Phou monumental complex and other major pre-Angkorian and Angkorian monuments in the classified area.*
- *Fossil traces that remain in the area of Vat Phou, from the Ancient City to the east, and south, around the Angkor road, highlighting the existence of a large area with many amenities (Ancient City, hydraulics, quarries).*
- *The constituent natural elements of the associative natural landscape, such as the sacred mountain and river from the perspective of Vat Phou, to the left bank of the river.*

- The rest of the classified site, constituting the buffer zone encompasses:

- *A few scattered remnants of fossil traces, located in places that have undergone recent changes.*
- *Natural heritage components, agricultural components, and the buildings from the latest era, representing a local heritage, but not significant for the classified World Heritage Site.*

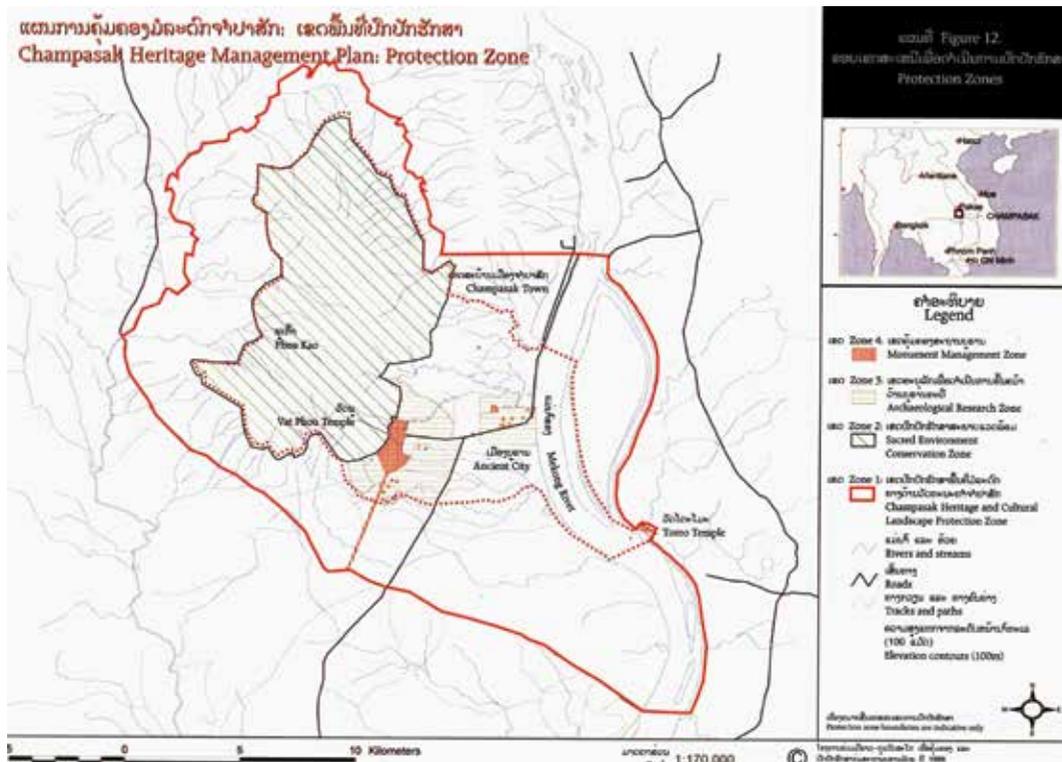


Fig.99: Integration of the core area (shown in red dots) within the zoning map of the World Heritage Site Management Plan.

### 2.2.3.2. Delimitation

The core area is delimited as follows:

- In the west and the north: followed by the perimeter of the sacred mountain (zone 2 of the Champasak Heritage Management Plan), to the Houay Phabang stream.
- The descent of the Houay Phabang stream, then crossing to the Don Daeng island.
- Descend along the shore of Don Daeng island, and the crossing to the left bank of the Mekong River including the monument of Vat Tomo.
- Immediately after Vat Tomo, a new crossing back to the right bank of the Mekong up to the mouth of the Houay Thateng stream.
- From the right bank to the mouth of Houay Katuep.
- Ascending the course of Houay Katuep, to the route towards the west to reach the southeast corner of the archaeological research zone south of Vat Phou.
- Followed by the limits of the archaeological research zone until the joining of the sacred mountain.

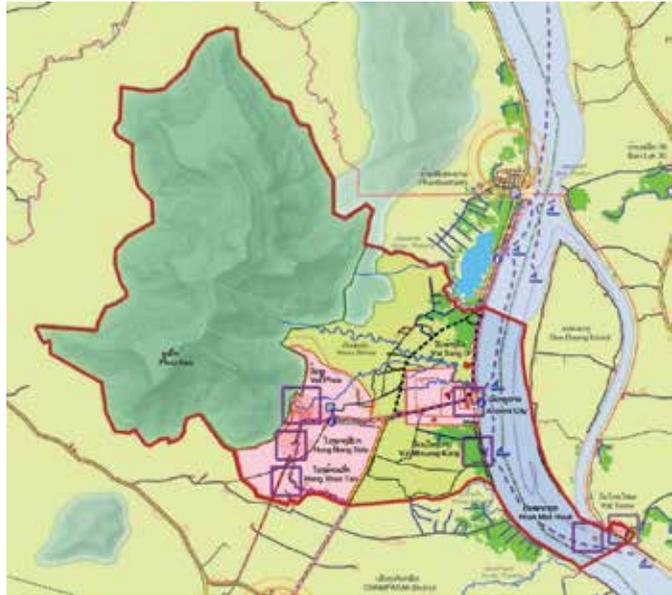


Fig.100: Integration of the perimeter of the core area in the Master Plan.

**The thus defined central zone covers an area of 169 km<sup>2</sup>, corresponding to 43% of the area of the classified site. More than two thirds of this area (118km<sup>2</sup>) are constituted out of natural elements (mountain and river). The rest (51 km<sup>2</sup>) is an area which has 10,000 inhabitants (in 2014), distributed over 13 villages.**

Zones	Area Km <sup>2</sup>	Nber of villages	Nber of inhabitants	%	Nber of families	%
- Vat Phou archaeological research zone	15.5	3	1 598	4.5	317	5.4
- Ancient city archaeo. research zone	4.5	3	1 775	5.0	282	4.8
- Vat Tomo archaeological research zone	0.2	1	606	1.7	107	1.8
SUB-TOTAL ARCHAEO. RESEAR. ZONES	20.2	7	3 979	11.2	706	12.0
- Rest of the core area	149	6	6 201	17.4	1 016	17.2
SUB-TOTAL CORE AREA	169	13	10 180	28.6	1 722	29.2
- Buffer zone	221	47	25 441	71.4	4 182	70.8
<b>TOTAL WORLD HERITAGE SITE</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>35 621</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5 904</b>	<b>100</b>

Fig.101: The population of the listed site, distributed according to the zoning of the Master Plan (data 2014).



## Part 3

### Measures relating to the protection and enhancement of the cultural landscape

#### Introduction: a planning system adapted to issues related to the site

The Master Plan guides the tourism development policy, determines the objectives related to the regulation of road traffic, and establishes a framework for the organisation of constructions with respect for the landscape and the archaeological foundations.

Construction opportunities are prioritised according to different degrees of protection, taking into account the issues of each area, from the archaeological research zones that are the most restrictive, to the peripheral poles of Panthakharm and Dontalat, where urban development is encouraged.

The framework of urban planning is based on the simplest possible planning system to be understood and appropriated by inhabitants of the 60 villages of the classified site. This system consists of three levels:

- Level 1: Master Plan
- Level 2: Land Use Plan, formed by building codes and assorted plans
- Level 3: Implementation decree to enforce the works regulation control

The establishment of the control of urbanisation is accompanied by an awareness programme for residents and consultation with the concerned villages. This programme will be continued after the completion of the review and will be the subject of the publication of simplified documents for use by residents. The success of protecting and managing the development of the classified site is largely based on this distribution and on dialogue with the local population.



Fig.102, 103: Presentation and discussion of urban planning documents with village representatives at a consultation meeting during the review procedure. © WHSO.

### 3.1. Measures for guiding the urban development of Champasak

#### 3.1.1. Road traffic supervision

##### 3.1.1.1. A territory in opening phase

Long isolated, the territory of the former capital of southern Laos began to open with the construction of the Pakse Bridge in 2000 and the construction of the 14A road in 2009. This allowed for the connection of the southern districts (Phonthong, Champasak, Soukhouma, Mounlapamok) to Pakse and to the R16 road to Thailand. The road extension mentioned above is also planned to head south to Cambodia.

This follows the opening up policy of the right bank of the Mekong, carried continuously by five-year plans, in the name of strengthening the territorial unity and equity of development of the country. The National Road Development Plan was adopted by the Government in 2009. It is also part of a transnational approach of the Master Plan CLV (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam), approved in 2004, and then revised in 2010.



Fig.104: National plan of road improvement (southern part), 2009.

### 3.1.1.2. Reducing the impact of road 14A in the heart of the classified site

In the National Road Development Plan of 2009, it is expected that the R14 road project bypasses the classified site by the west along section 14B + 14A1 (in yellow on the map right). The part of the 14A, which runs along the Mekong River (green) and through the classified site has the status of a secondary road.

But in practice, the construction of the 14A along the Mekong River began first. This situation has alerted the UNESCO who sought to stop the works at the heart of the site (between km 29 and km 34). UNESCO then conducted several expert missions. The last of these missions, which took place in 2015, sets out the prerequisites for implementation before completing this stretch of road<sup>50</sup>, to reduce the impact on the passage of this vulnerable area. These proposals were included in the decision of the the UNESCO<sup>51</sup> World Heritage Committee in July 2015.

The Master Plan incorporates the proposals of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, of which there are two types:

1. Realising roads bypassing the classified site west, before the completion of road 14A.
2. Implement traffic management measures: guide the heavy traffic to the bypass road, set up parkings for buses north and south of the classified site,



Fig. 105: Diagram illustrating the development strategy and road traffic management adopted by the Master Plan.

50. Joint Reactive Monitoring Mission – 17-21 February 2015 – Mission report - Recommendation 1, p. 6

51. Decision 39COM7B. World Heritage Committee, 2015.

limit the use of the 14A road to the traffic of light vehicles, prohibiting the passage of transit traffic through the Ancient City and the old villages of Champasak.

### **3.1.2. Organisation of urban development**

#### **3.1.2.1. Location of constructible areas**

##### *3.1.2.1.1. Polarisation of the development zones*

The Master Plan reflects the desire to guide the supply of land for new projects in order for them to not be dispersed throughout the site. It made the choice to enhance the urban development on the outskirts of the site, as far as possible from the central zone. For this reason, it encourages the creation of two urban centres in the villages of Dontalat (in the south) and Panthakharm (in the north).

The town of Dontalat has 4,500 inhabitants. It is the main urban centre between Pakse and Soukhouma. Its equipment, its market, its hospital are the main economic centre of Champasak district.



Fig.106: Aerial view of the town of Dontalat (southern view). More than 60 hectares (colored orange) are available for future urban development beyond the World Heritage Site border. The road lined in red marks the boundary of the listed area (top of photo).  
Image : © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

This approach, however, is not sufficient to meet the needs of the 60 villages and the 30 existing schools, which cannot be simply frozen. It is therefore necessary to calibrate the expansion possibilities at the village and to take account of the needs of the population while ensuring the heritage protection.

