

## WORLD HERITAGE LIST

### Guadalajara (Mexico)

No 815

#### Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The Hospicio Cabañas
<i>Location</i>	Guadalajara Municipality, Jalisco State
<i>State Party</i>	Mexico
<i>Date</i>	1 July 1997

#### Justification by State Party

Since the Mexican tentative list was drawn up in 1985, the National Commission responsible for this work has laid down precise criteria for the selection of cultural properties that might be inscribed on the World Heritage List. Alongside more than twenty archaeological sites and historic urban ensembles, only one single monument has been considered to be of outstanding universal value, the Hospicio Cabañas of Guadalajara.

Two special features give this monument its outstanding universal value. First comes its nature as a building for public assistance (hospice or *maison de charité*), planned in 1803, along with its architectural composition and its size (2.4ha). It is built at one level, so as to facilitate the movement of the sick, the aged, and children. It is constructed around twenty-three courtyards which vary in characteristics and size. Two-thirds of the area consists of open or covered spaces and only one-third of enclosed buildings.

#### Criteria i and iv

The second outstanding feature is the huge collection of high-quality frescoes painted in 1936-39 by José Clemente Orozco, one of the three great representatives of the movement known as "Mexican Muralism" that developed in 1920-50 and had profound cultural influence well beyond the American continent.

#### Criteria i and ii

The group of paintings in the Chapel of the Hospicio, and in particular the allegory of "The Man of Fire," is considered by many authorities to be one of the masterpieces of 20th century mural painting.

#### Criterion i

#### 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

Guadalajara was founded in 1542, on the left bank of a river flowing through a wide valley. Two native settlements nearby were eventually integrated into what became the capital of the Province of Nueva Galicia and the seat of a bishopric.

A sequence of droughts, floods, and severe frosts created much poverty and misery in the town. Around 1791 the Bishop of Guadalajara, Fray Antonio Alcalde, ordered the building of a hospital for the most destitute people, together with a groups of lodgings for the workers and an orphanage. This project was taken up by his successor, Juan Ruiz de Cabañas, when he arrived in Guadalajara in December 1796. He requested the authorization of the Spanish Crown to create a *Casa de la Misericordia* to house the homeless, the old people, and the orphans of the town. [*Translator's note* There is no single English equivalent for this term, since the establishment combined the functions of a workhouse, hospital, orphanage, and almshouse, all of which were separate establishments in Britain.] In his letter to the King he identified the site that had been selected, at a high and healthy location outside the town with an excellent water supply.

Royal approval was given on 5 September 1803 for the building of a *Casa de Expósitos* (orphanage), which would also accept aged men and women, handicapped people, and chronic invalids, along with their families, male and female orphans or children of parents incapable of feeding them (under ten years of age), and poor pilgrims.

In Mexico City on his way to take up his appointment in Guadalajara, Bishop Cabañas had made the acquaintance of Manuel Tolsá, an architect and sculptor from Valencia who had made some notable contributions to the architecture of Mexico, including the remodelling of the dome and completion of the towers and facades of the cathedral in Mexico City. Tolsá accepted a commission to design the proposed Hospicio, but entrusted supervision of its execution to his pupil, José Gutierrez, who carried out most of the work between 1805 and 1810 (with the exception of the chapel).

The War of Independence interrupted the work, and the uncompleted buildings were used as a barracks and stables, first by the insurgents and then by the Royalist forces, until Mexico secured its independence from Spain in 1821. The death of Cabañas in 1823 was deeply felt by the local people, and the Governor of the State brought pressure to bear on the Church to complete the entire establishment. Work began again in 1828 and the Hospicio was inaugurated the following year.

During the troubled times that followed, the Hospicio was once again taken over for military purposes in the 1830s. However, it quickly regained its original function. Work had to be carried out later to rebuild the dome of the chapel, damaged in a violent storm in 1842.

When the law expropriating Church property was enacted in 1853, the Bishop of the time divided up the enormous kitchen garden into forty plots crossed by two roads. However, the institution did not suffer financially during this period, thanks to the munificence of private benefactors.

