

Guimarães (Portugal)

No 1031

Identification

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| <i>Nomination</i> | Historic Centre of Guimarães |
| <i>Location</i> | Province of Minho, District of Braga |
| <i>State Party</i> | Portugal |
| <i>Date</i> | 27 June 2000 |

Justification by State Party

The historic centre of Guimarães is an ensemble and a testimony of urban development that brings together renowned examples of a special type of construction. Because of its unity, its construction system (in traditional techniques), its architectural characteristics (diversity of typologies, illustrating the evolution of the city at different periods), and its integration with the landscape setting, the town represents outstanding universal values.

The zone proposed for inscription contains an urban fabric that has medieval origins and includes a succession of places of great formal significance, where the built structure (mainly from the 17th century), while representing a variety of types, is built using traditional technology, ie the *colombage* and the *pisé de fasquio* in which timber is a fundamental element.

The authenticity and integrity of the traditional construction methods remain a living presence in the city. This type of construction is still widely used in the urban area and represents a cultural heritage to be safeguarded.

The authenticity and the strong visual impact of the historic centre of Guimarães result from the unified protection strategies that have been implemented by the Municipal Technical Offices (GTL). The policies of urban conservation have been based on the promotion of rehabilitation and the re-evaluation of public spaces, retaining the resident population, protecting and maintaining the existing historic structures built in traditional technology, as well as guaranteeing a strict implementation, which have resulted in an exemplary case that distinguishes Guimarães amongst the other towns of the country.

The exemplary results have been recognized by several international and national awards, such as the Prix Europa Nostra in 1985.

The traditional techniques used in Guimarães derive from experience and from oral transmission, transferring the past to the present and guaranteeing continuity to the knowhow and manual skills. The wealth of traditional techniques

resides in the combination of these factors, man being an agent of practice and of tradition. **Criterion ii**

Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*.

History and Description

History

Guimarães was situated on the most important early medieval route of communication connecting Monção and Braga with Viseu and Caminha, the seat of the Portuguese (*Portugalense*) Counts from the 10th century. This urban settlement developed as a result of two forces, a monastery and a fort, one in the valley, the other on the hill, surrounded by two rivers. The town thus dominated the fertile plain that extended towards the sea. The two focal points continued growing in parallel until they were brought together within a single enclosure in the 13th and 14th centuries.

The early history of Guimarães is closely associated with the forming of the national identity and the language of Portugal, being associated with the early Portuguese sovereigns. The region was given as a feudal property to the family that created the country in the 12th century. In 1139 Count Dom Afonso Henriques declared the independence of Portugal from León and took the name of Afonso I as the first king of the new kingdom. Because of the association of the family with the region, the monastery of Guimarães was transformed into a royal college, thus obtaining a primary institutional role in the country. It also became a pilgrimage place on the route of Santiago de Compostela because of an image of the Madonna that was considered to be miraculous.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the Bourg developed a variety of activities, including the manufacture of cutlery and jewellery, the treatment of leather, and marketing of the goods. The production reinforced the position of Guimarães on the route between the coast and the inland. The establishment of Dominican and Franciscan orders outside the walls of the Bourg contributed to the beginning of urbanization *extra muros*, including an area for the treatment of leather close to the river Couros. The economic and social status of the town was recognized in the new charter granted by Dom Manuel in 1517.

The 18th century was a period of intensive construction activity, particularly marked by noble residences. It was also the period of the first urban master plan, though most of the implementation took place in the first half of the 19th century. There were also new access roads, which came to modify the medieval situation, establishing the basis for the present-day layout in the region. The medieval defence walls and gates, which had already lost their function in the 16th century, were gradually demolished starting from the 17th to 19th centuries.

In the 20th century the town expanded at an increasing speed owing to industrial development. In the 1980s the municipality recognized the importance of the historic centre of the town, establishing a technical office responsible for the strategies of conservation and rehabilitation.

