

# ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 384

## A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Old Town of Caceres

Location : Province of Caceres

State Party : Spain

Date : December 30, 1985

## B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria III and IV.

## C) JUSTIFICATION

Caceres shares with many cities the privilege of remarkable historic continuity, spanning the time from the Roman Empire to the contemporary period, but it is also a unique example of an evolution marked by two major and distinct periods of urbanization: the Arab fortified city prior to 1229, and from the 14th to the 16th century the feudal city which the hidalgos dotted with palaces and gentilice towers.

Few traces of the Colonia Norbensis Caesarina founded 29 B.C. remain in the urban landscape; here and there, markings indicating the cardo and decumanus can be perceived. And all that is left of the Roman wall, reworked significantly by the Arabs, is a few wall sections and some foundation stones.

Caesarina -as it was called in the 6th century- assumed only a minor role in the Visigoth Kingdom. It had lost nearly all its prominence when the Arabs seized it and made it a fortified city, called Qasri, which in the 12th century Al-Idrisi believed was the principal bridgehead against the Christians. Moreover, during the 12th century wars, after the Almohades had lost then retaken the city several times, they built remarkable fortifications which completely changed the appearance of the Roman walls. Flanking towers were positioned externally a few meters from the rampart and connected to it by a wall; five of the towers, rectangular in shape, still stand to the west, including the famous Torre del Bujaco (a phonetic transcription of Abu Yacub); two polygonal towers can be seen to the south (Torre Redonda and Torre Mochada); to the east, the Torre de los Pozos rising 30 meters above the rampart walk is partly built into a barbican.

Intra muros, few monuments have survived from the Muslim period. The most significant is the five-nave reservoir with three bays, incorporated into the Casa de las Veletas in the 16th century. Though most of the monuments have been lost (the site of the Alcazar was parcelled out in 1473), the pattern of the streets, with winding back streets that open on tiny squares or turn into narrow alleys, is a carryover from urban planning during the Almohad period. The number of patios and interior gardens also bears testimony to the influence of Qasri on Caceres.

Alfonso IX, King of Leon, recaptured the city definitively from the Moors in 1229. A charter of franchises established the conditions for re poblacion of the city; settlers from Asturias, Galicia and Castille built up a major rural village where an open market was a weekly event.

Caceres' destiny shifted again in the 14th century with the massive influx of hidalgos who had initially been excluded from re poblacion as a result of measures imposed by Alfonso IX. In the space of a few decades, fortified houses dotting the landscape made the city a perfect example of a feudal city, which since 1312 had been the stage for power struggles between rival clans. Notable among the oldest seigniorial fortresses are the Palacio de la Generala, the house and tower de las Cigüenas, Casa de los Ovando-Perero, Torre de los Espaderos, and Casa Espadero-Pizarro or Casa del Mono.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, noble pride evidenced richly decorated coats of arms and a cre scendo of towers, machicoulis and crenelations. Catholic kings tore down most of these unusual constructions, but preserved a few in deference to the wishes of a few, select lords (e.g., Palacio de los Golfines de Arriba, Palacio de las Cigüenas). Only their smaller proportions and a more modest system of defence distinguish the city's exquisite stone houses from the palaces (Casa de Aldana, Casa del Sol, Casa del Aguila, Casa de Ulloa, Casa de Carvajal, etc.). When the "Americans" returned, new palaces were constructed : Palacio Godoy, built by a newly rich conquistador and Palacio de los Toledo-Moctezuma, built in the second half of the 16th century for the grandson of the Aztec who had greeted Cortés when he reached Mexico. A wide variety of styles is reflected in these constructions and the city's contemporary structures, palaces (Palacios de las Veletas, de los Golfines de Abajo, del Mayoralgo, del Obispo, de la Isla, etc.), churches or convents (San Mateo, Santa Maria, Santiago de los Caballeros, Santo Domingo, etc.). The later addition of the imposing Jesuit church San Francisco Javier (1755) did not disturb the harmony of an urban fabric which had been remodelled according to a common pattern from the 14th to 16th centuries.