The Master Plan defines a total of 152 hectares of urban areas to accommodate the future growth of the population. 80% of these areas (122 hectares) are located outside the classified site, mainly in the villages of Dontalat (in the south) and Panthakharm (in the north).

17% of these areas reserved for urban expansion (26 hectares) are in the buffer zone, mainly to support the needs of villages located along the bank of the northern part of the site, where the administrative centre of the district is located.

The remaining 3% of the building area (4.69 hectares) corresponds to free land located within the existing towns in the central area.

In the perimeter of the protected site, the possibilities for urban expansion are strongly framed. **No new zone of urban expansion of villages is permitted within the core area. The new zones are possible only within the buffer zone, provided that each zone is the subject of a comprehensive development study, in order to avoid scattered constructions.**

Zonages	Number of villages	Existing built up area (ha)	Zones for expansion (ha)	Total Zones U (ha)
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ZONES	7	76.80	0.00	76.80
- Rest of the core area	6	94.40	4.69	99.10
SUB-TOTAL CORE AREA	13	171.20	4.69	175.90
- Buffer zone	47	505.95	26.12	532.07
<b>SUB TOTAL WORLD HERITAGE SITE AREA</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>677.15</b>	<b>30.81</b>	<b>707.96</b>
- Border villages (Dontalat, Panthakharm...)		219.61	121.81	341.42
<b>TOTAL CAPACITY</b>		<b>896.76</b>	<b>152.62</b>	<b>1049.38</b>

Fig.107: Distribution of existing built up areas and new zones for expansion.



Fig.108: The area of Vat Thong, located in the northern part of the listed site, is the administrative centre of the district. The planned areas for expansion are colored orange. Image : © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

#### 3.1.2.1.2. Specific issue for the heart of the site

The specific problem of the village of Thang Khop (composed of the villages of Thang Khop Ban Phonsao'E and Phonngam), located in the heart of the site, on the axis leading to Vat Phou, remains to be solved. With more than 2,200 inhabitants, it is the most populated village of the classified site. The Master Plan does not envisage

them to develop new urban areas, given their highly sensitive position. However, remaining with no alternative runs the risk of diffused, illegal and uncontrolled urbanisation, as illustrated by the recent constructions of farm buildings for the industrial farm located near the airport. It would be helpful if this area were subject to detailed urban plan to ensure that buildings have a minimal impact on the landscape.



Fig.109: The village of Thang Khop forms a T where the junction between the east-west axis operates from the Ancient City and goes up to Vat Phou and the road down to Dontalat (in the south). The road from Phonngam (left), connecting to the high school, joins the end of the runway of the old airport (visible at the top of the photo). Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

This area is one of the last that to have no access to running water. More generally, the heart of the site, ranging from the Ancient City to Ban Nongsa, has more than 5,000 inhabitants<sup>52</sup>, as well as three primary schools and one secondary school. This territory appears to the villagers as a disadvantaged place, without the development of public services, due to the UNESCO classification. The heart of the site should adopt a suitable development project in order not to be stigmatized and to allow a form of possible development with respect to the classified site.



Fig.110, 111: High school of Phonngam. The four schools located in the heart of the site accommodate 1,300 students. © J-C. Castel, © D. Bazin.

52. Villages of: Vat Luang Kao, Nongvien, Nongdern, Thang Khop (Ban Phonsao'E and Phonngam included), Ban Nongsa (Phondou included).

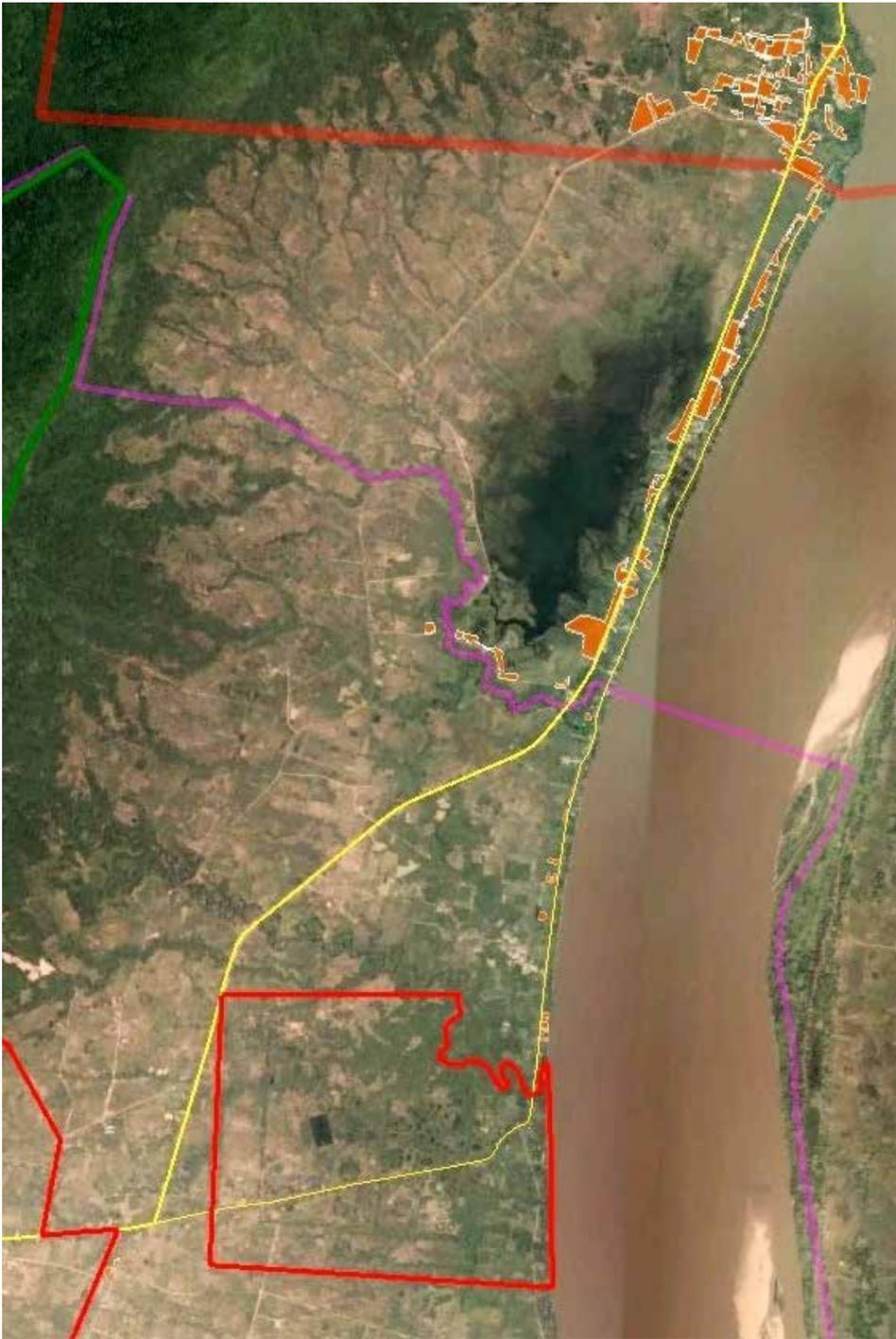


Fig.112: Location of the expansion areas in the northern half of the site. It clearly distinguishes the Panthakharm development pole in the north, where 43 hectares are available for future urban development. The thick red line marks the boundary of the site. 26 hectares of secondary development zones are arranged within the villages along the Mekong River, inside the buffer area. The purple line marks the boundary of the core area. No urban expansion is allowed in the archaeological research zones, delineated by a red line (bottom of the photo). Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

### 3.1.2.2. General limitation of the height of buildings

The urbanisation of Champasak is formed out of old farming villages. Aside from the south pole of Dontalat akin to a small town (located mainly outside of the classified zone), the rest of the inhabited landscape consists of scattered villages, interspersed with rice fields and dotted with trees or groves overlooking the houses. No building has no more than two storeys, including the ground floor. It is essential to maintain this characteristic in order to preserve the dominant natural component of the large vista seen from the terrace of the Vat Phou sanctuary. Likewise, whatever the point of view from the surrounding mountains or the beaches of the Mekong River, the natural appearance of the site remains dominant.

**The Management Plan adopted in 1998 foresaw that the height of buildings should be limited to 12 meters. The principle of a height limited to 12 meters is included in the Master Plan and applied to the entire classified area.**



Fig.113: Limiting the height of buildings helps to maintain the landscape filled with trees of the villages on the shores. Above: village of Ban Phoxay. © J-C Castel.



Fig.114: Impression of the landscape from the bank to the road in the village of Ban Phoxay. ©WHSO.

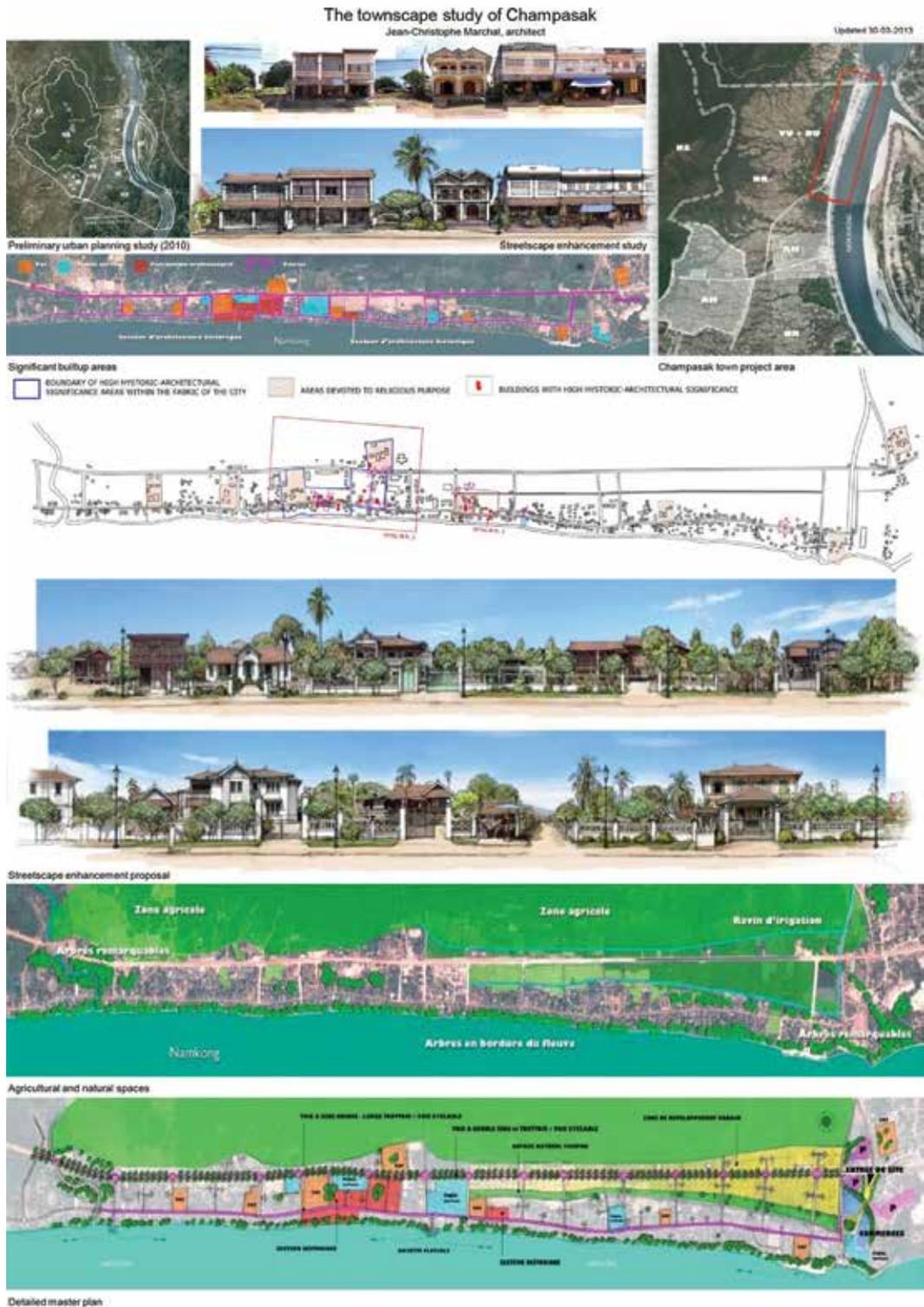


Fig.115: The townscape study of Champasak, by J-C Marchal (2013), shows the importance of a balance between buildings and vegetation, covering the villages from the Mekong River bank to Champasak.