It was to become a barracks once again in 1858. When the military departed, the Bishop passed the management of the Hospicio to the Sisters of Charity. This was the occasion for a further inaugural ceremony, during which it was agreed that all the orphans would in future bear the name Cabañas. This saw the start of the most important period in its history. In 1872 it housed more than five hundred people. However, with the expulsion of the Sisters in 1872 economic aid was cut off and the number of orphans was halved by 1880. This unhappy situation was rectified by the action of the Governor in 1883, and the number of inhabitants rose steadily - 442 in 1887, 672 in 1910.

The growth of the Mexican Muralist movement was a demonstration of national cohesion and identity following the 1910-20 revolution. In the 1930s the Government of Jalisco invited one of its most distinguished exponents, José Clemente Orozco, to execute a number of works in public buildings in Guadalajara, where he worked between 1936 and 1939. His murals in the chapel of the Hospicio Cabañas, representing the multi-ethnic character of Mexican society and the allegory of the Man of Fire, are among his finest works.

In 1980 the Government of Jalisco located its newly created Cabañas Cultural Institute in the Hospicio, to house schools of arts and crafts, exhibition rooms, and areas for theatre, music, and dance. More recent additions have been a documentation centre and the office of the State Cultural secretariat. The State Government and the National Institute of Anthropology and History are also proposing to install a school of restoration in the Hospicio.

#### *Description*

The entire complex is laid out on a rectangular plan measuring 164m by 145m. All the buildings, which are, with the exception of the chapel and the kitchen, single-storey structures uniformly 7.5m in height, are ranged round twenty-three courtyards.

The main structure of the chapel, built in the centre of the complex and dominating the uniform roofs of the other buildings, is 15m high, and it is surmounted by an imposing dome, giving a total height of 32.5m.

The only other high building is the kitchen block, which has an elevated roof with a saucer dome and small lantern above. Like the chapel, it is located on the central axis of the complex.

The courtyards vary greatly in size, with sides ranging in length from 9m to 50m. The great majority of them are arcaded on at least two sides.

The architectural solution adopted by Tolsá for the Hospicio Cabañas is a unique one, completely different from conventional approaches to the design of this type of complex. Its roots are to be found in ensembles such as the Monastery of El Escorial (Spain) or the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris.

There are other unique features, to make movement easier for the people for whom it was built to serve, that are also without parallel. These include the restriction of buildings to a single storey, the use of wide open spaces to give air and light, to assist healing, and the provision of covered passageways (and in particular the double arcades that traverse some of the rectangular courtyards) within and between buildings. The adaptability of the relatively simple structures, built to a modular, almost "prefabricated" system, has been demonstrated by the ease with which the Hospicio has been used for different purposes in the two centuries since it was built.

Orozco's murals in the chapel represent in part the most symbolic and characteristic elements of the indigenous culture of Mexico (gods, sacrifices, temples) and for the rest those of Spanish culture (kings, monks, churches). These elements are then brought into confrontation in scenes depicting evangelization and conquest. The central feature represents the submission of humans to machines, culminating in the figure of "The Man of Fire."

#### **Management and Protection**

##### *Legal status*

The Hospicio Cabañas is an Immovable Historic Monument under the terms of the 1975 Federal Law on Archaeological, Artistic, and Historical Monuments and Zones, which imposes very strict controls on any interventions not given official authorization.

The Cabañas Cultural Institute was established by Decree No 10351 of 18.12.80, implemented by Decree No 14784 of 3.9.93.

##### *Management*

The property belongs to the Federal Government, in accordance with the National Constitution, and was assigned to the State of Jalisco in May 1895.

Responsibility for the conservation and restoration of the property is vested in the National Institutes for Anthropology and History (INAH) and Fine Arts (INBA), which form part of the National Council for Culture and the Arts (CNCA) of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) and in the Ministry of Administrative Control and Development (SECODAM) for legal aspects of ownership.

The State Government of Jalisco and the Municipality of Guadalajara are associated with the conservation

and restoration of the property. The Cabañas Cultural Institute is responsible for direct management.

There is as yet no formal management plan for the Hospicio, but one has been in preparation by the Heritage Directorate of the Cultural Secretariat of Jalisco and the Municipality of Guadalajara since 1985, at the instigation of INAH and the Mexican National Commission for UNESCO. Meanwhile, the Institute, working closely with the Cultural Secretariat of Jalisco, which occupies part of the property, has a continuing programme for the review of its management, maintenance, and utilization.