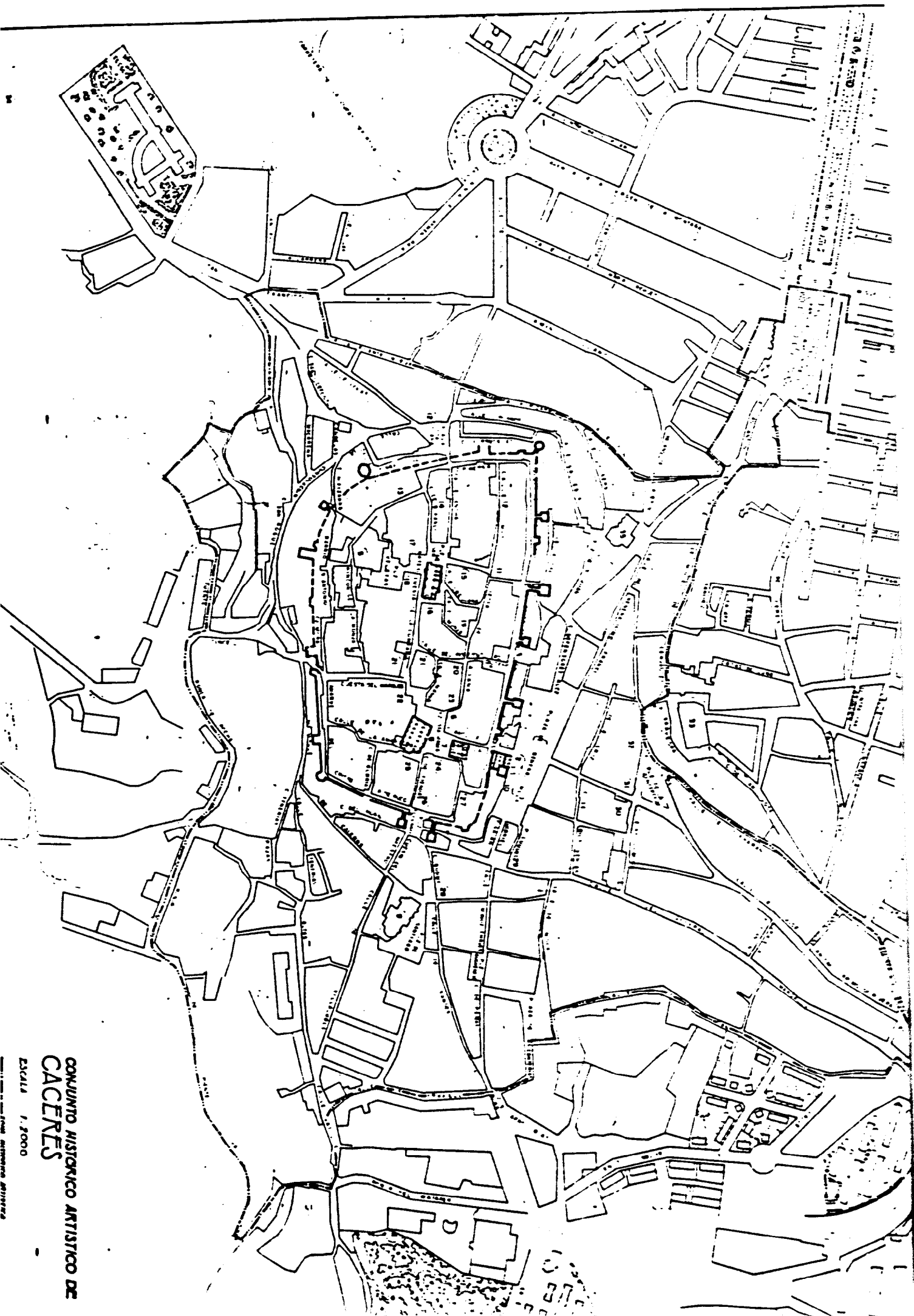
Having noted that the meeting of experts on historic cities

retained Caceres on the list of properties for inclusion on the World Heritage List, ICOMOS supports the nomination of the Government of Spain on the basis of criteria III and IV.

**Criterion III.** The walls of Caceres bear exceptional testimony to the fortifications built in Spain by the Almohades. Frequently compared to Torre de Espantaperros in Badajoz and to Torre del Oro in Seville, Torre Mochada in Caceres is part of an ensemble of walls and towers which is representative of a civilisation and which has been largely conserved.

**Criterion IV.** Like several cities in Italy, Caceres is an outstanding example of a city which was ruled from the 14th to 16th century by powerful rival factions; fortified houses, palaces and towers dominate its spatial configuration. The example is unique because of the historic features of this city in Estremadura which from the Middle Ages to the classical period bears the traces of highly diverse and contradictory influences, such as Islamic arts, Northern Gothic, Italian Renaissance, arts of the New World, etc.

ICOMOS, April 1986.



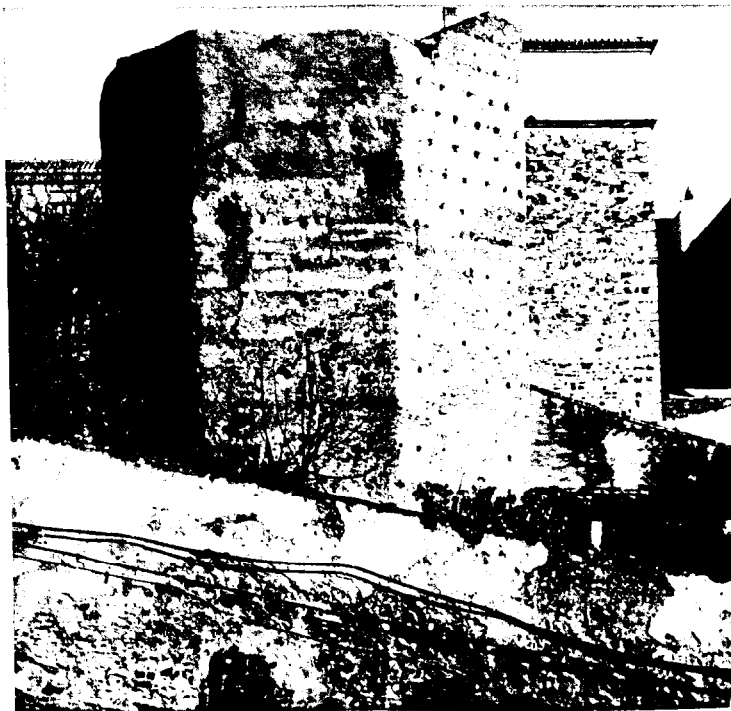
CONJUNTO HISTÓRICO ARTÍSTICO DE  
CACERES

ESCALA 1:2000

PROYECTO DE RECONSTRUCCIÓN DEL CONJUNTO HISTÓRICO ARTÍSTICO DE CACERES



CÁCERES : Torre de las Cigüeñas.



CÁCERES : Torre Huchada en el ángulo sudeste.