ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
ARCHAEOLOGY

ROAD ROUTE OF THE “NEW RING ROAD” PROJECT OF “CSCEC AECOM CONSULTANTS” LLC IN THE CITY OF ULAANBAATAR

Archaeological Rescue Survey Report

ULAANBAATAR
2025

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Archaeological Rescue Survey Report

Report written: Ts. Amgalantugs – Doctor (Ph.D)
Researcher of the Department of Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, Academy of Sciences

L. Monkhbayar – Master
Researcher of the Department of Medieval Archaeology, Academy of Sciences

N. Nandintseg – Master
Researcher of the Department of Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, Academy of Sciences

Ordering organization: CSCEC AECOM Consultants Co., Ltd

Report owner: Institute of Archaeology, MAS.
Ulaanbaatar 13330, Enkhtaivan Avenue, MAS Institutes Complex I
Tel: 11-452894
Email: archaeology@mas.ac.mn

ULAANBAATAR
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INTRODUCTION

“CSCEC AICOM consultants” LLC, in accordance with the Mongolian Law “On the Protection of Cultural Heritage, " submitted a request for archaeological exploration and research work along the highway route within the framework of the “New Ring Road” project in Ulaanbaatar city. Based on this request, archaeological exploration and research work were carried out from May 14 to 17, 2025, by the Institute's Research and Laboratory Department Research Fellow, Doctor (Ph.D.). Ts. Amgalantugs, Master N. Nandintseg, Medieval Department Research Fellow L. Monkhbayar, and Driver G. Temur.

The research aimed to implement the following legal provisions. Specifically, Article 7 of Chapter I of the “Constitution of Mongolia” states that “Historical and cultural monuments, scientific and intellectual heritage of the Mongolian people are under state protection.” The Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Mongolia also regulates relations related to the search, registration, study, classification, evaluation, preservation, promotion, restoration, and inheritance of historical and cultural heritage. Article 27. 8 of Chapter 5 states that “Before allocating land for economic activities such as the construction of urban settlements and buildings, laying new roads, establishing hydroelectric power plants, farming, and mineral exploration and exploitation, a preliminary exploration and research shall be conducted and a paleontological, archaeological, and ethnological professional research organization shall draw a conclusion. " Article 27 9 states that “The costs required for conducting preliminary exploration and research and for the protection of discovered historical and cultural monuments shall be borne by the customer, " and Article 27. 10 states that “Failure to conduct preliminary exploration and research and draw a conclusion shall be grounds for invalidating the decision to acquire land. "

Additionally, Article 2.1.2.1.4 of the “Regulations on Paleontological and Archaeological Exploration and Excavation Research,” approved by the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Education and Science as an appendix to Order No. A/509 A/562 dated December 20, 2023, defines “preservation research” as “research aimed at identifying factors affecting the risk of tangible cultural heritage, conducting paleontological and archaeological exploration and excavation before disturbing the surface and subsoil, and securing tangible cultural heritage.”

RESEARCH STATUS

1.1. Overview of Archaeological Research in Ulaanbaatar City

The capital of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, has an area of 4,704.4 km² and a population of 1,466.1 thousand (as of 2019). It is located at the southwestern tip of the Khentii Range, surrounded by the Bayanzurkh, Bogd Khan, Songino Khairkhan, and Chingeltei Khairkhan mountains to the east, south, west, and north, respectively. It has been settled in the valley of the Tuul and Selbe rivers since 1778.

The first Russian explorer, N.M. Yadrintsev, who first visited Urgaug in the 1890s, identified, measured, and recorded a stone monument. The legend about the settlement of Ulaanbaatar in its current location in 1778 says that "geographers came across a stone in the Tuul River valley and were very wise" and decided to build Urgaug. It is still known as the Man-Stone Hollow or the Golden Tevshiin Valley.

Since then, Finnish researcher Gustav Jon Ramstedt and Polish traveler W. Kotwich, who conducted research in Mongolia at the beginning of the 20th century, have visited the capital city and observed various monuments, making notes.

In 1925, at the invitation of the Institute of Scripts at that time, Soviet archaeologist G.I. Borovka, who participated in the famous Kozlov analysis class and excavated the tombs of Hunnu nobles in Noyon Mountain, traveled along the Tuul River from Ulaanbaatar city to explore and study archaeological monuments, discovering and recording numerous monuments, and excavating and analyzing some types of monuments. As a result of his research, a published article4 and a later published photo album5 recorded and documented many monuments in places such as Takhilt and Songino Khairkhan Mountain, which are now part of the Songino Khairkhan District of Ulaanbaatar city, and mapped and published some monuments with photographs.

In 1948-1949, the "Mongolian-Soviet Historical and Ethnographic Research Department," led by S.V. Kiselev, a corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and H. Perle, a scientist from the Institute of Sciences of the Mongolian People's Republic, conducted a large-scale study of the ruins of Mongolia's ancient capital, Kharkhorum. The department established two branches: one focused on studying stone tools and ethnographic research, and the other on creating original materials. The stone tools research branch was led by Soviet archaeologist A.P. Okladnikov. They collected old stone tools from the Zaisan and Maahuur Tolgoi areas near Ulaanbaatar, and discovered several new monuments from different historical periods. One notable find was a bronze sculpture depicting horses, birds, and humans, found at the mouth of the Gachuurt River, about 30 km east of Ulaanbaatar. It is noted that the Gachuurt coin images were re-copied in 1963 by archaeologist D. Navaan of the archaeology department, organized by the State Central Museum, which led to the addition of many new elements to the previous copy and allowed for better evaluation. Even today, researchers continue to analyze and study this monument and its preservation.

Archaeologist Ts. Dorjsuren announced discoveries of artifacts from the Neolithic, Early Iron Age, and Khitan periods at the Khurkhreei Am site Ulaanbaatar.

Later, in 1960, A.P. Okladnikov discovered and studied a monument with red and black ink drawings as well as Mongolian, Chinese, and Tibetan inscriptions at the mouth of the Great Sky on Bogdhan Mountain in front of Ulaanbaatar. The Great Sky Am bronze painting is a representative of the Bronze Age "Selengiin" bronze art, depicting a large square enclosure with broad lines, many circular spots, an eagle flying with its beak turned sideways at the top of the enclosure, and a sketch of a

person standing with hands held on the left side of the enclosure, with animals below. Seven paintings with these features have been preserved here. Specifically, there are seven square frames with numerous spots inside, 29 outlines of people standing alone or holding hands in groups of 2, 3, or 5, three eagles flying high, and two horses walking along the road.