### 3.1.3. Enhancement policy of the classified site for sustainable tourism

#### 3.1.3.1. Goals

The promotion of the classified site is generally too limited to the Vat Phou monument only. Other archaeological sites, natural heritage, and the surrounding lake are also places worth discovering. The villages of Champasak also have a cultural, historical, architectural, and religious significance, set in a remarkable landscape, which should be capable of retaining more tourists.

The valuation of the policy envisaged in the Master Plan aims to raise awareness and improve the tourism possibilities for the entire cultural heritage, encouraging visitors to stay at least one night in Champasak and thus promote the development of local economic activities.

The project is designed with respect to Ecotourism principles, which can be defined as “responsible traveling to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people and involves interpretation and education”<sup>53</sup>.

#### 3.1.3.2. The feasibility of enlarging tourism alternatives

A feasibility study has been conducted in 2015 to evaluate potential trails and assess the needs to improve access to the sites and information for visitors. 8 thematic trails have been identified and documented with text description, map to detail each route, practical information: duration, access, way of transportation, level, necessity of a guide or not, seasonal difficulty.

As a result, four trails focus on archeology, history and nature in order to promote the main archeological sites of Vat Phou Heritage:

- Vat Phou – Hong Nang Sida – Thao Tao: *Archaeology, History, Nature*
- Vat Phou – Oub Moung – Tam Lek: *Archaeology, History, Nature*
- Ancient City – Vat Louang Kao: *Archaeology, Nature*
- Tomo Temple: *Archaeology, History, Nature, Local life across the Mekong*

The four other itineraries focus on additional highlights: Temples, Mekong river, rice fields, nature, culture, History, handicraft and local life:

- Ancient City – Vat Meuang Kang: *History, Nature, Local life*
- Don Daeng island: *Nature, Local life, Panoramic view*
- Muang Champasak - Historic and local life trail: *History, Local life, Architecture*
- Champasak rice paddies: *History, Nature, Local life, Rice paddies.*



Fig. 116, 117: Examples of the installation of terminals and information board in the classified area.

53. Definition of The International Ecotourism Society.

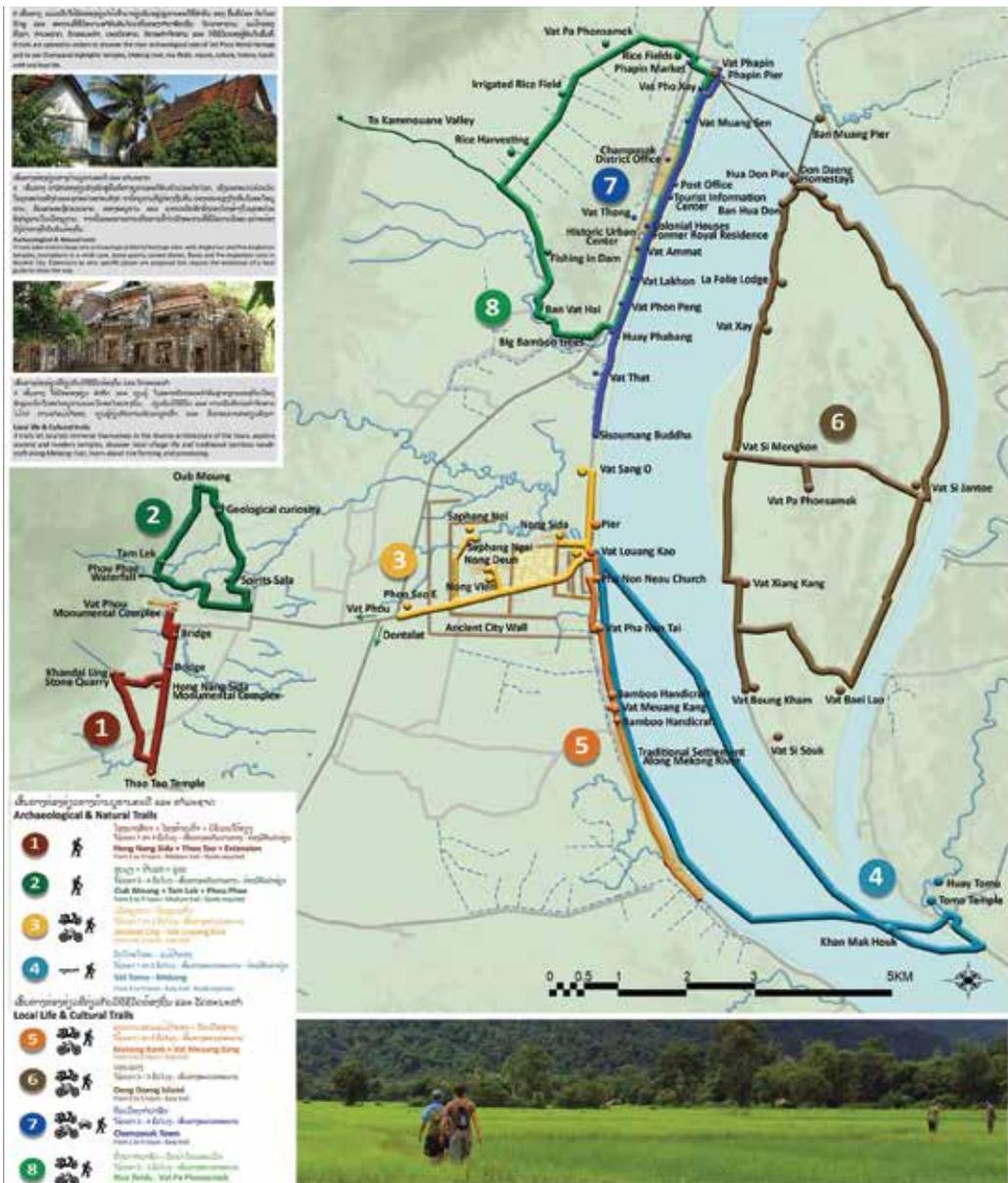


Fig.118: Global map of the 8 thematic trails in Vat Phou- Champasak.

### 3.1.3.3. Additional measures

The strengthening of tourism in Champasak is accompanied by two types of additional measures<sup>54</sup>:

- Establishment of physical facilities (signs, route signs, maintenance and securing of paths),
- Management support of the stakeholders in the tourism sector (administration, public and private guides, boat transport undertaking, rental bikes and scooters, hotels and catering, travel agencies).

54. Projects supported by the French cooperation (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and French Development Agency), the Swiss cooperation (Swiss Contact) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

## 3.2. Management and implementation of the Master Plan

### 3.2.1. Legal framework

#### 3.2.1.1. National framework

The national legal framework for heritage preservation is provided by the Law Concerning National Heritage, adopted in 2005 and revised in 2014.

Management is undertaken in accordance with the Champasak Heritage Management Plan that was officially adopted by the Government in September 1998. The Plan defines the boundaries of the Protection Zone and the three Preservation Areas. It contains regulations for the management of the World Heritage Site to cover archaeological work, conservation, and development control.

In addition, action plans to identify priority management measures are developed every five years. The last review of the action plan has been approved in 2014.

#### 3.2.1.2. Urban planning documents

The Champasak urban planning system is based on the articulation of two documents, the Master Plan and the Land Use Plan, collecting the first consent of the provincial committee of heritage and are then subject to the provincial government. Ultimately, the urban planning documents at the provincial level, in consultation with the two districts, are endorsed by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

- *The Master Plan* consists of this report and a general map scaled 1/20 000. This is an internal document for the administration and aims to guide the policy development and protection of the classified site, by putting it in a broader geographical context in relation to the surrounding territories.

- *The Land Use Plan* is a more precise variation of the master plan on the perimeter of the classified site, that informs on the applicable construction rights and which serves as a basis for including the processing of applications for building permits. It includes plans to scale 1/5000, possibly supplemented by more detailed specific plans, inventories, and regulations (building codes).

The respective requirements contained in these two documents are specified below.



Fig.119: The Land Use Plan consists of detailed prescriptions on a scale four times more accurate than the Master Plan, so that each project can be clearly positioned on the field.  
Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

### 3.2.2. Translation of the Master Plan into the Land Use Plan

#### 3.2.2.1. Requirements of the Master Plan and the Land Use Plan

The Master Plan sets the framework for the protection of heritage and the distribution of land for general purposes.

- *Protection of heritage:* The Master Plan respects the influence of the different zones of the Champasak Heritage Management Plan of the World Heritage Site. It contains the following distinctions: Grasp of the classified site (Zone 1) which also plays the role of a buffer zone, sacred mountain (Zone 2), Archaeological research zone (Zone 3), Monument zone (Zone 4). It complements these categories by introducing the concept of a core area, which includes the particular zones 2, 3, 4, gathering the constituent factors of the Outstanding Universal Value used for the classification of the site, as distinguished from the rest of the buffer zone.
- *Land use assignments:* The Master Plan locates the urban development poles and the possibilities for village expansion. It sets the location of the main equipment, and the road network extension projects. It defines the area of the protected natural sites: mountain, ecological wetlands, and irrigated rice fields.

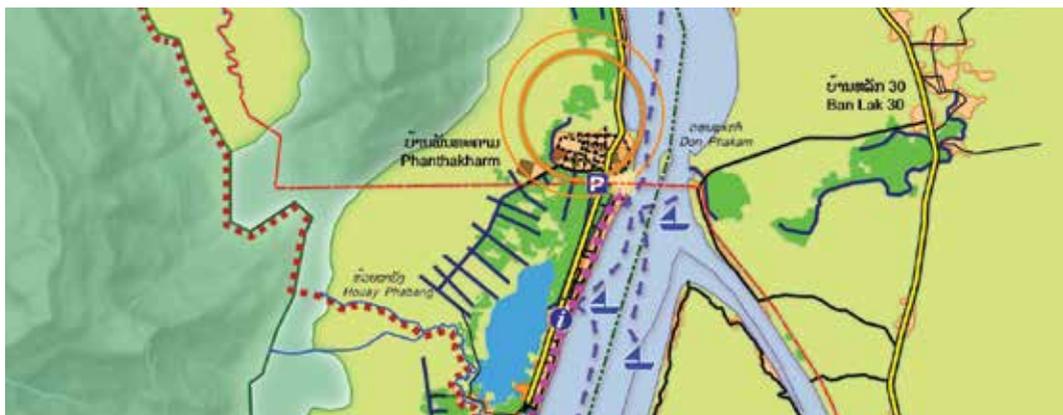


Fig.120: Extract from the Master Plan where one can see the development pole at the north entrance of the site, roads, river links, the irrigation system and irrigated rice fields, as well as the lake wetlands.