Description

The nominated area of Guimarães (16ha) consists of the historic centre as it was formed at the time of the construction of the medieval enclosure in the 13th century. This core area is surrounded by a buffer zone (45ha), which roughly corresponds to the built area in the first half of the 20th century. The nominated area has a population of about 1000 and the buffer zone 1850 inhabitants.

The urban layout of the historic centre is an area some 850m long and about 250m wide, with the castle in the north and the original monastic complex in the south. The different constructions fall into several periods, though the single buildings may have undergone various changes and additions over time. The following have been identified as the main periods of construction:

- I. The early settlement, 950–1279;
- II Unification within one enclosure, 1279–1498;
- III Renaissance to Baroque, 1498–1750;
- IV Rococo to Neo-Classicism, 1750–1863;
- V Eclectic to industrial period, 1863–1926;
- VI Modern expansion, 1926 till today.

The historic centre is characterized by a large number of buildings from the different periods. Periods I and II have a number of stone constructions, including the two poles around which the town initially developed, the castle in the north and the monastic complex in the south. The third and fourth periods are characterized by noble houses and the development of civic facilities, city squares, etc. The fifth and sixth periods are characterized by some modern changes, though the town essentially has maintained its medieval urban layout.

The systems and techniques of construction and building types have evolved over time. The residential buildings in the nominated area are characterized by the use of two construction techniques, one dating from before the 16th century, called *taipa de rodízio*, a particular type of half-timber structure, which mixed granite with a structure in timber and a filling in sun-dried brick, using clay mortar. The other technique, called *taipa de fasquio*, came into use in the 19th century and was built entirely in timber. These techniques are still mastered today. This technology was first developed in the region of Guimarães. From here it was exported to Portuguese colonies in other parts of the world, becoming a distinct characteristic of the personality of Portuguese colonial architecture.

Considering that the town had begun to develop *extra muros* in the 16th century, the historic area is not limited to the core zone within the original medieval enclosure. The core area and the buffer zone contain several listed monuments of national and public interest: twelve in the core area and ten in the buffer zone. Furthermore, the municipality has identified buildings of particular heritage interest: 36 in the core zone and 24 in the buffer zone.

The monuments of national interest include the medieval CASTLE, built on the site of the first fort of the 10th century. The present construction was built in stone, begun at the time of Afonso I in the 12th century and continued with various modifications in the following centuries. The building is an austere crenellated structure with towers, designed for

defence. Part of it was demolished in the 18th century and it has been subject to restorations in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Close to the castle, there is a small Romanesque church, SÃO MIGUEL DO CASTELO, which was consecrated in 1239. Having been ruined in the 19th century, the building was restored in the 1920s.

The church of NOSSA SENHORA DA OLIVEIRA was founded in the 12th century on the site where the first monastery had existed some three centuries earlier. The church was completely renovated from 1387 to 1413, with three naves and a wooden roof structure, according to the Portuguese Gothic model. The cloister was added in the 16th century and the present sanctuary to the church in the 17th century.

The PALACE OF THE DUKES OF BRAGANÇA is a large complex built in stone down the hill from the castle. The first construction dates from 1420–22, most probably under French influence. The building, a late medieval type, was conceived as a symbol of the pride of the Bragança family. The building underwent various vicissitudes, serving as a military headquarters in the late 19th century. It was restored in the 1930s, much of the restoration based on hypothesis.

The TOWN HALL, in the square in front of the church of Nossa Senhora, dates mainly from the 16th and 17th centuries. The palace, primarily in stone, has one main floor with large doors opening to a balcony along the main facade. The ground floor is characterized by open arcades. In the same square, in front of the church, there is also a 14th century Gothic arch, a monument commemorating the victory of Dom Afonso IV in the battle of Padrão do Salado.

The core area and the buffer zone contain several interesting religious buildings, such as the CONVENT OF SANTA CLARA from the 17th and 18th centuries and the CHURCH OF MISERICÓRDIA from the early 17th century.