Alongside the previously mentioned bronze figures, there are also black ink drawings and inscriptions shown in the mouth of the great sky. Near the bronze figures, a Mongolian inscription reads “Eternal Blue Sky” in black ink, accompanied by a person in a Mongolian robe and a spotted sogoo looking back. The woman in the Mongolian robe is depicted from the front, with her round face and mischievous eyes clearly visible. She wears a long skirt, a wide-sleeved robe, a thick purse, and Mongolian boots with pointed toes. There are rows of decorative items stacked on the hem of her robe. The most interesting feature is the tall hat she wears, topped with something resembling a feather. Researchers believe this hat's image resembles a bogtag hat worn by Mongolian noble women in the 13th century.

From 1960 to 1966, the Mongolian Stone Age Research Group, led by A.P. Okladnikov and D. Dorj, conducted an exploration study covering almost all provinces of our country, and discovered relics of the Middle, Upper, and Neolithic periods in many places, including Songino Mountain, Buyant-Ukhaagiin Terrace, and Shar Khadny Terrace near Ulaanbaatar.

In 1960, following the cooperation agreement between the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Mongolian People's Republic and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences—which involved T. Horvat, the head of the Hungarian Society for the Study of Asia, the director of the Asian Art Museum of Budapest, and archaeologists from the Institute of History N. Ser-Odjav, Ts. Dorjsuren, D. Dorj, and D. Navaan—a group of graves belonging to Hunnu nobles was surveyed. These graves are located near the current Sukhbaatar district, close to the mouth of the Belkhi River (Ranjanbyn hollow), and the site known as Khulgaichin Dolon Khokhor. Background maps were created, three graves were selected for excavation, and a certain amount of excavation was carried out. These graves were heavily equipped; some contained iron nails, iron awls, three-lobed iron rust, bridle handles, and tongue-shaped islands. Later, in 2009, researchers from the Institute of Archaeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences conducted a small-scale excavation at this cemetery and reconstructed the burial ground, revealing six noble tombs and four auxiliary tombs.

The Institute of Archaeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, the Department of Culture and Arts of the Mongolian Capital, and the Hungarian Institute of Hungarian Studies in Hungary, together with the Institute of Archaeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, have begun implementing the “Archaeological Study of the Noble Tombs of the Huns of the Mongolian Capital.

In 2021, the project team excavated the 3rd tomb of the Hunnic nobleman of Belkhy-am, along with tombs 1-3, which are satellites of the nobleman's 1st tomb. In 2022, the surface soil around the 1st tomb was cleared. The 3rd tomb, located southwest of the tomb group in Belkhy-am at 1727 meters above sea level, was excavated. It yielded artifacts including a bronze ornament with a horse image, seven floral-shaped bronze ornaments, a thin iron ornament, a human mid-clavicle bone fragment, and a coffin plank. These artifacts were analyzed at the institute's laboratory and genetically tested on human bone samples from the tomb with support from the Institute of Hungarian Studies. To turn the monument into a cultural heritage and tourism site, plans are underway to make the largest tomb, Tomb No. 1, an open

exhibit, with the final stages of cleaning the southwestern part of the large stone frame outside the tomb near completion.

Within the framework of this project, a memorial protection zone has been established for the Belkhi River mouth, and a sketch of a planned tourism product, including the preservation and protection of the monument, an open exhibit, an information center, and a service area, has been prepared. The Capital City Department of Culture and Arts has created a tourism and recreation environment and opened a memorial monument in the "Hunnu Noble Complex" of the Belkhi River mouth in October 2024.

The institute is also leading the nomination of a series of cultural heritage sites of the “Hunnu Noble Burial Complex Monuments” to UNESCO and has submitted relevant materials to UNESCO.

The Institute of Archaeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Institute of Hungarian Studies jointly conducted excavations at 7 Hunnu ring-shaped stone tombs in the area of Ar Gunt, in the 19th khoroo of Songinokhairkhan district of Ulaanbaatar city, in front of Jargalant Mountain and at the western mouth of Jargalant Pass, within the framework of the “Research on the Relationship and Affinity of Asian Huns and European Huns” project from June 27 to August 8, 2022.

A detailed survey and mapping of the Argunt site confirmed the previously reported number of 19 Hunnic graves and revealed a total of 41 burial sites. Human and animal bones were found in all the excavated graves, with 7 sites containing 6 types of animal bones: horses, cattle, sheep, goats, and dogs. More than 1,250 bones were recovered in total, with the largest numbers being 34 sheep, 20 goats, 14 cattle, 9 horses, and 3 dogs. The discovery of 3 deer bones allowed for detailed laboratory research. The walls of the burial pits in graves 1 and 2 were smoothed and polished with 2 cm-thick red copper, marking the first time this has been recorded in Mongolia. Notable artifacts include the iron pot with a flat bottom found in grave 2 and the bone-covered dashma lid in grave 4. The dashma lid was likely made from processed animal bone, with the lid also constructed from the same material. Such items have not yet been found elsewhere in Mongolia. The iron pot was restored in Hungary and handed over to the institute in 2023. Although similar in shape to bronze pots from the Hunnu period found in our country, it is unique as it is made of iron and is larger in size.

In 1976, P. Gungaajav and Ch. Durzee published a book, “From the Historical and Cultural Monuments of Ulaanbaatar” (Ulaanbaatar, 1976). They mentioned the stone age monuments of Maahuur Tolgoi, Zalaat, Buyant Ukhaagi, Khurkhreei Am, Gachuurtyn Am, Ih Tengeri Am, and the Tonyukuk illuminated statue in Nalaikha, as well as the man-made stone in the center of the city [Gungaajav, Durzee, 1976. Pages 103-105].

A Mongolian grave was excavated in the Tuul River valley, Songino Khairkhan mountain range, and at a site called Burhant Gatsa, in a place called Dadart, east of the mouth of Burhant Gatsa. Items such as a corkscrew, an iron pestle, an iron knife with a wooden handle, and a belt with gold decorations were discovered [Navaan, 1981]. D. Navaan published the excavation findings in “Archaeological Studies” in 1986 without an appendix. During the excavation of the grave, the northern wall was dug from a depth of 2.3 meters. The remains of a person buried in a shallow grave were found completely wrapped in cork, with their head turned to the left. They were laid in a supine position with both arms extended along the body. The grave also contained sheep's tusks, an iron knife with a wooden handle, a cork stopper, an iron rod, a three-legged cast-iron pot, a six-sided floral plaque, a gold decoration shaped like a beetle, and a piece of saddle wood from the head of the grave.