The Land Use Plan:

- Defines the categories set up in the Master Plan at a finer scale. For example, different types of relics and old facilities are listed: quarries, remains, barays, canals, raised land, scattered bricks or carved stones.
- Provides additional detailed requirements: Buffer zones are set close together around every vestige. The rights of way that open up new land for construction are defined and distinguished from existing built up areas. The outlook perspectives to preserve the separation between villages and vistas of the landscape are positioned on the map. Architecture, footpaths, and protected trees are identified one by one. An inventory of the architectural heritage is attached to the zoning plan (Champasak Architectural Heritage Inventory).

- Fixes the building codes to be abided by the owners who want to carry out works or construct new buildings<sup>55</sup>.



Fig.121: Extract from the Champasak Architectural Heritage Inventory, appended to the Land Use Plan.

55. See appendix 3.

### 3.2.2.2. Articulation between the Master Plan and the Land Use Plan

#### 3.2.2.2.1. Correspondence between the Master Plan principles and the building codes

The zoning and guidelines laid down in the Master Plan are reflected in the settlement of the Land Use Plan by graduated regulatory provisions depending on the importance of the value of the heritage, as summarized in the table below:

Zones	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Nber of villages	Nber of inhabit.	Goal of the Master Plan	Building codes
Monument & Archaeological Research Zones (Zones 1 and 3 of the Management Plan)	20	7	3 979	Absolute prohibition of urban expansion	« The amenities and new buildings - must take root within the grasp of the villages within the U area (bounded by a thick orange line). - only include shallow foundations - generate no earthworks, ditches, nor landfill »
Rest of the core area	31*	6	6 201	No extension zones. Limited urban expansion within the grasp of existing villages	« The new authorised constructions can be implemented within the U zone delimited by a thick orange line on the zoning plan, or is in the immediate adjacency of this limit. However, the realisation of constructions outside of the boundaries is not permitted when : - is in an area of irrigated rice fields, identified as “irrigated paddy field”, as identified in the zoning plan, - is an ecological nature reserve, identified as “ecological area for wildlife” as identified in the zoning plan.
Buffer zone	193*	47	25 441	Organised urban expansion as development projects.	« The construction of new urban areas, colored in orange on the zoning plan, must be the subject of a coherent development project designed to avoid unregulated building. »

\*Sacred mountain (102 km<sup>2</sup>) and Mekong River (44 km<sup>2</sup>) not included.



Fig.122: Examples of urban sprawl and encroachment of construction in irrigated rice fields. The Land Use Plan prohibits the construction of this urban sprawl (view from the north).

© J-C. Castel.

ແຜນວັງການນໍາໃຊ້ທີ່ດິນ ຢູ່ໃນເຂດມໍລະດົກໂລກວັດພູຈໍາປາສັກ ແລະ ພື້ນທີ່ອ້ອມຮອບ  
Zoning Map of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Land Use plan

Fig. 123/2016

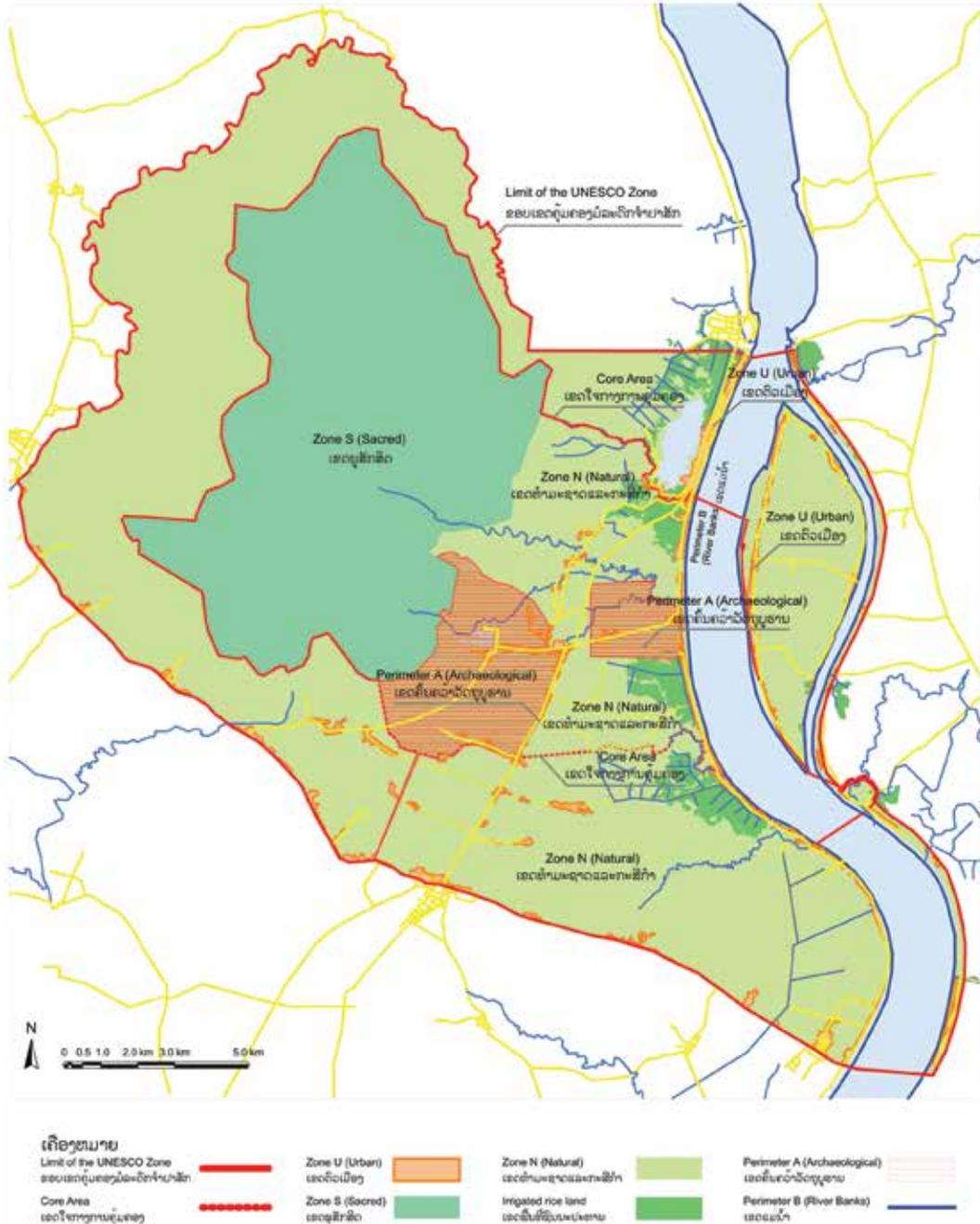


Fig.123: Zoning map of the Land Use Plan, approved by the Champasak Province Government on 18-02-2016.

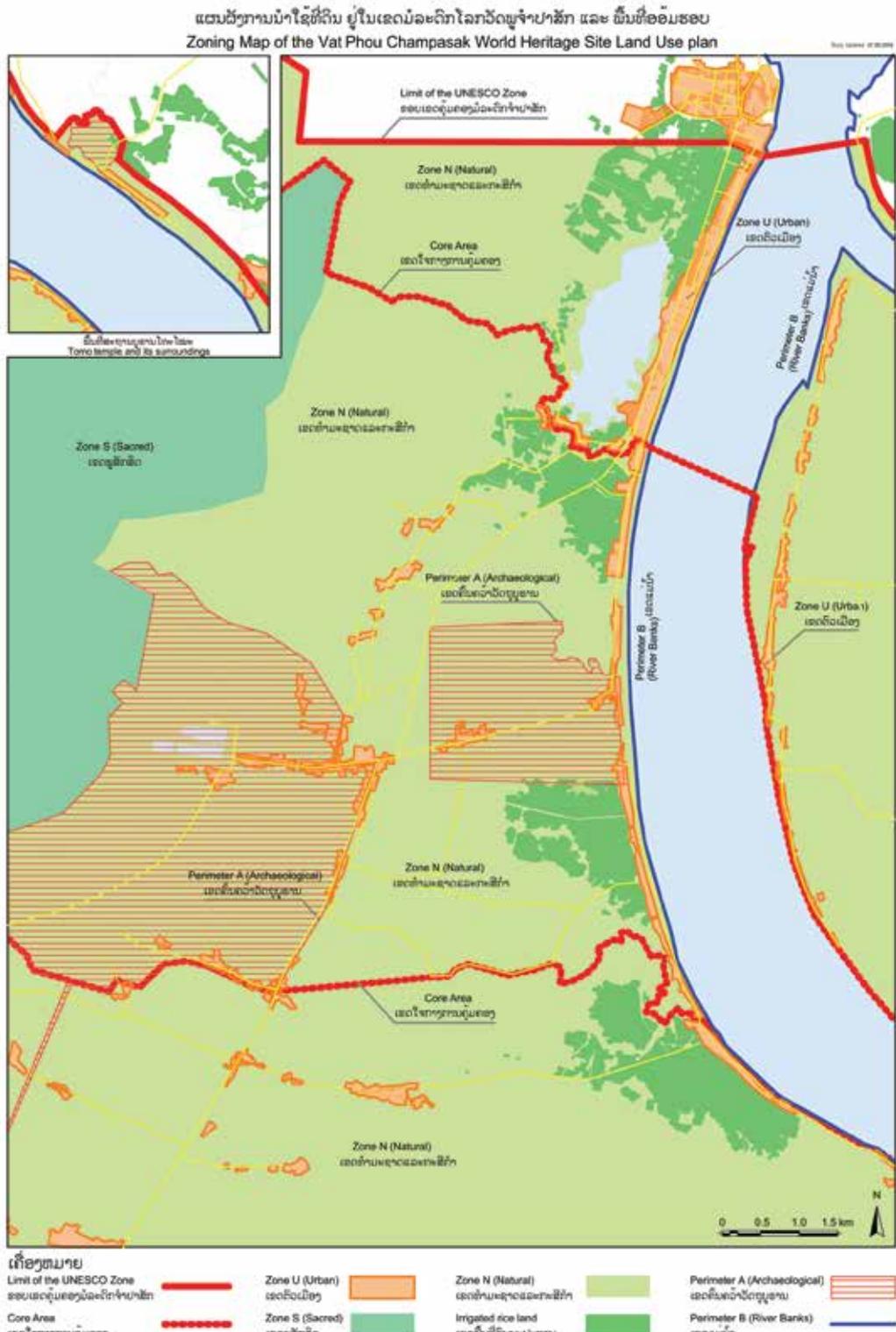


Fig. 124: Extract from the zoning map of the Land Use Plan, approved by the Champasak Province Government on 18-02-2016.

