

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° 495

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Strasbourg, "Grande Ile"

Location : Alsace, Department of Bas-Rhin

State Party : France

Date : December 21, 1987

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

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

C) JUSTIFICATION

Washed by the waters of two arms of the Ill and attached to the rest of the city by 20 bridges, the "Grande Ile" (big island) is the historic centre of Strasbourg. It was the site of the Roman castrum of Argentorate, whose two principal axes have been respected by modern urban development. The Rue des Hallebardes and the Rue des Juifs are laid along the cardo while the Rue du Dôme and the Rue du Bain-des-Roses are two segments of the decumanus.

Within a small area the Grande Ile possesses a remarkable monumental ensemble. Rising above the high-pitched roofs with multi-storied dormer windows, several churches stand out on the skyline. The Cathedral, whose single spire dominates the Alsatian plain, and the four old churches of St. Thomas (12th-15th century), St. Pierre-le-Vieux (13th-15th century), St. Pierre-le-Jeune (13th-15th century) and St. Etienne (12th century) are more than just isolated monuments. They fit coherently into an old quarter that exemplifies medieval cities and reflects the evolution of Strasbourg from the 15th to the 18th centuries.

The Cathedral, which is the principal element of the nomination, illustrates this historic and urban coherence. That it is indissociable from the Oeuvre Notre-Dame, the institution which controlled the funds for its construction and upkeep, is obvious. But it is also closely tied to the Palais Rohan, built by the Rohan family in 1732-1742 facing the south end of the transept as a residence for the cardinals, princes and bishops of the family. Likewise, the Cathedral is closely linked with the Collège des Jésuites (now the Lycée Fustel de Coulanges) which adjoins it.

In fact, what emanates from the tight network of streets of shops and craftsmen is the image of medieval and post-medieval Christian society. The street names reflect the guild movement-- Rue des Tonneliers, Rue des Charpentiers, Rue des Ecrivains, Place du Marché-aux-Poissons, Place du Marché-aux-Cochons-de-Lait, and so forth. Public buildings like the Hôtel de Ville (1585), today the Chamber of Commerce, la Grande Boucherie de la Ville (1587-1588), now a historic museum, stand alongside inns (Hôtellerie du Cerf), boutiques and workshops, as well as elegant town mansions (the Kammerzell house and others in the Rue Mercière, the rue du Vieux-Marché-aux-Poissons, and elsewhere).

ICOMOS is delighted that the nomination submitted by France is not limited only to the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, a cultural property whose obvious universal value made its presentation inevitable, but includes the exceptional ensemble of the Grande Ile, considered as a single unit.

The Cathedral and the Grande Ile ensemble satisfy criteria I, II and IV.

- **Criterion I.** In each of its construction stages, from the Pillar of the Last Judgement, ca. 1230, to the completion of the northern spire in 1439, the Gothic Cathedral of Strasbourg is a unique artistic achievement. Soaring to 142 meters, the intricate filigree spire in pink sandstone is in itself a technical feat unequalled until the 19th century.

- **Criterion II.** The Cathedral of Strasbourg represents the eastward vector of the Gothic art movement. The considerable influence which this model exerted on the statuary arts in the Germanic countries can be divided into three successive phases: the influence of the Pillar of the Last Judgement, the influence of the rood-screen, and the influence of the doors of the façade. It must not be forgotten that Goethe considered Notre-Dame de Strasbourg the Gothic cathedral par excellence. Thanks to him, it once again served as a model in the 19th century, inspiring such extravagant creations as the spires for the Cathedrals of Ulm and Cologne.

- **Criterion IV.** The Grande Ile of Strasbourg is an outstanding example of an urban ensemble characteristic of central Europe and a unique ensemble of domestic architecture in the Rhine valley of the 15th and 16th centuries.

ICOMOS, May 1988

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ICOMOS, July 1988