The gold decoration of the belt accompanying the above grave is interesting and consists of a total of 27 small 6-petalled flower plaques with a brooch, a pendant, and a beetle-shaped pendant. Based on this gold-decorated belt, the deceased buried in this grave is considered to be a 13th-century nobleman (Jamukha) [Navaan, 1986. Pages 3-10].

In 1981, the Mongolian-Soviet joint field research team led by archaeologist D. Navaan excavated a tomb with a low stone pillar on the slope of Dadart Mountain, located at the eastern mouth of Burkhant Gorge in Songinokhairkhan District of Ulaanbaatar. In 1982, the Paleolithic Monuments Research Team of the Mongolian-Soviet Joint Historical and Cultural Expedition found and collected more than 80 stone tools from 7 sites, including Tuul I, Ia, II, III, IV, Ulan Khad Khot, and Shuvuuni Am, 50 km west of Ulaanbaatar, and recorded more than 70 tombs and grave goods at 11 sites along the Tuul River, Khar Shugui, Tavan Tolgoi, Dugan Khotul, Khavchuui Am, Ulan Khad, Shuvuuni Am, and Ulan Khujir. Two sacrificial mounds of the Turkic period were excavated and analyzed on the east side of Dugan Khot. The report also noted that there are very faded bronze paintings with vertical lines and images of flying birds on the rocks near the mouth of the bird.

In the territory of Khoroo No. 13 of Khan-Uul district of Ulaanbaatar city, there are ruins of a walled building along the banks of the Tuul River. When archaeologist H. Perle first published it, he called it the Chinggis Khan III or Khar-tunin ord, and the Bhuhegin Gol adgiin balgas. He called the ruins the ruins of the Kidan period, the Tooril Khan palace of the Hereid, but in 1997, Japanese scientist N. Shiraishi and Mongolian researcher B. Enkhbat supported H. Perle's proposal that it was the Khar Tungin ord based on measurements, detailed background maps, and discovered artifacts. In doing so, they noted that the ruins were built during the Kidan period and continued to be used by Wang Khan.

Researchers from the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences excavated the monument from 2021 to 2023 and aimed to clarify and study many issues, including identifying the architectural features and pinpointing the monument's date in detail. They also developed a methodology to determine the scope of the cultural heritage, considering areas with high human and livestock activity near the city. The monument was protected by the Khan-Uul District in 2002 through Resolution No. 8 of the City Council and by Decree No. 357 of the Governor of the Capital in 2008. It was registered and protected under the name “Tuul Black Night Palace Ruins” in the “List of Historical and Cultural Immovable Monuments under State Protection,” approved by the Government Resolution No. 13 of 2020.

During the 2021 excavation study conducted by the institute, aerial photographs of the monument were taken, detailed measurements and descriptions were recorded, and a background map was created showing the structure and relief of the city' s Tuul walls, including the central building and smaller structures within it. To determine the structure and age of the city wall, a 2 x 26 m trench was excavated, revealing a 4 m wide, 70 cm high earthen wall with a layer of clay, and a 4 m wide, 60 cm deep ditch outside it. The ditch was carefully lined with red clay to prevent water seepage, indicating it was a deliberate engineering feature used to drain water away from the wall. An animal bone debris- filled hole was found inside the wall, providing important material for detailed laboratory analysis and dating. The upper part of the central palace inside the wall was completely cleaned, a background map was created, and a foundation cut was made to examine its structure. The ruins of the palace do not align with the general zero point and orientation of the earthen wall, which directly suggests they belong to a different period. The earthen foundation supporting the palace measures 34 x 18.5. 5 meters, is rectangular, and built from light- colored clay,

forming a 2. 5- meter- high earthen platform, carefully paved with baked bricks. Based on the brickwork of the floor, the building included a reception area and several large rooms, with abundant materials such as roof tiles, face tiles, bricks, and decorative elements, indicating it was a palace of elegant design created by skilled craftsmen and constructed according to engineering measurements and plans. During the excavation, it was first discovered that the palace floor was made of pressed bricks arranged with a mosaic floor method featuring patterned decoration, a rare scientific find. The excavation of the palace foundation also revealed remnants of wooden structures that can be dated. Based on these findings, efforts have begun to reconstruct the palace as it was during that period, and a protective zone has been established around the monument. Additionally, a tourism development plan has been created, including the preservation of the monument, exhibits, an information center, and service areas.

The Institute of Archaeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Science and Culture of the Gandantegchenlin Monastery, the center of Mongolian Buddhism, have continued excavations at the monument as part of the "Heritage Cultural Hotspot" archaeological research project, which has been running since 2022 with support from "Golomt Bank". The scope of the excavations, which began in 2021, has been expanded, and several samples from the 2022-2023 excavations are being analyzed to determine their age. Detailed studies of the design and craftsmanship of building decorations, stone and brick floor sections, atriums, mantles, and facade ceramic decorations are ongoing. On the other hand, a document identifying the location of the Tuul Khanate, the land of Van Khan, is in the article III-115 of the Mongolian Secret History: …Tooril Khan, having defeated (on his return) Burkhan Khaldun, attacked Ukhortu Jubur, the Gatsuurt subchids, and the Uliastai subchids, taking the land and destroying the Tuul Khanate. From this, it can be concluded that the Khar Tun, inhabited by Van Khan, was approximately 20-25 km from the mouth of the present Uliastai and Gatsuurt rivers down to the Bokhug Turgeniy river.

As a result of the excavations by the Archaeological Institute, no artifacts from the 12th-13th centuries were found in the ruins of the Turgeniy River at the lower end of the area mentioned above. The analysis of some samples indicates a different date, so the work to search for and clarify the remains and traces of the Tuul Khanate of Van Khan will continue.

O. Namnandorj, in his article "Culture and Historical Monuments," mentioned the historical and cultural monuments in the capital city, such as the Hurey Monastery, the Tonyukuk Light Statue, Ikh Tenger, Zaisan, Chuluut, Khurkhree, Jargalantyn Am, Aldar Tolgoi, Tolgoyt Bayankhoshuu, and Hun Khuluuny Khonkhor [Namnandorj, 1959; 2003. Pages 370-374].