Land Use plan of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site and its surroundings

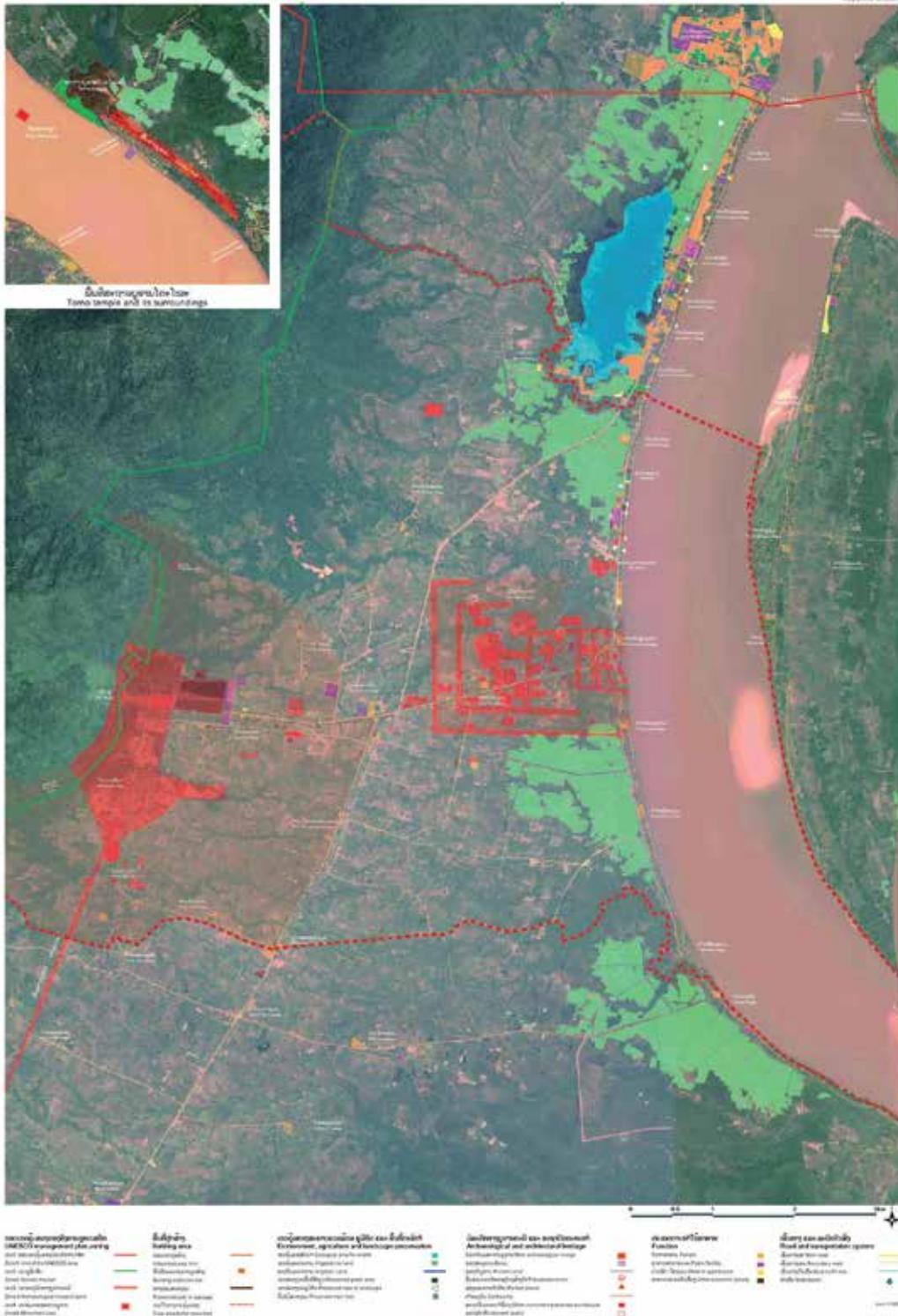


Fig.125: Extract from the Land Use Plan with detailed prescriptions (Real scale: 1/5 000), approved by the Champasak Province Government on 18-02-2016. Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

3.2.2.2.2. Organisation of building regulations

The Land Use Plan respects the general land allocation contained in the Master Plan. It cannot develop new urban areas within the central zone.

The Land Use Plan specifies the details of the rules by creation two layers of requirements that can overlap:

- The zones: the entire territory is classified in an U zone (villages), N zone (natural or agricultural area) or S zone (area of the sacred mountain).
- The perimeters of special easements: certain areas are affected in addition to special provisions: A (archeological research easement) or B (river banks).

Finally, the rules can be classified as follows:

	Surface (hect.)	Principal zone rule (U,N or S)	Additional constraints (A and/or B)	
			Archeological easement	River banks easement
Zone U situated within the core area	176	Construction authorised within the limits of the existing or contiguous zone U <sup>56</sup>	Foundations pads only	Lean, lightweight structures only
Zone U situated within the buffer zone	532	Same as above + possibility of creating new U zones		
Zone N	23,692*	Wooden traditional buildings related to agricultural activity only		
Zone S	10,200	No authorised constructions		

\*Mekong River (4,400 hectares) not included.



Fig.126: The village of Vat Louang Kao, situated right in the Ancient City, is an area where the constraints are cumulative. The resolution of the U zone adds archaeological servitude, and for some constructions only, the servitude of river banks. The limits of the U zone are delimited by an orange line. The grasp of the remains and their buffer zones are shown in red. Image: © 2015 Google Image © 2015 Digital Globe.

56. The regulation provides for special cases in which the constructibility may be subject to special constraints, for example when land is adjacent to irrigated rice fields or an ecological zone.

### 3.2.2.3. Implementation of the control of works and buildings

The implementation of procedures to control works and buildings are defined in the order of the provincial government n°01, dated 18-02-2016. It aims to organise the authorisation of works and the control exercised by the administration, involving the various services involved in the protection of the landscape and architectural heritage.

This order allows to summarise and clarify in a single text all applicable rules from decree n°621/DHUP of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport on building permits, and other provisions issued by the Planning Act and the Presidential Decree on Administrative Costs, so that the authorities and inhabitants of the classified site have a unique and simplified regulatory tool, enabling them to ascertain the authorisation process and control of works.

This order declines and specifies national provisions in order to enhance the coordination between the services required by specific issues for the classified site in Champasak concerning the protection of the archaeological foundations and landscape. In particular, it specifies the modalities of consultation of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Office in the proceedings.

*Composition of the order of Champasak province on the monitoring of works carried out in the perimeter of the classified site:*

- Part 1 - Provisions on preventive archeology: control of works on the excavations and earth embankments.
- Part 2 - Provisions relating to the preservation of the cultural landscape: control of demolition and felling of trees.
- Part 3 - Provisions relating to the preservation of the cultural landscape: building control.



Fig.127, 128: The earthworks pose a permanent risk in case of accidental discovery of archaeological remains. Above: earth collection on a site intended to fill for road works (left). Land supply to elevate a plot to build a house (right). © E. Cameron. © J-C. Castel.

### 3.2.3. Management and participation

The World Heritage Site Office of Vat Phou Champasak has been launching actions to promote the heritage of the classified site and to raise awareness of behaviours favourable to the protection of this heritage since 2009.

This policy was based on three levers:

- Inviting school groups for tours around Vat Phou and the museum, accompanied by their teachers.
- Establishment of the Champasak puppet theatre for an itinerant show concerning the heritage.
- Training of guides.

Since 2012, the local team has been completing these actions by setting up an itinerant information programme in the villages: illustrated presentations (video projection, debates, cultural games of questions and answers with gift giving). Since 2014, these presentations were also completed to include dissemination and consultation on the plan and regulations, and to raise awareness on the rules to follow and building permits.

Since then, the World Heritage Site Office of Vat Phou Champasak has decided to strengthen the awareness programme to reflect on the new imperatives: integration of intangible heritage, development of scientific knowledge, areas of archaeological research and discoveries, implementation of planning and construction rules.



Fig.129, 130: Awareness actions toward schools, at the museum and at schools. © WHSO.



Fig.131: Boarding equipment before leaving for a mobile briefing. © WHSO.



Fig.132: Presentation of heritage conservation measures in a village. © WHSO.



## APPENDICES

### Annex 1: Calendar of the revision procedure of the urban planning documents

<b>1st phase: Emergency protection measures and 1st phase of urban planning</b>	
18/05/2010	Provincial Government approval on draft proposal
10/07/2011	Launching of the first phase of architectural inventory with the support of National University of Laos and Brittany Region (France)
05/04/2013	Interministerial coordination meeting in Pakse and Provincial Government Decision on the setting up of the team organisation for urban planning review
17/12/2013	Provincial heritage committee approval of the 1st phase of the Champasak World Heritage Site (WHS) urban planning review
06/01/2014	Provincial government decision on approval of 1st phase of the Champasak WHS urban planning review
<b>2nd phase: Consultation process of villagers &amp; public bodies and second phase of urban planning</b>	
30/04/2014	Launching of the outreach program for schools
15/05/2014	Launching of the outreach information and consultation programme to villagers
12/06/2014	Opening ceremony for the implementation of urban planning in Champasak district
20/08/2014	Interministerial coordination meeting in Vientiane on the Champasak WHS urban planning project
22/09/2014	Second Provincial Government approval for enforcement of the planning review and building codes
24/10/2014	Approval of the proposal for the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value review by the Vice Prime Minister
23/12/2014	National approval of the Champasak WHS urban planning review by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport
<b>3rd phase: Achievement of the road project plan, urban planning documents update and implementation decree</b>	
01/06/2015	Beginning of the tourism development program in cooperation with AFD and Swiss Contact
10/10/2015	Interministerial coordination meeting in Pakse on the Champasak WHS urban planning project
23/11/2015	Provincial heritage committee approval
18/02/2016	Provincial government approval of the updated Master Plan and Land Use Plan & approval of the implementation decree to enforce the regulation control
11/03/2016	2nd Interministerial coordination meeting in Vientiane on the Champasak WHS urban planning project
19/05/2016	National approval of the Champasak WHS urban planning review by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport



## Annex 2: Provincial Government approval of the revision



Lao People's Democratic Republic  
Peace Independence Democracy Unity and Prosperity  
Champasak Province

Champasak Province

No. 188 /ຈຂ.ຈສ  
Pakse, date 18/02/2016

### Agreement

#### Approval of the Urban Planning Documents and Enforcement of the Regulations for Administration of Construction in the Area of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site, Revised Version

- In reference to the Law on Local Administration for Lao PDR No.03/ສພຊ, dated 21 October 2003.
- In reference to the Land Law No. 04/ສພຊ, dated 21 October 2003 and the Decree concerning Implementation of Land Law No.88/ນຍ, dated 03 June 2008.
- In reference to the Proposal of the Management Office of Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site No. 158/ຫມວ dated 09/02/2016 and Decision of the Provincial Heritage Committee dated 23 November, 2015 regarding approval of the urban planning documents for the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site and enforcement of amended regulations for administration of construction according to Agreement No. 011/ຈຂ.ຈສ, dated 06 January 2014 regarding the Overall and Land Use Plan and Decision No.1623/ຈຂ.ຈສ dated 22 September 2014, concerning administration of construction in the area of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site.

