



**THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS, LUXOR, EGYPT
SITE MANAGEMENT MASTERPLAN**



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Edited by Lucy T. Jones

**A PUBLICATION OF
THE THEBAN MAPPING PROJECT**

V

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Figure Key

BH	-	Brendhan Hight
B&M	-	John Baines and Jaromír Málek, <i>Atlas of Ancient Egypt</i>
DB	-	Dina Bakhoun
FD	-	Francis Dzikowski
FMS	-	Fisher Marantz Stone
JB	-	Jan Bailey
LTJ	-	Lucy T. Jones
MK	-	Matjaž Kačičnik
NJH	-	Nigel J. Hetherington
SCA	-	Supreme Council for Antiquities
TMP	-	Theban Mapping Project Archive
WC	-	Walton Chan

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Valley of the Kings (KV) on the West Bank of the Nile in Luxor, Egypt, is one of the best known and most visited archaeological sites in the world, forever associated in collective memory with the discovery of the tomb of the Pharaoh Tutankhamun in 1922.

The necropolis served for five centuries (during the New Kingdom, Dynasties 18, 19, and 20, from 1550 to 1070 BC) as the burial place of ancient Egypt's pharaohs and other notables. To date, 62¹ tombs have been found there, together with about 20 "commencements." Cut deep into the hills and cliffs that define the valley, these tombs range from small, single-chambered holes in the ground to huge complexes of rooms and corridors covering thousands of square meters. Ancient artisans plastered, carved, and painted their walls and ceilings with scenes and texts describing the royal journey into the afterlife, the night time journey of the sun, astronomical events, and ceremonies at the royal burial.

The Valley's unique inscriptions and reliefs attracted early travellers and explorers; however, they ignored the site's true importance in their pursuit of treasures. Only with the decipherment of the hieroglyphic language in 1822 by Jean François Champollion, and the advent of modern archaeology at the end of the 19th Century, did scholars begin to gain a fuller understanding of the site's significance. That significance was acknowledged in 1979, when Unesco recognized ancient Thebes, including the Valley of the Kings, as a World Heritage Site.

"Before heritage places are promoted or developed for increased tourism, management plans should assess the natural and cultural values of the resource. They should then establish the appropriate levels of acceptable change, particularly in relation to the impact of visitor numbers on the physical characteristics, integrity, ecology and biodiversity of the place, local access and transportation systems and the social, economic and cultural well being of the host community. If the likely level of change is unacceptable the development proposal should be modified."

ICOMOS, 1999

¹ As we go to press (February 2006) the discovery of a new tomb in KV has been announced, labelled KV 63

RATIONALE BEHIND THE MASTERPLAN

The Valley of the Kings has been the focus of attention of scholars, tourists, vandals, and thieves for over 3,000 years. Today, after centuries of damage and looting, the Valley is facing a severe challenge: unless swift, radical, and all-encompassing action is taken, we may see the destruction of the site within the next 25 years. The nature of the threats is two-fold: there are natural threats including flooding, geological instability, and environmental changes, but the most serious problems come from human activity. The popularity of KV and the sheer number of visitors has resulted in a myriad of problems that include damage to the fabric of the site, the destruction of tomb interiors, and aesthetic pollution due to intrusive tourist facilities and ill-chosen flood protection measures. These problems are likely to become even more acute over the next few decades, as the number of visitors coming to KV rises.

The number of visitors to the Valley today is immense; indeed 30 years ago, the number of tourists in the Valley of the Kings was about 100 per day; today, more than 7,000 visitors arrive daily, and the Ministry of Tourism is aiming for 12,000 visitors daily by 2014. To adequately deal with the problems such numbers impose, the Valley of the Kings needs a site management masterplan that addresses the issues of visitor access in conjunction with site conservation.

With this in mind, the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) commissioned the Theban Mapping Project (TMP) to produce a comprehensive Masterplan for the Valley of the Kings. It has been prepared with the generous assistance of the World Monuments Fund and the American Research Center in Egypt.

The Valley of the Kings, along with the rest of the West Bank and the temples on the East Bank of Luxor, was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979 under the cultural properties section after meeting the following criteria:

- I Cultural properties should represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.
- III Cultural properties should bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization, which is living or has disappeared.
- VI Cultural properties should be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas or beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

METHODOLOGY

The preparation of this Masterplan involved several interrelated projects, each of which will be dealt with in the following chapters. The outline below gives an understanding of these processes and the order in which they were carried out. The planning process is also summarized in Figure 1.

- A review was made of all available literature including historical records, previous interventions, modern rediscovery and excavation reports, and previous proposals for conservation. All relevant Cultural Resource Management (CRM) resources were consulted.
- Pertinent risk factors were identified and a review was made of their impact on the Valley.
- A review of the role of tourism in Egypt, Luxor, and KV was made.
- A Stakeholder Assessment was conducted, both to identify the interested parties and to assess the views of the many disparate groups who have a stake in the well-being and management of the Valley of the Kings. It also helped to foster a sense of inclusion and establish a role for these groups in the development of any plans.
- Surveys were made of such features as geological stability, topography, hydrological susceptibility, and meteorological conditions.
- Detailed condition assessments of tomb paintings has been compiled and detailed photography of all tombs open or potentially open to visitors has been made.
- Microclimate conditions in KV 9 have been monitored to track the effects of visitors on humidity and temperature.
- Data on visitor traffic, behaviour, and perceptions, and the impact of tourism on the Valley have been collected and analyzed.
- Visitor management policies such as opening hours, camera rules, and ticketing procedures have been reviewed.
- A review of landscaping, parking, passenger loading, vendor kiosks, and other infrastructure has been undertaken.
- Proposals have been suggested for the location and design of water supplies, sewage, electricity supply, and maintenance.
- Site and tomb carrying capacities and visitor flow mechanisms have been designed to prevent dangerous overcrowding.
- Tomb maintenance and protection procedures have been outlined.

