

Westminster (United Kingdom)

No 426

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: United Kingdom
Name of property: Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret's Church
Location: London
Inscription: 1987

Brief description:

Westminster Palace, rebuilt from the year 1840 on the site of important medieval remains, is a fine example of neo-Gothic architecture. The site – which also comprises the small medieval Church of Saint Margaret, built in Perpendicular Gothic style, and Westminster Abbey, where all the sovereigns since the 11th century have been crowned – is of great historic and symbolic significance.

2. ISSUES RAISED

Background

Boundaries of the property:

At the time of inscription, the property was proposed in two separate monumental parts, on either side of the avenue which crosses the Westminster site from north to south. On the east are the Houses of Parliament and its annexes, and on the west are Westminster Abbey, Saint Margaret's Church and the Jewel Tower. At the time the ICOMOS evaluation indicated that the proposed definition of the property was a little too restrictive.

The question of the boundaries of the property was raised again in the 2006 periodical report, which was linked to the setting up of a management plan, itself published in 2007. The periodical report concluded that the boundaries of the property were inappropriate, and the State Party agreed that it would propose a modification, which is the object of this request.

Buffer zone and visual integrity of the property:

The question of the visual integrity of the property, in view of several projects for large buildings in the south of London was dealt with in two decisions by the World Heritage Committee (30 COM 7B.74 and 31 COM 7B.91). They led to studies and decisions which are currently being taken by the State Party, particularly concerning the development plan for the South Bank of the Thames in London, but for the moment they have not led to a buffer zone for the Westminster site.

Modification

The proposal is to combine the two existing parts of the property into a single ensemble, by including the portion of the avenue which separates them, that is part of St. Margaret's Street to the north and the start of Abingdon Street to the south.

The initial surface area of the property is 9.41 ha. The proposed increase is 0.85 ha.

The ensemble will be more coherent, and its boundaries more easily identifiable. The unification of the property will clearly reinforce the expression of the property's outstanding universal value.

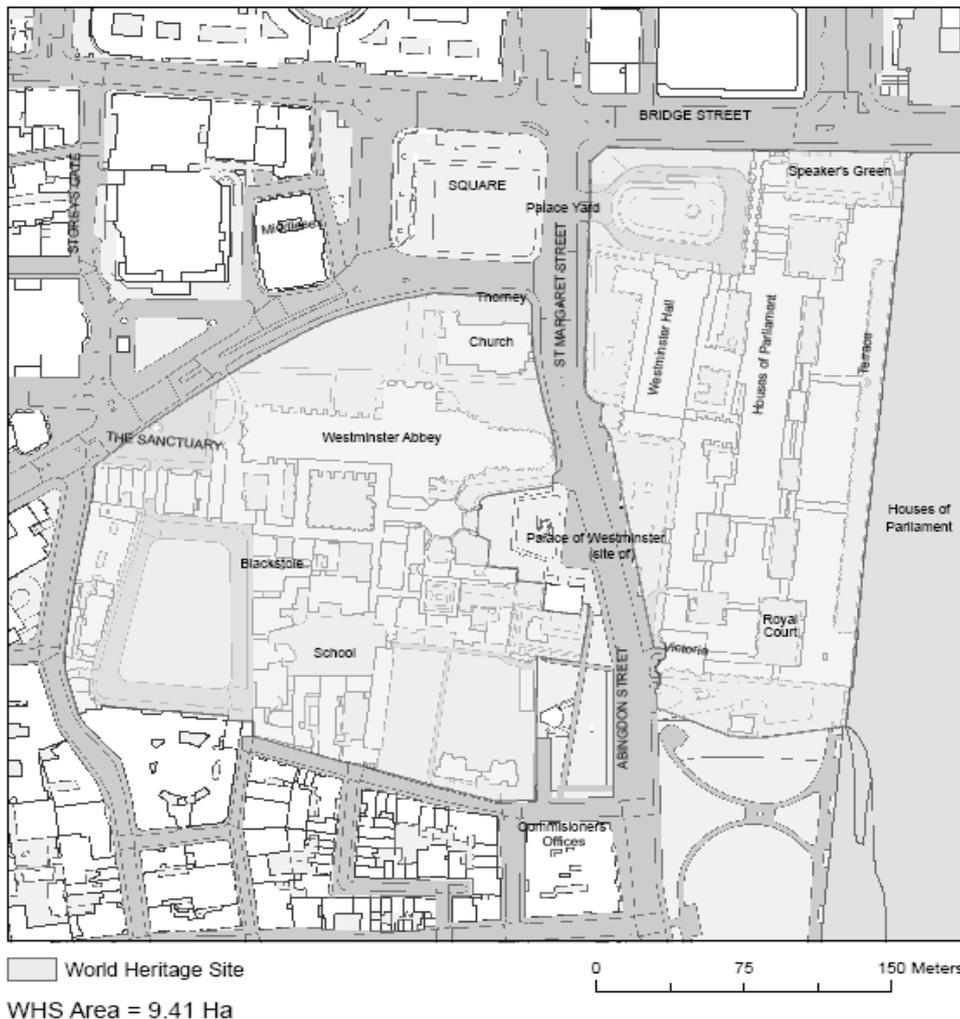
ICOMOS approves the proposed modification of the property, which is intended to give it territorial unity and greater coherence.

3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

ICOMOS recommends that the minor modification to the boundaries of the Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret's Church, United-Kingdom, be *approved*.

ICOMOS points out that up to now there has been no buffer zone with a view to protecting the visual integrity of the inscribed property in its environment. ICOMOS recommends that one should be created, on completion of the impact studies and the coordination projects for building developments south of the Thames in London, in keeping with the expression of the outstanding universal value of the Westminster site.

World Heritage Site: The Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret's Church



Map showing the revised boundaries of the core zone