#### The Governor of Champasak Province agrees to:

**Article 1 :** Approve the revised documents for planning for the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site (Overall Plan for the Cultural Area of Champasak, Land Use Plan, Regulations for Administration of Construction and Standards for Implementation of Regulations Concerned) according to Annex 01/ຈຂ.ຈສ, dated 16 February 2016.

>> The purposes of the revision are:

- To further clarify the road development project, inside and around the World Heritage Site.
- To determine clearly the core administration/ protected areas and areas associated with regulations for administration inside and around the World Heritage Site.
- To increase the system of enforcement of regulations for protection of archeological sites, demolition and various forms of construction.

**Article 2 :** Assign the Vat Phou Champasak Heritage Site Office to coordinate with the administration of the District of Champasak to disseminate the stipulations and rules for administration of construction to all concerned parties to know and strict implementation.

**Article 3:** This agreement is valid and can be implemented from the day it is signed onwards.

Champasak Provincial Governor  
Dr. Bounthong DIVIXAY



## Annex 3: Regulation of the Land Use Plan for the classified area



Lao People's Democratic Republic  
Peace Independence Democracy Unity and Prosperity  
Champasak Province

### Vat Phou-Champasak World Heritage Site Urbanism Regulation

Amendment approved by the Provincial Government Decision, dated 18 February 2016

#### - Building Codes -

#### Introduction

This regulation distinguishes:

- The U (Urbanised) Zone: a built up area corresponding to the present placement of villages and authorised extensions. The possibilities for village expansion vary according to whether Area U is located in the heart core area or in the buffer zone.
- The S (Sacred) Zone: the area of the Sacred Mountain, which corresponds to Zone 2 in UNESCO's management plan: "Sacred Environment Conservation Zone".
- The N (Natural) Zone: the rest of the area which is part of the UNESCO site, mainly natural and agricultural areas.

The following specific dedicated use perimeters can be superimposed onto these defined areas:

- Perimeter A (Archaeological): Perimeter dedicated to archaeological research, which corresponds to Zone 3 of UNESCO's management plan: "Archaeological Research Zone".
- Perimeter B (River Banks): Service perimeter of the river banks, including the banks up to a distance of 20 meters inland.

If a dedicated perimeter is superimposed upon a zone, the rules pertaining to the dedicated perimeter have priority.

#### General provision applicable to all areas

Any work or construction must respect the prior authorisation and control procedure, in accordance with the provisions of Provincial Government Decree dated 18/02/2016.

#### SECTION 1: PROVISIONS TO BE APPLIED TO ZONE U

##### Character, zone limits and scope.

- Zone U corresponds to the present occupation of villages and authorised extensions. Authorised extension zones are coloured orange in the Land Use Plan. All of Zone U, including present villages and authorised extensions, is outlined by a thick orange line on the Land Use Plan.
- When part of Zone U is also part of an A or B dedicated perimeter, the rules pertaining to those perimeters apply.

## **Article U1: Unauthorised buildings, facilities, installations and demolitions.**

The following are not authorised:

### *U1.1. In the whole area classified as World Heritage:*

- Anything which may damage protected monuments and architectural features, identified as “preserved architecture”, shown in dark red in the Land Use Plan, and contained in the annex to the plan under the title of the Champasak Architectural Heritage Inventory.
- Demolitions of traditional wooden fences, banisters, terraces and balconies as well as wooden pelmets.
- Cutting down trees which have been identified as “preserved main trees” in the Land Use Plan.
- Building within 20 meters of any vestige – coloured in light red around the vestiges on the Land Use Plan, with the exception of constructions necessary for the protection and enhancement of those vestiges.
- Elimination of green spaces identified as “preserved green area”, shown in dark green on the Land Use Plan,
- Elimination of green bands of natural or agricultural spaces between villages and shown on the Land Use Plan by a white triangle named “preserved viewpoint to landscape.”
- Closing protected passageways and mews identified as “preserved path or passage”, shown on the Land Use Plan.
- Advertising billboards.
- Bus parking outside specially designated areas as indicated on the Land Use Plan.
- Cement or brick walls, other than for temples.
- Colours other than the natural colours of wood, sheet metal, earth or terra cotta. Blue or green roofs are especially forbidden.

### *U1.2. In the core area of the World Heritage classified site, shown in the zoning plan by a thick red dotted line:*

- The creation of new village urbanisation extension zones.

## **Article U2: Authorised buildings, facilities and installations.**

Subject to the provisions laid out in the previous article, the following are permitted:

- New ground level buildings no more than one floor high with the proviso that:
  - they have a symmetrical two-fold roof or a surrounding roof with ridgepoles being parallel or perpendicular to the street,
  - they respect the distance in relation to the road or to property limits as they may be shown in the detailed plan,
  - they respect at least a minimum distance from the road so as to preserve the harmony of the road vista and tree lines,
  - in regards to new buildings along the river bank, a minimum space of two meters must be respected in relation to the lateral property limits so as to preserve visual access to the river, and
  - they present traditional wooden facades, either on the entire building or at least on the first floor.
- Restoration and reinforcement of traditional buildings, be they in wood, temples or buildings from the French era, with the proviso that such work neither covers or destroys the existing structure or prejudices typical architectural elements in any way.
- Light lean-tos, including in the buffer area of new buildings in relation to the street.
- Natural colour wooden fences which can also have a brick basement.
- Wooden signs if they are in a natural colour.

- Information boards for tourists, in natural coloured wood.
- Facilities linked to the storing and distribution of water, telephone and electricity with the proviso that these do not compromise visual perspectives and are in neutral colours.

### **Article U3: Location of new buildings**

New authorised structures can be built either within Zone U, the borders of which are shown by a thick orange line on the Land Use Plan, or directly touching this zone.

However, building in areas touching the outer side of the zone's limit is not authorised when this limit touches:

- a zone of irrigated rice paddies identified as “irrigated rice land”, shown on the Land Use Plan,
- a natural ecological zone identified as “ ecological area for wildlife”, shown on the Land Use Plan.

New buildings and fences must respect the buffer and be aligned with either the road or neighbouring buildings, whichever the case may be.

The construction of new village urbanisation extension zones, coloured in orange on the Land Use Plan, must be subject to consistent project development, intended to avoid sporadic construction.

### **Article U4: Obtaining authorisations**

New buildings as well as work on traditional wooden buildings, temples, buildings from the French era and the planting of pylons higher than eight meters and the creation of parking spaces for more than five cars require a work permit and must obtain Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Office consent.

Digging foundations, excavations or earthworks within the 20 meter buffer surrounding vestiges (shown as bright red contours around the vestiges on the zoning plan), must be submitted to an archaeological preservation procedure and obtain Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Office consent.

## **SECTION 2: APPLICABLE PROVISIONS FOR NATURAL AREAS**

### **Character of natural areas.**

This space includes both:

- Zone S (Sacred): The area of the Sacred Mountain which corresponds to Zone 2 in UNESCO's management plan: “Sacred Environment Conservation Zone” and,
- Zone N (Natural), which corresponds to the rest of the UNESCO Heritage Site and is mostly agricultural land or a natural environment.

### **Article N1: Unauthorised buildings, facilities and installations.**

The following are not authorised:

- All building, facilities, installations and parking areas, as well as telephone antennas, signs and billboards with the exception of those authorised in Article N2.
- Cutting down trees which have been identified as “preserved main trees” in the Land Use Plan.
- Building within 20 meters of any vestige – coloured in light red around the vestiges on the Land Use Plan, with the exception of constructions necessary for the protection and enhancement of those vestiges.
- Elimination of green spaces identified as “preserved green area”, shown in dark green on the Land Use Plan,

- Elimination of green bands of natural or agricultural spaces between villages and shown on the Land Use Plan by a white triangle named “preserved viewpoint to landscape.”

**Article N2: Authorised buildings, facilities and installations.**

In Zones N and S, those facilities and installations which are deemed necessary to protect and enhance archaeological digs and vestiges are authorised.

In Zone N only, the following are authorised:

- Traditional wooden buildings, fences, facilities and installations deemed necessary for farm work and the household needs of the farming families,
- Signs and indications relative to agricultural produce sold on the farm,
- Technical installations linked to the storage and distribution of water, telephone and electricity with the proviso that they do not interfere with the landscape and respect neutral colours.

**Article N3: Location of new buildings**

New buildings and fences must respect the buffer and be aligned with either the road or neighbouring buildings, whichever the case may be.

**Article N4: Obtaining Authorisations**

Digging foundations, excavations or earthworks within the 20 meter buffer around vestiges (surrounded in bright red on the zoning plan), must be submitted to an archaeological preservation procedure and obtain Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Office consent.

Building, facilities and demolitions must obtain a work permit and obtain Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Office consent.

**SECTION 3: PROVISIONS APPLIED TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PERIMETERS (PERIMETER A)**

**Character and limits of the perimeter**

Perimeter A (Archaeology) is defined by the spaces of archaeological research, which corresponds to Zone 3 in the UNESCO management plan: “Archaeological Research Zone”. These perimeters are bordered by a red line on the Land Use Plan.

**Article A1: Unauthorised buildings, facilities, installations and demolitions**

The following are not authorised:

- New buildings, facilities and installations, basin digging or earth removal,
- Anything which may damage protected monuments and architectural features, identified as “preserved architecture”, shown in dark red in the Land Use Plan and contained in the annex to the plan under the title of the Champasak Architectural Heritage Inventory.
- Demolition of traditional wooden fences, traditional banisters, terraces, balconies and wooden pelmets,
- Cutting down trees which have been identified as “preserved main trees” in the Land Use Plan.
- Elimination of green spaces identified as “preserved green area”, shown in dark green on the Land Use Plan,
- Elimination of green bands of natural or agricultural spaces between villages and shown on the Land Use Plan by a white triangle named “preserved viewpoint to landscape.”
- Closing protected passageways and mews identified as “preserved path or passage”, shown on the Land Use Plan.

- Bus parking lots,
- Advertising,
- Cement or brick walls, other than for temples,
- Any colour other than the natural colours of wood, sheet metal, earth or terra cotta. In particular green or blue roofs are forbidden.

#### **Article A2: Authorised buildings, facilities and installations**

As exceptions to the previous article, the following are authorised:

- New buildings and facilities inside villages in Zone U, the borders of which are shown by a thick orange line, no higher than one floor above the ground, with the proviso that they:
  - have shallow foundations,
  - have neither earthworks, ditches nor landfill,
  - have a symmetrical two-sided or surrounding roof, with ridgepoles parallel or perpendicular to the street,
  - respect the alignment of the plot as may be indicated in the detail plan,
  - or respect a minimum buffer space from the road so as to preserve the harmony of the alignment and tree line,
  - in case of new buildings on the river bank, to respect a minimum buffer space of two meters between lateral separating limits so as to preserve visual access to the river,
  - have traditional wooden facades, either on their entire height or at least on the first floor.
- Museum annex buildings, facilities and installations which are deemed necessary for the correct functioning of the Vat Phou monument site or the Ancient City, for archaeological digs and the protection and enhancement of vestiges.
- Renovation and reinforcement of traditional wooden structures, with the proviso that the existing structure be neither hidden nor destroyed.
- Light lean-tos, with neither foundations nor earthworks, as annexes to existing structures.
- Natural coloured wooden fences.
- Natural coloured wooden signs.
- Tourist information boards in natural wood.

#### **Article A3: Location of new buildings**

New buildings and facilities must be within Zone U limits, as shown by a thick orange line.