A.P. Okladnikov discovered and published a red-painted rock painting of a cliff facing east on the west side of the Gachuurt River in the Gachuurt district of Ulaanbaatar city (about 25 km east of the city center) in 1960 [Okladnikov, Zaporozhskaya, 1970].

In 1981 and 1982, when the MZTSE worked in the Tuul River Valley, they excavated a Mongolian grave on the western slope of the northwestern slope of the grove (Zuun modni) at the mouth of the Zuun Bogin River. They found a Mongolian burial with the head facing west, a coffin without a coffin, a corkscrew in the left hand, six flat iron rods, two large and small stirrups placed at the feet of the deceased, an iron knife on the left hip, and an iron mouthpiece with an iron ring on the right [Navaan, 1982].

In 1982, the Paleolithic Relics Study Group of the Mongolian-Soviet Joint Historical and Cultural Expedition found and collected more than 80 stone tools from 7 sites, including Tuul I, Ia, II, III, IV, Ulaan Khad, and Shuvuunu Am, 50 km west of Ulaanbaatar, and from there, more than 70 graves and burial mounds were recorded in 11 sites along the Tuul River, Khar Shugui, Tavan Tolgoi, Dugan Khotul, Khavchuuin Am, Ulaan Khad, Shuvuunu Am, and Ulaan Khujir. Two sacrificial mounds of the Turkic period were excavated and analyzed on the east side of Dugan Khotul. The report also noted that there were very faded bronze paintings with vertical lines and images of flying birds on the rocks around Shuvuunu Am.

Researcher G. While working as part of the Mongolian Archaeological Survey of Mongolia, Menes analyzed and mapped several monuments, including the Tonyuukuk complex in Nalaikh and the monuments in its vicinity, the Great Statue in Delgerkhaan soum in Tuv aimag, and Ulkh Bay in Tuul, and carried out scientific excavations of the Turkic sacrificial sites [Menes, 1983].

In 1993, Professor Son Po Gi, a member of the Mongolian-Korean joint project “Eastern Mongolia”, and archaeologist Z. Batsaikhan excavated two tombs in the Tuul River valley, West Khairkhan Mountain, one of which was not equipped [Son Po Gi, Batsaikhan, 1993, 143-144].

Researcher of the Hunnic Archaeological Research Sector of the Institute of Archeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, Doctor and Associate Professor Ch. Amartuvshin, doctoral students Ch. Yerool-Erdene and N. Batbold, and master's student B. Jargalan conducted a small-scale exploratory study at the headwaters of the Selbe River northeast of Ulaanbaatar on April 22, 2009 [Amartuvshin, Yerool-Erdene, Batbold, Jargalan, 2009].

B. Batdalai, a research worker and master of the Archaeological Monuments Preservation Sector of the Institute of Archeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, and D. Bukhchuluun, a research worker and master of the sector, conducted a small archaeological survey on February 15, 2012, at the “Khairga” site of “Altan Toig” LLC, located in Khan Uul district, Ulaanbaatar city [Batdalai, Bukhchuluun, 2012].

In addition, archaeologist D. Navaan conducted small-scale excavations here in 2005-2006. After that, in 2009, archaeologist U. Erdenebat, who is a lecturer at the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the National University of Mongolia, collected remains of building materials from the walled structure, analyzed the structure, and measured them, reflecting his ideas in a paper on the same topic. According to the work, “The remains of the original settlement are a four-sided earthen wall with a large central wall and several smaller auxiliary buildings around it. The northern, southern, and eastern sides of the wall are clearly visible, but the western side has completely collapsed and disappeared after being used to build a dam to protect against floods in the Tuul River. The remains of the wall are on average about 4 m wide and in some places up to 1 m high. The northern side of the wall is 120 m long, the western side is 250 m long, and the southern side is about 120 m long. It seems that there were two gates about 8 m wide on the southern side. The general axis of the wall is not aligned with the four cardinal directions. The remains of the north-south wall are oriented about 200 degrees to the northeast. However, the remains of the building in the central part of the wall have a general axis that differs from the direction of the surrounding walls and were built along the north-south and west-east directions of the world. The ruins of the main building measure 34 m by 18.6 m. The current height is about 2 meters. It was constructed with one door on the south side and three main halls—one large and two smaller—that are connected to each other.

In 2005-2006, the National Museum of Mongolian History, the Mongolian Institute of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China jointly conducted archaeological exploration and research in more than 40 soums in the central, eastern, and southern provinces of our country, repeatedly and newly registering, documenting, and publishing numerous monuments. Within the scope of this exploration work, some monuments around Ulaanbaatar were included. These included the Great Sky Mouth, the bronze image of the Gachuurt Mouth, the Huainday Mouth Monument, the Narstyn Hunnu Tomb, and the Bronze Age tomb on the west bank of the Turgeni River.

In the mid-2000s, during a field internship by students of Chinggis Khaan University, it is reported that four ancient tombs were excavated in the Bayanzurkh district at the mouth of the Bayanzurkh Khairkhan, called Ikh Zhindzhooni Am. It was also noted that relics from the Stone Age were discovered in the area.

In 2006, in the territory of the 21st khoroo of Songinokhairkhan district, in the Narin dairy farm, citizen B. Enkh-Amgalan accidentally found a grave more than two meters deep while digging a pit for pickling vegetables in his yard. Researchers from the Mongolian National History Museum conducted a rescue excavation study of the said grave and registered more than 50 monuments in the area.

In 2008, students of the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology of the Mongolian National University conducted field practice in the areas of Songino Khairkhan Mountain in Ulaanbaatar city, Altanbulag and Lun sum in Tuv aimag. During the field practice, archaeological excavations were conducted in Dartsagtyn and Tsookhor mouths in the territory of the 12th khoroo of Songinokhairkhan district, and 19 monuments that can be related to the Bronze, Hunnu, and Mongol periods were discovered. Of these, two tombs dating back to the Mongol period were selected and excavated, revealing human and animal bones, bone ornaments, gold items, pearls, and bone amulets.

In the same year, the students of the Department of Archaeology of Ulaanbaatar University conducted a practice to reinforce the lessons learned in the classroom at the Department of Archaeology of Ulaanbaatar University in places such as Nisek, Songino, Shuvuun Fabrik, Tuul Gol Valley, Polygon Valley of Tuv aimag, Altanbulag soum, and Emgentiin Shand. A group of Hunnic tombs were discovered and registered in the Emgentiin Shand area of the 12th khoroo of Khan-Uul district.

