

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Alhambra, Generalife, and Albayzín, Granada (extension of the Alhambra and the Generalife, Granada)
<i>Location</i>	Granada
<i>State Party</i>	Spain
<i>Date</i>	30 September 1993

Justification by State Party

The Albayzín quarter is an indispensable complement to the Alhambra and the Generalife, which were inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 8th Meeting of the Committee in 1984 under cultural criteria i, iii, and iv. It illustrates two phases of the development of the city, two aspects of the Arab city of Granada.

In its 1984 evaluation ICOMOS recommended that the Spanish Government should define "a large area of protection below the monumental zone of the Alhambra and the Generalife in order to prevent the construction of future buildings and parking lots". The Albayzín quarter, which is the oldest part of the ensemble, should not be considered as a buffer zone to the Alhambra and the Generalife because it has a universal value which is complementary to and chronologically earlier than the site already on the List. The Albayzín quarter qualifies under criteria iv and v.

Criterion iv Despite the development that followed the Christian conquest, the Albayzín still bears witness to the medieval Moorish settlement, since its urban fabric, the architecture, and its main characteristics (form, materials, colours), together with its physiognomy, were not changed when it was adapted to the Christian way of life.

This consisted essentially of the replacement of the original mosques by churches and monastic buildings. The new proprietors and their foremen must have been so dazzled by the beauty and coherence of this urban ensemble that they did not disfigure it. At the present time, five hundred years after the Reconquista, the Albayzín remains a remarkable example of a Spanish-Moorish town.

Criterion v Although the Albayzín is still a residential town, it is also a rich repository of Moorish vernacular architecture, with which the traditional Andalusian architecture, almost as old, blends harmoniously. The body of secular architecture is absorbed into the original urban fabric, that of the medieval Moorish town.

The work currently in progress is designed to remove as much as possible of the external manifestations of modern life, such as electrical installations, television aerials, etc, which tend to debase the perfect picture of the traditional Spanish-Moorish settlement, which has been able to survive over the centuries but which is perpetually exposed to the irreversible changes that the modern way of life might bring.

History and Description*History*

Archaeological excavations have shown that the hill where the Albayzín is now situated has been occupied continuously from as early as the Roman period. In the mid 8th century the region's governor Asap ben Abderrahman built a fortress where the Plaza de San Nicolás is now located (known as the Casbah until the Alhambra was built in the 13th century, when it became known as the Old Casbah). A new defensive

enclosure was added by the Zirids in the 11th century, and around this a settlement grew up. The town prospered under the Nasrid dynasty and this was reflected by considerable development of the Albayzín in the mid 14th century; it became the quarter of Arab and Jewish craftsmen and traders.

When the Reconquista was completed in 1492, the population of the Albayzín rose to 60,000. The emigration of most of the Moslem inhabitants and the baptism of those who remained, together with settlement by a substantial Christian population, had an effect on the development of the quarter, but without disfiguring the old Moorish town. The new late Gothic or early Plateresque churches and monasteries harmonized with the existing architecture.

The remarkable expansion of agriculture in the region in the 19th century gave a new impetus to the development of Granada. The lower quarters of the town were transformed and lost their artistic qualities. However, the Albayzín was spared this new urbanization owing to its hillside location. Today the town is divided into two distinct parts: on the one hand the modern lower town and on the other the medieval town on its two hills, the Alhambra and the Albayzín, which form a coherent whole.

Description

The present Albayzín brings together several medieval quarters - the Casbah Cadima, Ajsares, Cenete, and Albayzín proper. There are 16 designated national historical monuments and over 200 buildings considered to be of high national value, 26 of them religious structures.

Much of the significance of the Albayzín lies in the medieval town plan with its narrow streets and small squares and in the relatively modest houses in Moorish and Andalusian style that line them. There are, however, some more imposing reminders of its past prosperity. Among them are the Casa de la Reina (the remains of an aristocratic residence), the Corral del Carbón (an ancient caravanserai or *funduq*), and the former hermitage (*rabita*) converted into the church of San Sebastana. After the Reconquista Los Reyes Católicos honoured Granada in many ways and endowed it with many religious monuments. Diego de Siloé, who was trained in Toledo and was one of the initiators of the Plateresque style, became one of the most important architects working in Granada. Among his many masterpieces there is the Patio de la Chancillería.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The Albayzín quarter is designated as a National Historical-Artistic Ensemble (*Conjunto Histórico-Artístico*) in conformity with the Law for Town and Country Planning (*Ley de la Régimen del Suelo y Ordenación Urbana*, 1976) and the Law for the Spanish Historical Heritage (*Ley del Patrimonio Histórico Español*, 1985). This imposes strict controls over interventions that may impair the qualities for which the property was designated.

Ownership of properties within the quarter is shared between private individuals, the Spanish State, the Church, and the municipality of Granada.

Management

Following two expert missions organized by Unesco a comprehensive plan for the restoration and rehabilitation of the Albayzín quarter was drawn up in the 1980s and approved by the municipal authorities in January 1990. This is based on a complete survey of the whole quarter, building by building, and provides for the progressive rehabilitation of the entire area under the overall supervision of the competent municipal authorities. Special attention is given to the concealment of modern intrusions such as overhead electricity cables, television aerials, etc. Work has been in progress since that time and the results so far have been very successful.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

There was no overall approach to the problem of conservation in the Albayzín quarter until the 1980s. Individual buildings, and in particular those in public use, such as the churches, were regularly maintained, but the detailed survey carried out at that time revealed that many of the private houses were in a low state of repair. The rehabilitation plan imposes high standards for restoration and conservation works.

Authenticity

The fundamental authenticity of the Albayzín quarter is contained in its street pattern and townscape. Many individual buildings preserve substantial original elements, but the lack of an overall policy until recent years has meant that in many cases repairs and extensions have been carried out using unsympathetic materials and techniques.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Granada in May 1994 and reported favourably on the state of conservation of the buildings in the Albayzín quarter and on the excellent management of the green spaces that are a feature of the area. The situation regarding the boundaries of the proposed property and the buffer zones, which had caused ICOMOS some problems in its initial evaluation, was satisfactorily clarified.

Qualities

The medieval Spanish-Moorish townscape of the Albayzín quarter is remarkably well preserved. It represents an appropriate extension of the existing inscription of the Alhambra and the Generalife, with which it forms a coherent whole.

Comparative analysis

The architecture and urban fabric of the medieval Spanish-Moorish towns of southern Spain represent a unique cultural phenomenon, the harmonious blending together of two traditions to create a special form and style. The medieval city of Granada, as represented by the Albayzín quarter, can therefore only be compared with the other medieval towns of Andalusia.

Granada is pre-eminent among the major Andalusian towns because it has preserved its urban fabric almost intact, unlike Córdoba or Seville. Ronda is an excellent example of a Moorish town, but it is small and lacks the monumental elements that make Granada exceptional.

Recommendation

That this proposal for extension of World Heritage monument No 314 be approved, under the existing criteria (i,iii, and iv). In view of the rehabilitation programme for the Albayzín, it does not feel that inscription under criterion v to be necessary or appropriate.

ICOMOS, October 1994