New buildings and fences must respect the buffer and be aligned with either the road or neighbouring buildings, whichever the case may be.

#### **Article A4: Obtaining Authorisations**

Buildings or facilities requiring foundations, digging or earthwork are subject to an archaeological preservation procedure and must obtain the consent of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Office.

All building, facilities and demolitions are subject to a work permit and must obtain the consent of the the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Office.

### **SECTION 4: PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO THE RIVER PERIMETERS (PERIMETER B)**

#### **Character and limits of perimeter**

Perimeter B, for River Banks, covers the area bordering the river, including the banks up to a distance of 20 meters to the interior of the land.

**Article B1: Unauthorised buildings, facilities and installations**

The following are not authorised:

- Anything which may damage protected monuments and architectural features, identified as “preserved architecture”, shown in dark red in the Land Use Plan and contained in the annex to the plan under the title of the Champasak Architectural Heritage Inventory
- Demolitions of traditional wooden fences, traditional banisters, terraces, balconies or wooden pelmets.
- Any buildings, facilities, installations or parking lots, including telephone antennas, signs and billboards with the exception of those mentioned in article B2.

**Article B2: Authorised buildings, facilities and installations**

Buildings, facilities and installations deemed necessary for archaeological digs and the protection and enhancement of vestiges are authorised.

Light wooden structures within Zone U, as shown as surrounded by a thick orange line, or in immediate contact with this zone, are authorised.

Light wooden structures deemed necessary for embarcaderos, as well as pumps and public equipment related to the river.

**Article B3: Location of new buildings**

New buildings, facilities and installations must respect safety norms which may be imposed due to risks of flooding or erosion.

**Article B4: Obtaining Authorisations**

Digging foundations, excavations or earthworks within a buffer zone of 20 meters from vestiges – as shown bright red around the vestiges on the zoning plan – are subject to an archaeological preservation procedure and must obtain the consent of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Office.

Buildings, facilities, installations and demolitions are subject to a building permit and must obtain the consent of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Office.

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## Annex 4: Order of the Provincial Government on the monitoring of works



Lao People's Democratic Republic  
Peace Independence Democracy Unity and Prosperity  
Champasak Province

Champasak Province

No. 01/ຈຂ.ຈສ

Date 18/2/2016

### Governor's Decree

#### Concerning Implementation of Regulations for Administration of Construction for the Land Use Plan of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site

- In reference to the District Planning Act No. 03/99/ສພຊ, dated 3 April 1999.
- In reference to the Chairman's Decree on Service and Administration Fees No. 003/ສປປ, dated 26 Dec. 2012.
- In reference to Champasak Provincial Government Decree No. 011/ຈຂ.ຈສ, dated 22 September 2014, concerning approval of the Overall Direction Plan for Protecting the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site of the UNESCO.
- In reference to the Agreement of the Champasak Provincial Governor No. 188/ຈຂ.ຈສ, dated 18/02/2016, concerning approval of Urban Planning Regulations for the Area of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Revised Version.
- In reference to the Notice of the Office of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport No. 24033/ຫກຍທຂ, dated 23 December 2014.

In order that the Regulations for Administration of Construction of the Land Use Plan for the Area of the UNESCO Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site, Revised Version are implemented through consensus and completely and surveys and administration are carried out everywhere in order to guarantee that preservation of the heritage site is sustainable.

**The Governor of Champasak Province Issues the Decree regarding Implementation of Regulations for Administration of Construction in the Area of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site, as follows:**

#### **Part 1: Provisions relative to preventive archaeology Supervision of embankment, earth input and excavation work**

##### - Article 1-1: Establishment of a work permit for embankments, earth inputs and excavations

A work permit is required for the following works:

- In the areas covered by a perimeter of archaeological research (perimeter A in the Land Use Plan): Excavation work, trench digging intended for infrastructure work or installing septic tanks,
- In the core area of the World Heritage classified site (delimited by a thick red dotted line in the Land Use plan): The earth sampling sites, building embankments and earth input intended to raise building land or roads.

The purpose of the work permit is to ensure that the excavated or input soil is free of any archaeological element.

- Article 1.2.: Filing requests - Competent administration

- The work permit application must be filed in the Office of Public Works & Transports of the District, which will then consult the appropriate services concerned and examine the application.

- The Office of Public Works & Transports of the District will only respond to the request after having obtained a favorable certificate of archaeological inspection issued by the Management Office of the World Heritage Site, following an on-the-spot control visit. The notice must indicate the date of the visit and the name of the competent supervising officer.

- Article 1.3.: Prerogatives of the Heritage protection service

- The Management Office of the World Heritage Site and the project owner define together the appropriate time to perform an inspection.

- The Management Office of the World Heritage Site may at any time make new inspections and ask the District authority to suspend a previously granted authorisation in case of new discoveries.

- In a case where an inspection reveals the presence of vestiges, the work must be stopped immediately. The Management Office of the World Heritage Site is then responsible for filing a report.

- In the event of accidental discovery of remains or old bricks, the Management Office of the World Heritage Site has the power to order the interruption of work in order to take photos and to file a report.

- If the discoveries are important, the Management Office of the World Heritage Site has the authority to extend the work interruption in order to implement preventive archaeological excavation and to perform the necessary surveys to backup scientific data.

- In the case of a monument discovery, the Management Office of the World Heritage Site may request authorities to permanently stop construction and propose that the concerned site be classified and included in the archaeological research perimeter if that is not yet the case.

-Article 1.4.: Specific provisions for earthmoving firms

- Earthmoving firms must obtain a work permit for each site where earth is extracted.

- The authorisation shall specify the location and the surface of the extraction site. Any extension to the extraction site must be the subject of a further application.

-Article 1.5.: Provisions relative to excavations within the archaeological research perimeters

- Digging trenches for infrastructure work or septic tank installation within the archaeological research perimeter must be done in the presence of an authorised official of the Management Office of the World Heritage Site.

- The digging of linear foundations, resulting in earth removal is prohibited in the Archaeological Research boundaries (Zone 3) delimited in the Land Use Plan. For construction authorised in these areas, only spot pillar foundations are authorised.

- Article 1.6.: Fees

- The project owner must pay a participation fee to offset the costs incurred by the work permit procedure, as stipulated in the Presidential decree concerning administrative fees and services No. 003/PR dated 26 December 2012.

**Part 2: Provisions relative to the preservation of the cultural landscape**  
**Control of demolitions and cutting down of trees**

- Article 2.1.: Permit required to demolish a registered building or cut down a protected tree.

- Any work leading to the total or partial destruction of a building registered in the Architectural Heritage Inventory, which can be found in the Land Use plan annex, requires a demolition permit.
- Cutting down any tree identified as protected in the Land Use Plan plan is prohibited. Cutting such a tree may be authorised only if the owner submits an application for a demolition beforehand, accompanied by a veterinary certificate stating that the tree may collapse or has a contagious disease.

-Article 2.2.: File contents

- The project owner must specify the object of his request by mail and attach photos and a plan of the location of the construction or the tree to be cut down. In the case of partial destruction of a building, a precise plan must be submitted delimiting the sections concerned.

- Article 2.3.: Filing the request - Competent authority.

- The application for a building or tree demolition permit must be filed in the Office of Public Works & Transports of the District, which is in charge of consulting the services concerned and processing the application.
- The Office of Public Works & Transports of the District will not respond to the request until after having obtained a permission issued by the Management Office of the World Heritage Site, following an on-the-spot inspection. The notice must indicate the date of the inspection and the name of the competent inspecting officer.
- The permission, signed by the Director of the Management Office of the World Heritage Site, must be motivated and can be accompanied by conditions designed to reduce or offset the impact of this destruction.

- Article 2.4.: Fees

- The project owner must pay a fee to offset the costs incurred by the demolition procedure, as provided by the Presidential decree on administrative fees and services No. 003/PR dated 26 December 2012.
- Cutting down protected trees falls into the same category as building demolitions.

**Part 3: Provisions relative to the preservation of the cultural landscape**  
**Building control**

-Article 3.1.: Obligation of filing for a building permit

- A building permit must be obtained for the following:
  - New building projects or extensions of an existing building built on concrete foundations and more than 3 meters high
  - Projects involving pylons, technical facilities related to storage facilities, fluid or energy distribution networks more than 12 meters high.
  - On the other hand, lightweight constructions of less than 3 meters high without foundations or with wooden poles and structure are not subject to a building permit.

- It should be remembered that all work, amenities and facilities must comply with the provisions of the Land Use Plan and urban regulations, even those which do not require prior filing for a building permit.

-Article 3.2.: Purpose, Scope and Content

- The purpose of the building permit is to ensure that constructions or proposed facilities are compatible with the preservation of the cultural landscape of the Vat Phou - Champasak classified site.

- When the project involves earthmoving or excavation, a building permit is sufficient and also serves as an authorisation as laid down in section 1.

- The documents required in the building permit file are defined in the Ministry of Public Works and Transports' National decree No. 621/DHUP, dated 11 November 2013.

- Article 3.3.: Request filing - Competent administration

- The request for building permit must be filed in the Office of Public Works & Transports of the District, which is in charge of consulting the concerned services and examining the application.

- In cases where the construction project involves earth moving, the demolition of a classified building or cutting down a protected tree, the building permit will be issued only if it obtains the agreement on these earth movements or destruction, issued by the Management Office of the World Heritage Site, in accordance with the provisions of sections 1 and 2.

- Article 3.4.: Fees

- The project owner must pay a fee to offset costs incurred by the building permit procedure, as stipulated in the Presidential decree on administrative fees and services No. 003/PR dated 26 December 2012.

**Part 4: Rewards and sanctions**

The rewards and sanctions relative to regulations and authorisation procedure compliance or non-compliance are defined in the Planning Act n° 03/99/NA, dated 03 April 1999.

**Part 5: Dissemination and application**

The Local Heritage Committees and Districts offices are responsible for the application and dissemination this decree.

This present decree comes into force on the day of its signature by the Governor.