The documentation provided in the nomination dossier does not indicate clearly what is proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List, but this is self-evident, since the boundaries of the property are clearly defined. There is as yet no formal buffer zone. However, the management plan that is in preparation provides for a protection zone of 35ha around the monument, containing twenty town blocks comprised on 640 buildings, within which there will be strict control over building heights. Study of the zone has so far revealed between forty and eighty buildings within it that are worthy of consideration for designation as historic monuments.

### **Conservation and Authenticity**

#### *Conservation history*

Conservation works began to be carried on the Hospicio Cabañas in 1892, when the roofs and paths were rehabilitated. However, the main projects date from 1951-61, when most of the existing roofs built in traditional style using clay squares reinforced with rammed clay on wooden beams, which necessitated frequent repair and replacement, were removed in favour of tiles supported on metal frameworks.

A major programme of restoration of the murals in the chapel and consolidation of its dome was undertaken in 1968. The slender columns supporting the dome were considered to constitute a serious hazard in view of the seismic risks in the region. Accordingly the columns were reinforced with steel and a reinforced concrete ring was inserted, to bond the bases of the columns.

The most recent intervention consisted of stabilizing the murals, since there was evidence of the plaster parting from its supporting walls.

The conservation work that has been carried out is of excellent quality and based on meticulous preparatory research and investigation.

#### *Authenticity*

The authenticity of the complex of the Hospicio Cabañas is high. The original layout of Manuel Tolsá survives intact (with the exception of the kitchen garden - see "History" above) and with virtually no later additions.

There have been modern interventions (replacement of roofs, consolidation of the dome of the chapel) which have made use of modern materials and

techniques. Since these were rendered necessary in order to preserve the ensemble and were only carried out after exhaustive studies, they may be considered to be unavoidable and in the best interests of the property.

### **Evaluation**

#### *Action by ICOMOS*

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Guadalajara in February 1997.

#### *Qualities*

The Hospicio Cabañas, the largest of its kind in Latin America, is an outstanding cultural property in its conception and design. Built for a humanitarian purpose, it makes use of space, light, and scale to meet the requirements of its intended occupants in an exceptional way. This perfect adaptation of its form and design to its original function has played a major role in its survival intact to the present day.

The Orozco murals, which are masterpieces of 20th century art, have been integrated into the Hospicio with immense skill and sympathy, in a way that should serve as a model for comparable projects in the Americas as a whole.

The admirable conservation of this exceptional historic building is all the more important in its context, since much of the old city of Guadalajara has suffered badly in recent years from unsympathetic modernization and reconstruction. The Hospicio is a distinguished testimony to the history of the town.

#### *Comparative analysis*

The establishment of "hospitals" or "hospices" for the poor, for the sick and handicapped, for the aged, for pilgrims, and for orphans is of considerable antiquity. However, the Hospicio Cabañas was one of the earliest in the New World, and certainly that most scientifically designed for this specific purpose. There is no complex in Europe from this period which can properly be compared with the Hospicio in terms of the skill with which Manuel Tolsá produced a functionally perfect complex that at the same time exhibited high aesthetic qualities. As such it is a unique architectural solution to a specific requirement.

It is also the setting for one of the finest and ambitious examples of the work of the 20th century Mexican Muralist movement, recognized generally to be of international significance in the history of art.

#### *ICOMOS recommendations for future action*

The process currently under way of rehousing those offices of the Jalisco Cultural Secretariat that are not directly concerned with the cultural heritage should be brought to a speedy conclusion.

In the presentation and interpretation facilities, greater stress should be laid upon the history of the Hospicio and its relationships with comparable establishments elsewhere in the world.

The open area immediately inside the main entrance contains some later features (fountains, pools) which are of low artistic quality and not consonant with the rest of the building. It is recommended therefore that these should be replaced when the opportunity offers.

#### **Recommendation**

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

The Hospicio Cabañas is a unique architectural complex, designed to respond to social and economic requirements for housing the sick, the aged, the young, and the needy, which provides an outstanding solution of great subtlety and humanity. It also houses one of the acknowledged masterpieces of mural art.