- A plan to promote and improve trails from the Valley to Deir al-Medina and Deir al-Bahari has been designed.
- A new management structure for the Luxor West Bank SCA administration has been proposed.
- New systems of lighting, environmental controls, and traffic management in tombs, and protective systems for wall decoration have been designed
- Provisions are outlined for continued security in KV—including tomb monitoring, policing of vendors, vehicular traffic management, and security checks at entrance gate.
- The construction of a Visitors Center has begun with funding from the Government of Japan. The TMP has been asked to design its exhibits and displays and to work with the SCA in designing the surrounding support facilities. Suggestions for such installations are included.
- The implementation of several trial schemes has begun and their effect on KV, positive or negative, reviewed.
- Consideration has been made to make provision for the regular updating, monitoring, and implementation of the Masterplan.

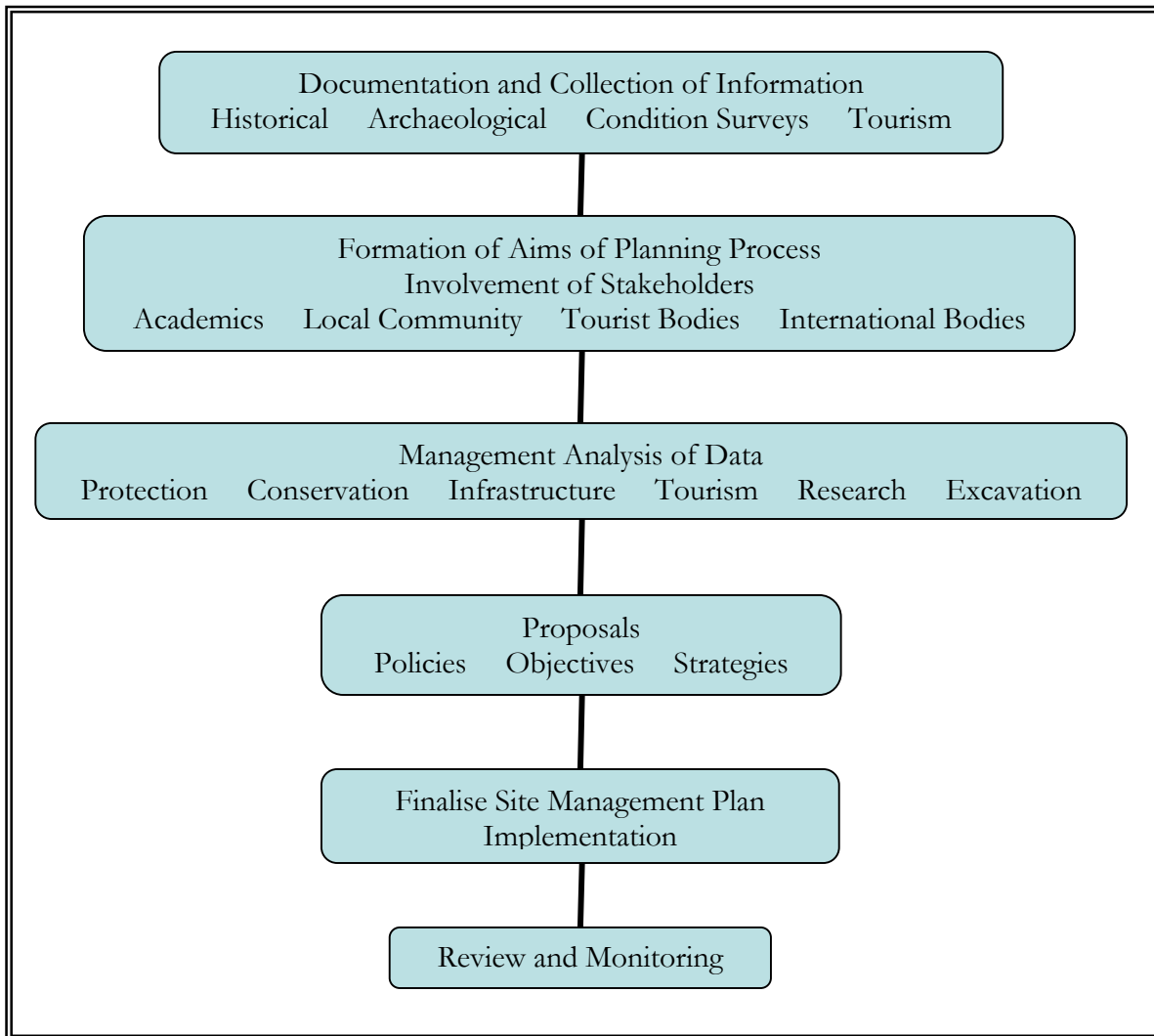


Figure 1: Site Management Planning Process for KV, after Demas