In 2013, teachers of the SHUTIS NTS organized exploration work in places such as Bayankhoshuu, Zuun Salaa of SHD, Gachuurt, Huangdain Am, and 22-y Tokoo of BZD. They discovered 27 tombs of the Hunnic period, a Bronze Age tomb, and 6 khirgisurs and wrote a scientific report [Boldbaatar, Erdenebold, Khatanbaatar, Byamba-Ochir, Vanchigdash, 2013].

In 2013-2014, Dr. Ya. Tserendagva published a series of articles entitled “Archaeological sites around Ulaanbaatar” in the “Erdem” newspaper of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences [Tserendagva, 2013; 2014]. He published descriptions and some photographs of the Stone Age sites in 6 locations: Zaisan Tolgoi, Maahuur Tolgoi, Zalaagiin Am, Zalaatyn Am, Buyant Ukhaa, and Songino.

In 2014, researchers B. Tsogtbaatar and Ch. Amartuvshin conducted an exploratory study within the framework of the “Risk Assessment of the Preservation and Protection of Archaeological Sites around Ulaanbaatar” project commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Culture [Tsogtbaatar, Amartuvshin et al., 2014].

In 2014, the Institute of Archaeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences implemented the project “Risk Assessment of the Preservation and Protection of Archaeological Monuments in the Ulaanbaatar City Area” with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Within the framework of the project, information on

the location of historical and cultural heritage, previous research reviews, artifacts, and monument registrations in the geographic database of archaeological monuments in the Ulaanbaatar city area was collected and processed. Based on this database, researchers divided the research into two parts: the eastern and western regions and conducted a survey using generalized archaeological exploration methods. During the survey, 41 monuments related to the Bronze, Hunnu, and Mongol periods, including many tombs, khirgisur, Turkic sacrificial virgins, rock paintings, and god portraits, were repeatedly and newly documented and registered in the database. Based on the 1:100,000 scale topographic map of the entire territory of Ulaanbaatar city, the AgsGIS program was used to develop a map of the distribution of monuments and a scientific report was written reflecting the results of the project in eight parts.

In the same year, the Archaeological Research Team of the State University of Mongolia (SHUTI) worked on the relics of ordinary Hunnic citizens located at the mouth of the Bishrelt Pass, on the border of the Erdene soum of Tuv aimag and the Nalaikh district of Ulaanbaatar city, in 2014, within the framework of the "Tuul Valley Cultural Heritage Research" project. They explored the area from the Bishrelt Pass to the Tuul River and from the Nalaikh aerodrome to Ar Janchivlan, and discovered and recorded relics from the Bronze, Hunnic, Turkic, and Mongol periods. They also made a background map of the Hunnic cemetery at the mouth of the Bishrelt Pass and selected and excavated one tomb. The above research was continued, with six more excavated in 2016 and a total of eight tombs in 2018.

In 2013-2014, Dr. Ya. Tserendagva, a research fellow at the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, published a series of articles entitled “Archaeological Monuments in the Ulaanbaatar City Area” in the Mongolian Academy of Sciences’ “Erdem” newspaper. He published descriptions and some drawings of the sites of the Zaisan Tolgoi settlement, Maahuur Tolgoi, Zalaagiin Am, Buyant Ukhaa, and Songino Stone Age monuments, the Gachuurt Aam bronze painting, the Ikh Tengeriin Rock Painting, and the Huainday Aam monument, the Turgeniy Gol tomb, the Tur (Tor) Khurkhyn Aam Hunnu tomb, the Aguit Mountain tomb, the Maikhan Tolgoi Hunnu tomb, and the Khurkhreegiin Aam tomb, etc. In 2015, the “Inspection and Inventory of Immovable Monuments of History and Culture” organized throughout Mongolia included 479 immovable monuments in 217 monuments, covering 9 districts of the capital. Of these, 237 monuments from 67 archaeological sites have been registered.

In 2016, Ch. Amartuvshin and D. Bukhchuluun conducted an archaeological survey along the 11 km road line to be built in the Inner Gunti Valley in Songinokhairkhan District of Ulaanbaatar, at the request of “Artsat Suvarga” LLC, within the framework of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage [Amartuvshin, Bukhchuluun, 2016].

In 2016, B. Gunchinsuren, N. Erdene-Ochir, and N. Bayarkhuu conducted an archaeological survey along the 11 km road line to be built in the Inner Gunti Valley in Songinokhairkhan District of Ulaanbaatar, at the request of “Artsat Suvarga” LLC, within the framework of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage [Gunchinsuren, Erdene-Ochir, and Bayarkhuu 2016].

In 2017, Ts. Amgalantugs and his colleagues conducted an archaeological excavation and survey under the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in accordance with the request of citizen B. Gerelchuluu, who asked for a circular frame to be removed from his summer cottage located at 4-25, 20th Khoroo, Bayanzurkh District, Ulaanbaatar City [Amgalantugs 2017].

Also, in 2017, Ts. Amgalantugs and his colleagues conducted an archaeological excavation and survey at the northeastern foot of Songino Khairkhan

Mountain in Ulaanbaatar City, to discover the bodies of those involved in the “First 14” case during the 1937 political repressions, at the request of their families and children [Amgalantugs 2017].

In 2018, with the support of the Swiss Development Agency, the Ulaanbaatar City Museum conducted a presentation of historical and cultural immovable monuments in the capital city, which included a list of 61 archaeological sites located in the six districts of the capital city that were included in the nationwide historical and cultural immovable monument inspection and inventory conducted in 2015.

In 2018-2019, with the funding of the Government Implementing Agency, the Department of Culture and Arts, researchers from the Institute of Archeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences excavated and analyzed a structure related to the history and biography of the State Great Fairy Dondogdulam, located at the foot of Rashaant Mountain and at the mouth of Sharga Moryt, in the 19th khoroo of Sukhbaatar District. More than 130 artifacts were discovered during the excavation, and it was determined that the structure was the “Bradigabudin stupa.”