Guimarães has a rich typology of houses and palaces ranging from the 16th to the 19th and even the 20th centuries, continuing to use similar traditional techniques. The BOURGEOIS HOUSES OF THE 16TH CENTURY have a ground floor in granite and the upper floors are built using the half-timbered structure of *taipa de rodízio*. The 16th century houses of noble families have often been an alteration of a previous structure, and have generally their elevation built in granite, as a sign of distinction.

The typical HOUSES OF THE 17TH CENTURY continued using the same construction technique, ie granite in the ground floor and half-timbered structure in the upper floors, usually three, which extend stepwise over the ground floor. Another type of house of the same century was built with a peristyle and arcaded ground floor, and is usually found in public squares. The noble palaces were built in granite ashlar, including a series of recesses. The building extended along the street front with its characteristic windows and balconies, giving it a dignified aspect. More modest town houses have a simple facade without any decorative features.

The NOBLE PALACES OF THE 18TH CENTURY were built in ashlar stone with recessed elevations, but more modest dimensions than in the previous century. In the transition from the 18th to the 19th and 20th centuries, the constructions still continued using certain traditional features, but they are distinguished by their size and the

horizontal accent. In the 20th century it is fashionable to use *azulejos* as a decorative element in the elevations.

The continuity in traditional technology and the maintenance and gradual change have contributed to an exceptionally harmonious townscape, but limited to the core area. The buffer zone has several interesting monuments, including an entire traditional street, Rua Dom João I, though otherwise the area results from industrial housing developments in the 20th century.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The public areas of the historic centre are the property of the municipality of Guimarães. Apart from some state-owned properties, most of the building stock is privately owned.

The historic centre is subject to legal prescriptions regarding the protection of historic buildings (L. 13/85; L. 120/97; D.L. 3/98), and related to town planning (D.L. 38/382 of 1951; L. 445/91; D.L. 250/94). The urban master plan dates from 1994 and includes norms for the protection of the historic centre.

In the historic centre there are 14 historic buildings legally protected as national monuments (8) or as historic buildings of public interest (6), according to the Portuguese Law on the Protection of Historic Monuments. Where no protected zone has been established, the protection also includes prescriptions regarding the setting of the protected buildings, up to 50m from the exterior of the construction.

During the mission to the site, the ICOMOS expert noted that parts of the buffer zone remained outside the protection zone. While norms for the protection of the historic core area exist, these have not been established for the buffer zone. Consequently, the municipality has already taken measures to rectify the situation and to extend protection to the entire area proposed for inscription and to prepare the required norms for the buffer zone.

Management

The management of the historic centre is the responsibility of the Local Technical Office for the Historic Centre of the Municipality (GTL), established in 1985. Any interventions related to listed buildings is under the control of the Portuguese Institute of Architectural Heritage (IPPAR).

The ICOMOS site mission was able to verify and confirm that the conservation and maintenance of the historic area is exceptionally well managed. In fact, the area is in good condition, also as a result of the systematic maintenance programme, sponsored by European funding. Most of the building stock has already been subject to this maintenance programme.

It is noted furthermore that Guimarães has continued to make use of traditional knowhow and skills up to the present day. As a consequence maintenance work and repairs have been executed using traditional methods, thus guaranteeing a harmony with and respect for the existing historic fabric.

The historic town has a considerable number of visitors, out of whom about 75% are foreigners, mainly from Europe. It is well equipped to manage such tourism flows.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

The town of Guimarães has been fortunate in that it has never been subject to any major disasters in its history. As a result the town represents an exceptional harmony in the continuation of eventual changes and developments. This is also due to the continuity in the use of traditional techniques and materials since the Middle Ages. Although the different epochs have introduced a variety of building types, the typology as a whole also represents a continuity that gives the town a remarkably well balanced townscape.