Signed in place of the Governor of Champasak Province

Boualinh Vongphachanh

## Table of illustrations

Fig.1 :	Cover illustration: The sacred mountain	p. 1
Fig.2 :	Map of the physical geography of southern Laos	p. 7
Fig.3 :	Aerial view of the scope of the Master Plan depicting main zoning and roads	p. 8
Fig.4 :	General map of the Champasak Cultural Landscape Master Plan	p. 9
Fig.5 :	The arrival in Champasak by boat from the left bank	p. 11
Fig.6 :	Pre-Angkorian temple lintel, photographed at its place of discovery	p. 12
Fig.7 :	The village temple Vat Lakhon	p. 13
Fig.8 :	The two main archeological sites in Champasak	p. 14
Fig.9 :	A well-preserved section of the road from Angkor	p. 14
Fig.10 :	The archeological area of Vat Phou, from the south	p. 14
Fig.11 :	The archaeological remains of the ancient Khmer landscape	p. 15
Fig.12 :	The cortege of the king of Bassac	p. 16
Fig.13 :	Almsgiving ceremony in Bassac	p. 16
Fig.14 :	The royal pagoda of Bassac	p. 16
Fig.15 :	Illuminated pirogues and fireworks displayed on the Mekong River	p. 17
Fig.16 :	The statue of the Prince Khammatha in Vat Phou	p. 17
Fig.17 :	A visit from the King of Bassac to the Mekong Exploration Mission	p. 17
Fig.18 :	A dry torrent in the Bassac mounts	p. 17
Fig.19 :	Panorama of the Mekong river valley, from the top of the Phou Salao mount	p. 18
Fig.20 :	The chain of Bassac mounts seen from Don Daeng island	p. 18
Fig.21 :	View of the Phou Malong mount	p. 18
Fig.22 :	The overgrown staircase of Vat Phou, in the state as it was discovered by Jules Armand	p. 19
Fig.23 :	Inside the sanctuary, as discovered in 1866 by the Mekong Exploration Mission	p. 19
Fig.24 :	The exploration of Bassac	p. 20
Fig.25 :	Extract from the general staff map of the US army from 1954	p. 21
Fig.26 :	Extract from the state map of the major geographical service of the Lao PDR in 1983	p. 22
Fig.27 :	Photo taken from the west, over the mountains	p. 23
Fig.28 :	1907. Diagram designed after the map produced by Etienne Lunet de la Jonquiere	p. 24
Fig.29 :	1958. Diagram designed after an aerial picture	p. 24
Fig.30 :	1981. Diagram designed after an aerial photograph	p. 24
Fig.31 :	2014. Diagram designed after a Google Map satellite photo	p. 24
Fig.32 :	At the foot of the mountain, rice fields and the lake	p. 25
Fig.33 :	A landscape of contrasts between dry and wet season (part. 1)	p. 25
Fig.34 :	A landscape of contrasts between dry and wet season (part. 2)	p. 25
Fig.35 :	The study of Champasak cultural landscape	p. 26
Fig.36 :	The sacred mountain located at the heart of the cultural landscape	p. 27
Fig.37 :	The perimeter of the classified site extension to the left bank of the Mekong	p. 28

Fig.38 :	Champasak Heritage Management Plan protection zones	p. 29
Fig.39 :	Drawing reported by Léon de Beylié	p. 30
Fig.40 :	Overview of the Vat Phou buildings	p. 30
Fig.41 :	The old city (Vat Louang Kao), photographed by a Soviet mission in 1981	p. 31
Fig.42 :	Arrangements made during the Angkorian era, around the Hong Nang Sida temple	p. 31
Fig.43 :	Vat Phou, second most important site of religious pilgrimages in Laos (part. 1)	p. 32
Fig.44 :	Vat Phou, second most important site of religious pilgrimages in Laos (part. 2)	p. 32
Fig.45 :	The living legend of Vat Phou interpreted by actors chosen from the inhabitants	p. 32
Fig.46 :	The race canoes in Bassac, by Louis Delaporte	p. 33
Fig.47 :	Phou Kao mountain (Lingapavarta) and the Mekong river, assimilated to the Ganges	p. 33
Fig.48 :	The Houay Sahoua stream carrying water from the holy spring to the Mekong river	p. 33
Fig.49 :	The ancient cultural landscape of Champasak	p. 34
Fig.50 :	Elevation works and drainage of the existing road in the villages on the shore	p. 35
Fig.51 :	The dam and artificial lake submerging traces of remains previously identified	p. 35
Fig.52 :	The integrity of the World Heritage Area of Vat Phou Champasak	p. 36
Fig.53 :	The fragile paving accessing to the sanctuary	p. 37
Fig.54 :	Times of high tourist traffic, such as the annual festival	p. 37
Fig.55 :	Estimated quarter of the old city destroyed by erosion	p. 37
Fig.56 :	Erosion from the Mekong river and the Houay Sahoua stream	p. 37
Fig.57 :	Widening of the access road to Vat Phou. Photo taken in 2011	p. 37
Fig.58 :	Brickyard activity on the banks of the temple of Vat Sang'O	p. 37
Fig.59 :	The arc of the mountains, where each vertex represents a divinity	p. 39
Fig.60 :	Remains inventoried on the right bank of the Mekong River in Champasak province	p. 40
Fig.61 :	Same map containing the scope of the classified site	p. 40
Fig.62 :	100 Major archaeological sites in southern Laos	p. 41
Fig.63 :	Mount Phou Malong, seen from near Pakse, historic landmark for travelers	p. 42
Fig.64 :	The temple of Nong Din Chi: photograph taken during the 2015 excavations	p. 42
Fig.65 :	The towers of That Sam Pang, in Ban That	p. 43
Fig.66 :	Aerial photograph showing the Angkor route, bordered by trees	p. 43
Fig.67 :	The greater cultural landscape of Vat Phou Champasak heritage site	p. 44
Fig.68 :	In Champasak, traditional and French architecture coexist (part. 1)	p. 45
Fig.69 :	In Champasak, traditional and French architecture coexist (part. 2)	p. 45
Fig.70 :	In Champasak, traditional and French architecture coexist (part. 3)	p. 45
Fig.71 :	In Champasak, traditional and French architecture coexist (part. 4)	p. 45
Fig.72 :	In Champasak, traditional and French architecture coexist (part. 5)	p. 45
Fig.73 :	Vat Meuang Kang, seen from the river	p. 46
Fig.74 :	Along the river, the Buddha of Sisumang, under the ficus religiosa (part. 1)	p. 46
Fig.75 :	Along the river, the Buddha of Sisumang, under the ficus religiosa (part. 2)	p. 46
Fig.76 :	The rice fields of Champasak (part. 1)	p. 47
Fig.77 :	The rice fields of Champasak (part. 2)	p. 47

Fig.78 : The natural areas of the Mekong. The islands of Don Phakam	p. 47
Fig.79 : The natural areas of the Mekong. The island of Don Daeng	p. 47
Fig.80 : Comparison of river systems between 1965 and 2015 (part. 1)	p. 48
Fig.81 : Comparison of river systems between 1965 and 2015 (part. 2)	p. 48
Fig.82 : Vegetation within the classified site. Source : ENSAV, 2015	p. 48
Fig.83 : The preserved environment of Vat Phou Champasak	p. 49
Fig.84 : The historical palimpsest of Vat Phou – Champasak	p. 50
Fig.85 : The contemporary cultural landscape of Champasak	p. 51
Fig.86 : Modification of the irrigation system driven by the completion of the 14A road	p. 52
Fig.87 : Mechanisation of the rice harvest. Photo taken south of Vat Phou	p. 52
Fig.88 : Evolution of the number of visitors in Laos (2011- 2015)	p. 53
Fig.89 : Number of visitors at Vat Phu Temple (2010- 2015)	p. 54
Fig.90 : Distribution of private employment of residents of the classified site	p. 54
Fig.91 : From Pakse, tour operators offer a round trip to Vat Phou in half a day (part. 1)	p. 54
Fig.92 : From Pakse, tour operators offer a round trip to Vat Phou in half a day (part. 2)	p. 54
Fig.93 : The 60 villages of the classified site	p. 55
Fig.94 : The 32 schools of the classified site	p. 56
Fig.95 : The management of tourism and road traffic must be organised (part. 1)	p. 56
Fig.96 : The management of tourism and road traffic must be organised (part. 2)	p. 57
Fig.97 : Determining the scope of the Master Plan	p. 58
Fig.98 : Aerial view from Mount Phou Kao on the area (toward the east)	p. 59
Fig.99 : Integration of the core area within the zoning map of the Management Plan	p. 60
Fig.100 : Integration of the perimeter of the core area in the Master Plan	p. 61
Fig.101 : The population of the listed site, distributed according to the zoning of the Master Plan	p. 61
Fig.102 : Presentation and discussion of urban planning documents with village representatives	p. 63
Fig.103 : Presentation and discussion of urban planning documents with village representatives	p. 63
Fig.104 : National plan of road improvement (southern part), 2009	p. 64
Fig.105 : Diagram illustrating the development strategy and road traffic management	p. 65
Fig.106 : Aerial view of the town of Dontalat (southern view)	p. 66
Fig.107 : Distribution of existing built up areas and new zones for expansion	p. 67
Fig.108 : The area of Vat Thong, located in the northern part of the listed site	p. 67
Fig.109 : The village of Thang Khop forms a T to Dontalat	p. 68
Fig.110 : High school of Phonngam (part. 1)	p. 68
Fig.111 : High school of Phonngam (part. 2)	p. 68
Fig.112 : Location of the expansion areas in the northern half of the site	p. 69
Fig.113 : Limiting the height of buildings helps to maintain the landscape filled with trees	p. 70
Fig.114 : Impression of the landscape from the bank to the road in the village of Ban Phoxay	p. 70
Fig.115 : The townscape study of Champasak, by J-C Marchal (2013)	p. 71
Fig.116 : Examples of the installation of terminals and information board (part. 1)	p. 72
Fig.117 : Examples of the installation of terminals and information board (part. 2)	p. 72

Fig.118 :	Global map of the 8 thematic trails in Vat Phou- Champasak	p. 73
Fig.119 :	The Land Use Plan consists of detailed prescriptions	p. 74
Fig.120 :	Extract from the Master Plan where the development can be seen	p. 75
Fig.121 :	Extract from the Champasak Architectural Heritage Inventory	p. 76
Fig.122 :	Examples of urban sprawl and encroachment of construction in irrigated rice fields	p. 77
Fig.123 :	Zoning map of the Land Use Plan, approved by the Champasak Province Government	p. 78
Fig.124 :	Extract from the zoning map of the Land Use Plan	p. 79
Fig.125 :	Extract from the Land Use Plan with detailed prescriptions (Real scale: 1/5 000)	p. 80
Fig.126 :	The village of Vat Louang Kao is an area where the constraints are cumulative	p. 81
Fig.127 :	Earth collection on a site intended to fill for road works	p. 82
Fig.128 :	Land supply to elevate a plot to build a house	p. 82
Fig.129 :	Awareness actions toward schools, at the museum and at schools (part. 1)	p. 83
Fig.130 :	Awareness actions toward schools, at the museum and at schools (part. 2)	p. 83
Fig.131 :	Boarding equipment before leaving for a travelling briefing	p. 83
Fig.132 :	Presentation of heritage conservation measures in a village	p. 83

## Realisation and credits

### Realisation:

- Ministry of Information, Culture & Tourism (M.I.C.T.)
- Ministry of Public Works and Transports (M.P.W.T.)
- Province of Champasak
- Districts of Champasak and Pathoumphon
- World Heritage Site Office of Vat Phou Champasak

### Special thanks to:

- The École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) for its contribution to the texts relating to history and archaeology
- The Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs (DRAC) of Bretagne (France) and the inventory service of the region of Bretagne for their contribution to the realisation of the architectural inventory
- The town of Dinan (France) for its support to the regulatory control of the works and constructions
- Ms. BABIGEON-DIAZ Susana, architect-urbanist, consultant on building codes & urban planning
- Mme MAGUEUR Isabelle, consultant on the tourism development component
- Ms. MAITREMIT Lassamon, PhD Fellow, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A, for her contribution to the study of the cultural landscape of Champasak
- Mrs. SAYARATH Chayphet, architect-urbanist, consultant on the building regulation & control

### Credits for maps and graphic documents:

- École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO)
- École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Versailles (ENSAV)
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- M. MARCHAL Jean-Christophe, architect
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### Editorial direction

- World Heritage Site Office of Vat Phou Champasak

This dossier was realised with the support of the French Embassy in Laos and the French Development Agency (A.F.D.)