In March 2020, to verify the information submitted by citizens, at the expense of the “Cooperation Center for the Protection of Cultural Heritage” NGO, E. Mijiddorj and J. Erdene, lecturers at the Department of Archaeology of Ulaanbaatar University, B. Ochir, a research fellow at the Institute of History and Ethnology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, and G. Ankhsanaa, Head of the Conservation Department of the National Center for Cultural Heritage, conducted an exploration in the area of Khan-Uul District No. 12 and 13, registering 31 archaeological sites of 5 types from four locations and writing a report.

In May 2020, at the request of the Khan-Uul District Governor's Office, researchers from the Mongolian National Museum conducted a detailed study of the ruins of the ancient walled city of "Van Khan's Palace" (Tuul's Black Night) located in the district, explored the slopes of Mount Songinokhairkhan, registered and documented 13 monuments, and conducted preliminary identification, dating, and significance determination.

Several monuments are kept in the collections and exhibitions of museums and universities in Ulaanbaatar. In particular, there are two deer stone statues and one human stone statue in the square in front of the National Museum of Mongolia. One of the deer stone statues was brought from Morin Tolgo, Altanbulag soum, Tuv aimag in 2000, while the other deer stone statue is one of four deer stone statues brought from the deer statue complex of Sortiin Denji (with eight deer statues) in Burentogtoh soum, Khuvsgul aimag in 2006. One of the remaining three deer stone statues is in the collection of the museum, and the other two are in the square in front of Ulaanbaatar University. The human stone statue was brought from the Yagshiin village of Bulgan soum, Khovd aimag. This human stone statue is one of the few human stone statues belonging to the Chemurchek (Khemtse) culture that have been discovered in Mongolia. The Zanabazar Museum of Fine Arts also has several stone monuments, including two stone statues of Turkic people, a stone sheep, a deer statue, and a fascinating stone statue of a person whose origin is unknown, brought from the Toglokhin Tal complex in Battsengel soum, Arkhangai aimag.

In addition, a stone statue of a deer, whose origin is unknown, is kept in the Ulaanbaatar Museum of History and Reform. A stone statue of a Turkic person, which was kept in the courtyard of the Bogd Khan Palace Museum, was transferred to the museum in 2014. In recent years, land relations in our country have been intensively developing, including issuing mining and mineral licenses, creating new settlement zones, allocating land, and building new roads. The above activities are also actively taking place around the capital. Before carrying out the above activities, Article 27.8

of Chapter 5 of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage states that “Before allocating land for economic activities such as the construction of urban settlements and buildings, the construction of new roads, the construction of hydroelectric power plants, farming, and the exploration and exploitation of minerals, a preliminary exploration and research shall be conducted by a paleontological, archaeological, and ethnological professional research organization and a conclusion shall be drawn”, Article 27.9 states that “The costs required for the preliminary exploration and research and the preservation of discovered historical and cultural monuments shall be borne by the customer”, and Article 27.10 states that “Failure to conduct a preliminary exploration and research and a conclusion shall be grounds for invalidating the decision to acquire land.”

In accordance with the above provisions of the law, research organizations with permission to conduct archaeological research have conducted a preliminary exploration and research in the areas of mineral licenses granted, new road routes, and newly granted settlement areas in Ulaanbaatar city. In 2012, the Institute of Archaeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences excavated 4 sites from 3 licensed sites, 246 sites from 10 licensed sites, 27 sites from 3 licensed sites, and one site affected by a road in Nalaikh district. The Institute of History of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and the Department of Archaeology of Ulaanbaatar University excavated 1,449 sites from one licensed site in 2015. The Department of Humanities of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology of the Mongolian National University of Science and Technology conducted exploration and discovered dozens of archaeological sites, which were included in their scientific reports.

In addition to exploration, excavations were also conducted at some licensed sites. In 2017, researchers from the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences excavated and analyzed a hirgisur located on the land owned by Tsogtsaikhan, a citizen of Burhant Khoshuu, located in the Uliastain Baga Aman, Bayanzurkh District. Also, in 2017, researchers from the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology of the National University of Mongolia discovered and excavated a hirgisur with five columns and four circular stone tombs on the land owned by “Tulgyn Undur” LLC at the Artsat Aman of the Bogd Khan Mountain Reserve, located in the 4th Khoroo of Khan-Uul District.

In 2023, leading research fellows of the Institute of Archeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, Doctor (Ph.D.), Associate Professor Ya. Tserendagva, Master S. Dalantay, and research fellows of the “San Khomrug Laboratory Branch” Ts. Amgalantugs, B. Erdene, and L. Delgermaa excavated and studied a total of 8 monuments within the framework of archaeological conservation excavations at the tourist site of “Unen Khulug Construction” LLC, Khan-Uul District, 23rd Khoroo, Bogdhan Mountain Reserve, Ulaanbaatar. These include 2 khirgisurs (sites 1, 6), Bronze Age tomb 1 (site 3), sacrificial structures 4 (sites 2, 4, 5, 7), and an unknown tomb 1 (site 8).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Methodology

Archaeological exploration methods and techniques

Exploration is the organized process of searching for and discovering something. “Exploration” is often used in scientific terminology and is a common concept in scientific fields such as geology, paleontology, biology, and archaeology. Exploration is the first and most responsible stage of archaeological research.

Classification. Archaeological exploration is a form of research based on its own methodology, aimed at searching for, discovering, identifying, studying, and analyzing ancient historical and cultural monuments. Archaeological exploration can be divided into three types: detailed exploration, simple exploration, and simplified exploration.

Precision prospecting is a method used to survey plains and flat areas. This method involves performing linear surveys along longitude and latitude, and aims to find large-scale monuments, as well as stone tools, pottery fragments, and some small artifacts that are often not visible to the naked eye on the ground [Lightfoot, Kent. 1986].

If any item is found, its location is determined, a description of the item found is provided, documentation of the find is carried out, and a consultation is held on whether to conduct an extended excavation at a later stage.

This exploration method should be used in the exploitation and exploration zones of mining companies. Because the size of mineral exploration and exploitation areas varies but is limited to a certain range, and since these areas are likely to be damaged or destroyed in the future, it is advisable to conduct these activities more precisely. Simple exploration is suitable for use in grassy slopes, hills, and dry valleys along rivers. Its goal is to speed up exploration and involve more people, based on accumulating experience and information about exploration and monuments in a given area. Additionally, when maps are scarce or inaccurate, aerial photography is employed for exploration. This is because aerial photos are taken from a certain height; however, depending on errors and image quality, the terrain may not be clearly visible, and detailed information about the line may be lacking.