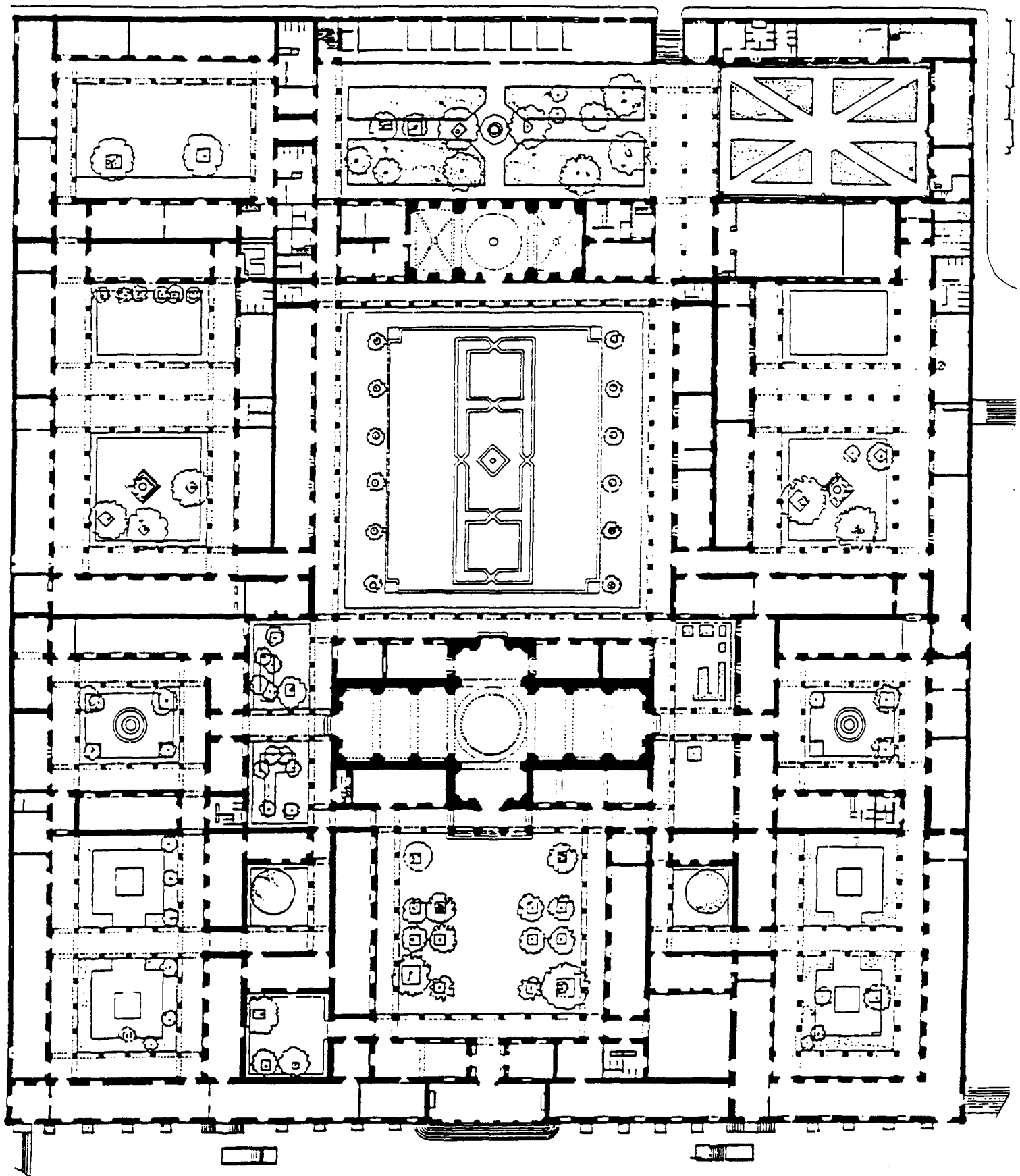
ICOMOS, September 1997



**Guadalajara :**  
**Façade de la chapelle /**  
**Main facade of the Chapel**



**Guadalajara :**  
**Façade de la cuisine /**  
**Main facade of the kitchen**



Guadalajara :  
Plan au sol de l'hospice /  
Ground plan of the Hospicio