So far as the single buildings are concerned, there have been various interventions, changes, and additions, resulting from changes in uses. Some of the public buildings, such as the Castle, the Bragança Palace, and several churches have been subject to restoration in the 19th and early 20th centuries. These restorations have been carried out following the criteria of the time, including reconstructions on the basis of evidence or sometimes based on hypothesis. However, these interventions can be seen as part of the history of the place and they do not impair the overall issue of authenticity.

Authenticity and integrity

ICOMOS regards the historic area of Guimarães as having well retained its historic stratigraphy and passing the test of authenticity. The historic core also presents an area of great integrity, where the different phases of development are well integrated into the whole.

It is also to be noted that the core area obviously represents the historic centre of a town, which has continued to grow and develop around it in the 20th century. As a result the areas outside the perimeter of the protected zone reflect a more ordinary townscape.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited the site in February 2001. ICOMOS also consulted its International Committee on Historic Towns and Villages (CIVVIH).

Qualities

The history of Guimarães is closely associated with the creation of the national identity and language of Portugal. It was the feudal territory of the Portuguese Dukes who declared the independence of Portugal from León in the mid 12th century.

Guimarães has well preserved its historic building stock, which represents the evolution of building typologies from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. This development is documented in the rich variety of different building types that have responded to the evolving needs of the community.

Guimarães also developed a particular version of a type of construction using granite mixed with a timber-framed structure, a technology which was widely diffused in the Portuguese colonies.

Comparative analysis

In the Portuguese context there are basically two urban developments. One is related to the Roman, Germanic, and Arabic inheritance, such as Evora (inscribed on the World

Heritage List 1986: criteria ii, iv), which were then expanded in the Portuguese period. The other development has a Portuguese basis, resulting in cities such as Guimarães and Minho.

As the seat of the king and the government Lisbon has had its own particular basis for the development. There is also a difference with cities such as Oporto (1996: iv), which architecturally represents a different development, becoming a major metropolis, when compared with the traditionally evolved and small-scale Guimarães.

While Portugal certainly has a rich heritage with numerous historic cities, Guimarães is distinguished in particular for its integrity, where the historically authentic building stock is presented in an exceptionally well managed context.

ICOMOS recommendations for future action

Considering the verified lack of protection in certain areas of the buffer zone and the lack of specified norms of protection in the same areas, ICOMOS urges the State Party to take the necessary action and to provide the required legal protection and protection norms for the areas concerned.

Brief description

The historic town of Guimarães is associated with the creation of the Portuguese national identity in the 12th century. The town is an exceptionally well preserved and authentic example of the evolution of a medieval settlement into a modern township, retaining a rich building typology representing the specifically Portuguese development over the centuries, particularly from the 15th to the 19th centuries, and consistently built using traditional building materials and techniques.

Statement of Significance

The historic town of Guimarães is associated with the definition of the Portuguese national identity and language in the 12th century. The town is exceptionally well preserved, illustrating the different phases of the evolution of particular building types from the medieval settlement to a modern township, and particularly from the 15th to the 19th centuries, and consistently built in traditional building materials and techniques. Because of the role of Guimarães in the exploration of new territories, the specialized building techniques developed there in the Middle Ages were introduced to Portuguese colonies, becoming their characteristic feature.

ICOMOS Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii, iii, and iv*:

Criterion ii Guimarães is of considerable universal significance by virtue of the fact that specialized building techniques developed there in the Middle Ages were transmitted to Portuguese colonies in Africa and the New World, becoming their characteristic feature.

Criterion iii The early history of Guimarães is closely associated with the establishment of Portuguese national identity and the Portuguese language in the 12th century.

Criterion iv An exceptionally well preserved town, Guimarães illustrates the evolution of particular building types from the medieval settlement to the present-day city, and particularly in the 15th–19th centuries.

Bureau Recommendation

That the Historic Centre of Guimarães be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii, iii, and iv*.

ICOMOS, September 2001