At the very beginning of the exploration work, the four edge points of the selected area are determined using an aerial photography device. Then, the distance between each person is discussed and determined. The exploration is carried out back and forth along the longitude and latitude, such as walking a fixed distance from one edge of the area to the other edge. In this way, the exploration group conducting the exploration in a line can be divided into several parts and perform the exploration in the exploration area as they choose. Each exploration team will use its own exploration data book, a general background map of the monument, a camera, and a GPS.

Simplified exploration. This method is used for exploring areas that are relatively far from the main site and beyond. In regions with dense trees between rivers and mountains, the exploration team will stay at accessible locations and investigate areas reachable by people. While archaeological sites are rare in such mountainous

regions, the main goal is to use various methods within the chosen area without missing any sites. Additionally, there is an urgent need to visit nearby areas outside the selected exploration zone and compare them with the main area. Since the region is large and the roads are long, this can be done by car. You can access valleys and river mouths where vehicles can go to explore and document monuments.

Tools and equipment used in exploration. A wide range of tools and computer programs are commonly employed in archaeological exploration. This includes GPS devices to determine land locations and GIS or Archview programs to input measurements from GPS devices into a computer and display them on a map.

Memorial documentation. Documentation of monuments is the most important task for creating a database, identifying, analyzing, and making recommendations for further research, preservation, and protection.

In the event that any monument is discovered during the exploration process, the following documentation is performed. These include:

1. If a member of the exploration team conducting a linear exploration finds a monument, he or she will call other participants to register the monument jointly.

2. Monument numbering

- When numbering the monument, the name of the area or place being explored is indicated in full or in abbreviations (for example, Oyu Tolgoi-01, OT-01, etc.) and then numbered starting from one. However, since this name will be entered as data in the database in the future, it is advisable to consider the name of the previous exploration and the name of the future exploration.

3. Writing a Description

- The description is recorded in a specially prepared notebook according to the serial number. On the first page, brief questions are provided to remind the person writing the description of what information to include.

- Assess the general condition of the land. Identify nearby geographical features such as mountains, rivers, lakes, etc., close to the monument. Describe the appearance of the monument and any damage.

- Measure the size of the monument. It is important to note that measurements should be taken from north to south, east to west, or along longitude and latitude. Using a standardized measurement method facilitates comparative research based on survey data.

- Identify the coordinate system. This is a crucial part of the database. Remember the coordinate system in UTM or Lat/Lon hddd.ddddd° format and ensure the WGS84 setting is used.

- Take photographs. Capture all relevant information about the monument through photographs, which will serve as an important data source for the database.

- Prepare a board displaying the memorial number, excavation site number, and date.

- Place the board in a visible location without obstructing the external view of the monument, and take a photograph. The information on the board should be clearly visible, as it is essential for entering the monument into the database.

- Place a marker indicating the north direction on the front of the board. This will help in later classifying the external layout, shape, and geographical description of the monument.

- Place a scale. Position the scale where it is clearly visible, oriented according to longitude and latitude. For large monuments, a scale of 100-200 cm is more suitable, while for smaller monuments, 20-50 cm is more appropriate. This will help in determining the size of the monument later.

- When taking photos, it is inevitable that the monument will be the main focus, but you should also include some of the mountains, rivers, and ravines visible in the background.

- Collecting artifacts. This involves gathering small artifacts such as stone tools, pottery shards, and fragments of iron and copper. The first step at a site is to determine the distribution of artifacts. To do this, hang brightly colored flags or banners near the artifacts to make the distribution visually clear. Record the distribution along both longitude and latitude and include these details in the description. After mapping the distribution, identify the area with the highest density and document the number of artifacts found per square meter. It is possible to collect some samples from the site with artifacts, but it is better to leave the artifacts in place for future test excavations and ongoing research.

If it is necessary to collect artifacts, write down the monument number, exploration site number, and cross-section information in the designated bag.

1. Make a background drawing. This documentation work is done to provide additional information that cannot be obtained in photographs.

- Make a background drawing in outline. Because the monument cannot be identified in the soil until llrel-1daj, and it is calculated to save time for further exploration.

- The exploration team has two notebooks: a notebook for writing descriptions and a background drawing.

- When making a background drawing, it is essential to match the scale to the notebook and to consider the purpose of later understanding.

- Draw a meter along the north-south axis of the monument. On a large monument, only an outline can be drawn.

- Scale the scale along the axis to depict the general shape of the monument correctly.

- In some cases, in areas with many monuments, special places such as mountains, ravines, and rivers can be marked and the locations of the monuments can be drawn by eye.

2. Soil testing. This method is used in areas covered with tall grass. In such areas, assuming that the artifact is not clearly visible to the human eye and is likely underground, exploration participants select a specific distance and a section of land to excavate with a shovel.

- Exploration participants will carry out a linear exploration along the longitude and latitude with a shovel and a sieve.

- If an average of 6 people are participating in the exploration, 3 people will go in a row with a shovel and 3 people with a sieve, and the participant with the sieve can be organized on the left, the participant with the shovel on the right, etc.

Every 100 meters of the linear exploration, which is determined by the lead participant using a GPS rangefinder and reminds other participants to conduct a soil test, all exploration members, including the person with the shovel, will dig a hole roughly 50x50 cm in size and 20-30 cm deep. The participant with the sieve on the left will come and sift the soil thoroughly, checking for artifacts. If five or more artifacts are found in the sieve, they will be considered relics and documented. If fewer than five artifacts are found, they will be included in the exploration report, and the exploration will continue.

Field research objectives and work plan

"CSCEC Aicom consultants" LLC, in accordance with the Mongolian Law "On Cultural Heritage Protection", submitted a request for archaeological exploration and research work along the highway route within the framework of the "New Circle Highway" project in the territory of Ulaanbaatar city. In accordance with this request, the archaeological exploration and research work was carried out from May 14 to 17, 2025, by the research staff of the Institute's Department of Archaeology and Laboratory, Doctor (Ph.D) Ts. Amgalantugs, Master N. Nandintseg, Research Staff of the Department of the Middle Ages L. Monkhbayar, and driver G. Temur.

The main purpose of this exploration and research work is to determine whether there are any historical and cultural monuments in the area with a special mineral exploration license provided by the customer (along the road route line) and in the vicinity thereof, and if any monuments are found, determine the location point, make a brief scientific description and attach it to the report.

The field survey was conducted using simple archaeological exploration methods along the route of the new road to be built within the framework of the "New Ring Road" project in Ulaanbaatar city.

Tasks to be completed	**Days since the contract was signed**
Sign and confirm the contract	May 13, 2025
Conducting exploration studies on the road route of the "New Circular Highway" project	May 14, 2025
Conduct exploration studies along the road route of the "New Circular Road" project	May 15, 2025
Conduct exploration studies along the road route of the "New Circular Road" project	May 16, 2025
Writing a report on the exploration work and reviewing it with the editorial board	May 17, 2025

Submitting research reports and conclusions to the client, with the authors' copyright	May 19, 2025

3. RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Mongolia, “Si es si i si aycom consultants” LLC requested to conduct archaeological exploration and research along the highway route within the “New Ring Road” project in Ulaanbaatar city. As a result, the exploration and research team from the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences carried out an investigation to determine whether there are any archaeological monuments in the specified area.

The field research aimed to comply with and implement the provisions of the following laws and regulations. In particular, Article 7 of Chapter I of the “Constitution of Mongolia” states that “Historical and cultural monuments, scientific and intellectual heritage of the Mongolian people are under state protection.” There is also the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Mongolia, which seeks to regulate relations related to the search, registration, study, classification, evaluation, preservation, promotion, restoration, and transmission of historical and cultural heritage. Article 27.8 of Chapter 5 of this law states that “Before allocating land for economic activities such as the construction of urban settlements and buildings, the construction of new roads, the building of hydroelectric power plants, the exploration and exploitation of minerals, and the preliminary exploration and research by paleontological, archaeological, and ethnological professional research organizations shall be conducted and a conclusion shall be drawn,” and Article 27.9 states that “The costs required for the preliminary exploration and the preservation of discovered historical and cultural monuments shall be borne by the client.”

Archaeological exploration is a research method focused on searching for, discovering, identifying, studying, and analyzing ancient historical and cultural monuments. It can be categorized into three types: detailed exploration, simple exploration, and simplified exploration. The route of the “New Circle Highway,” which passes through the districts of Bayanzurkh, Sukhbaatar, Songino Khairkhan, Khan-Uul in Ulaanbaatar, has been in residential areas and ger districts for many years. The topsoil has been heavily eroded, making it impossible to find visible archaeological sites. The archaeological survey was conducted using simple methods. Photographs were taken broadly based on road conditions and attached to the conclusion. No archaeological sites were identified during the survey.

Although no archaeological sites were found during the survey and there are no visible signs on the surface, it is not ruled out that there are historical and cultural sites preserved underground, so it is recommended to work carefully and cautiously when carrying out any activities and immediately notify a professional organization if historical and cultural sites or artifacts are found.

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ATTACHED PICTURE

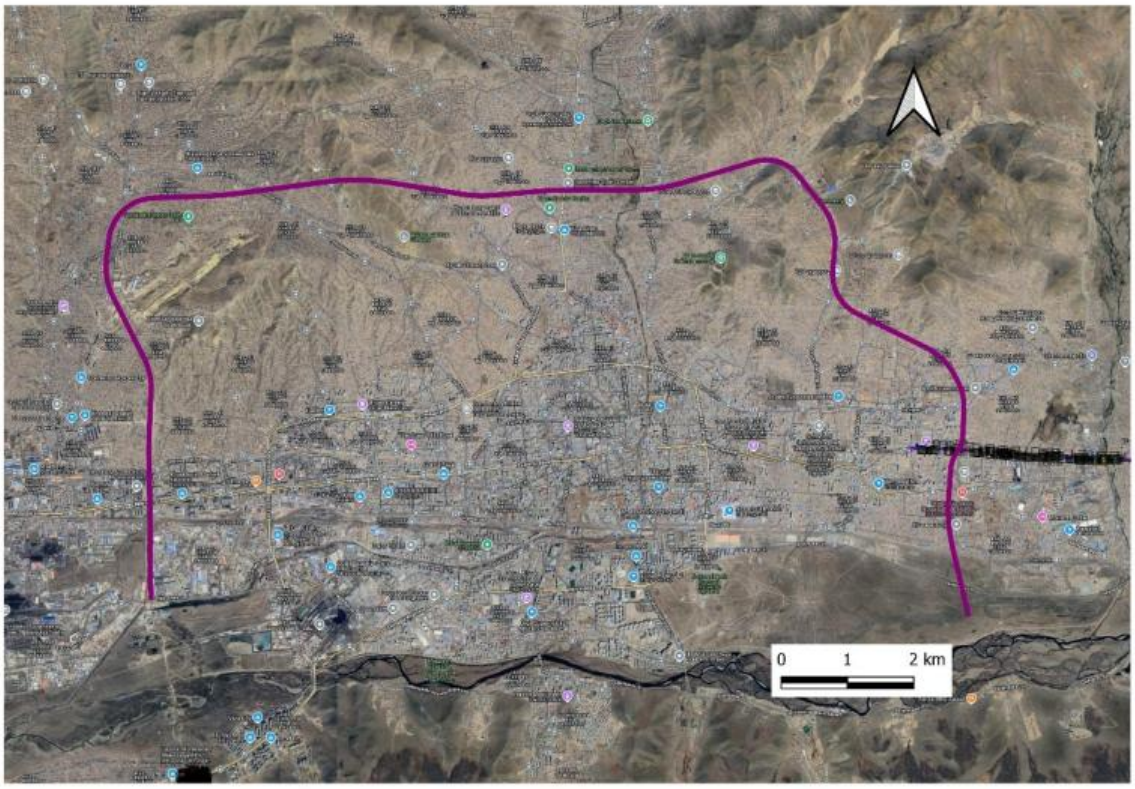

Figure 1. "New Ring Road"

Figure 2. Starting point of the road route, “New Circular Highway”

Figure 3. The middle section of the roadway is called "New Circular Highway".

Documents submitted to the Archives of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences by the
Archaeological Rescue Field Investigation Unit

Report of the Rescue Field Investigation Department on the archaeological exploration and research work carried out by Dr. Ph.D Ts. Amgalantugs, Master L. Monkhbayar, and N. Nandintseg along the route of the “New Ring Road” project of “CSCC Icom Consultants” LLC in Ulaanbaatar city from May 14 to May 17, 2025. UB., 2025. 27 pages.

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