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# Old Town of Cáceres (Spain)

## No 384 Bis

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### 1 Basic data

**State Party**

Spain

**Name of property**

Old Town of Cáceres

**Location**

Province of Cáceres, Autonomous Community of Extremadura

**Inscription**

1986

**Brief description**

The city's history of battles between Moors and Christians is reflected in its architecture, which is a blend of Roman, Islamic, Northern Gothic and Italian Renaissance styles. Of the 30 or so towers from the Muslim period, the Torre del Bujaco is the most famous.

**Date of ICOMOS approval of report**

11 March 2016

### 2 Issues raised

**Background**

The Old Town of Cáceres was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in December 1986 on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv). The property covers an area of 9 hectares, a zone designated in the minor modification proposal as "intra-muros". When the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List, it had no buffer zone. In 1990, the City Council of Cáceres adopted the Special Revitalisation and Protection Plan of the Architectural Heritage of the City of Cáceres (also referred to as the Special Protection Plan) covering a territory with an area of 60.63 ha, providing a buffer zone that surrounds the boundaries of the property. In 2012, the World Heritage Committee (Decision 36 COM 8D) noted the clarification of the property's boundaries and areas provided by the State Party in response to the retrospective inventory.

In 2015, the State Party lodged a minor modification request for the recognition as a buffer zone of the exact territorial boundaries of the "Special Protection Plan" (designated as the zone "outside the walls"). The total area of the inscribed property and the suggested buffer zone was 69.63 hectares.

ICOMOS took the view that the reasons behind the establishment of the buffer zone were well founded: it includes significant edifices (the oratory-infirmery of San

Pedro de Alcántara, Camarena Palace), and fully corresponds to the concern of ensuring architectural coherence. This is indeed why the zone to which the Special Protection Plan applied has formed the subject of a series of protective measures – at national, regional and local level – in 1985, and then in 1997, 1998 and 1999.

However the Special Protection Plan dates back more than 25 years, and requires adaptation in the light of the current situation, based on studies that could potentially modify its zone of application. With this in mind, a coordination body was created in 2013 ("Consortium of the Monumental City of Cáceres"), bringing together the Regional Government of Extremadura, the Provincial Council and the City Council, in order to oversee the actions affecting the property inscribed on the World Heritage List and establish a rational management strategy.

At its 39th session (Bonn, 2015), the World Heritage Committee adopted the following decision:

*The World Heritage Committee,*

*1. Having examined Documents WHC-15/39.COM/8B.Add and WHC-15/39.COM/INF.8B1.Add,*

*2 ; Refers the examination of the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the buffer zone of the Old Town of Cáceres, Spain, back to the State Party in order to allow it to:*

- a) Provide further explanation of the rationale chosen for the proposed limits of the buffer zone in relation to the maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;*
- b) Provide information on the management arrangements in place for the proposed buffer zone;*
- c) Provide a timetable for the preparation of the Management Plan of the Old Town of Cáceres and finalize it.*

**Modification**

The current request of the State Party is a response to the World Heritage Committee decision referred to above. The proposed buffer zone would include the quarters of Santiago, Jose Antonio, San Juan, Santa Clara and Ribera del Marco (as marked out by the streets and plots of which they comprise), i.e. the fortified town's suburbs, which date from the 12th century and are attested by 19th century cartographic documents. In this zone, the City Urban Planning department already applies rules that prohibit unauthorised archaeological excavations, limit the maximum height of buildings, and place restrictions on the use of materials for roofs and facades. These regulations represent an effort to contain urban tensions and ensure that the environment is compatible with the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

To monitor the application of the Special Protection Plan over the years, in accordance with the law, a surveillance committee has been set up, chaired by the mayor; its members are representatives of the technical departments of city hall and of various organisations (provincial commission for historic heritage, cultural department of the

regional government, university, college of architects, associations of surveyors and engineers, federation of the construction industry and the Consortium referred to above). Between 1994 and 2013, 1,700 rehabilitation or restoration projects were undertaken, most of them in the zone in question, under the control of the Cáceres Historic Centre Rehabilitation Bureau, which provided guidance on financial, technical and environmental issues.

A management plan (combined with a revision of the Special Protection Plan) is currently being drawn up under the auspices of the City Council and the Consortium, for the period 2015-2019. A working group of urban development technicians has been set up to develop the management plan, based on the same territorial zone as the Special Protection Plan, in three phases (2016-2017). Phase 1, which was documentary and has now been completed, was intended to bring together all the information available from all partners (institutions, administrations, university, companies, foundations), and to establish a detailed GIS plan of the site and make it available online. Phase 2 consists of establishing a strategic SWOT analysis, based on surveys of the persons involved and website users. In Phase 3 conclusions will be drawn, and a proposal will thus be made for a programme of actions to be applied in 2019.

In conclusion, ICOMOS acknowledges the efforts made by the State Party to maintain the integrity of the site, on the basis of existing national laws, directives and local incentives. With regard to this issue, ICOMOS considers that establishing a buffer zone around the fortified historic centre of Cáceres, as inscribed on the World Heritage List, is highly desirable, and that the State Party has clarified the boundaries of the buffer zone, in the current state of the dossier. A timetable for the finalization of the management plan, combined with the revision of the Special Revitalisation and Protection Plan of the Architectural Heritage of the City of Cáceres, has been established and the management arrangements have been clarified.

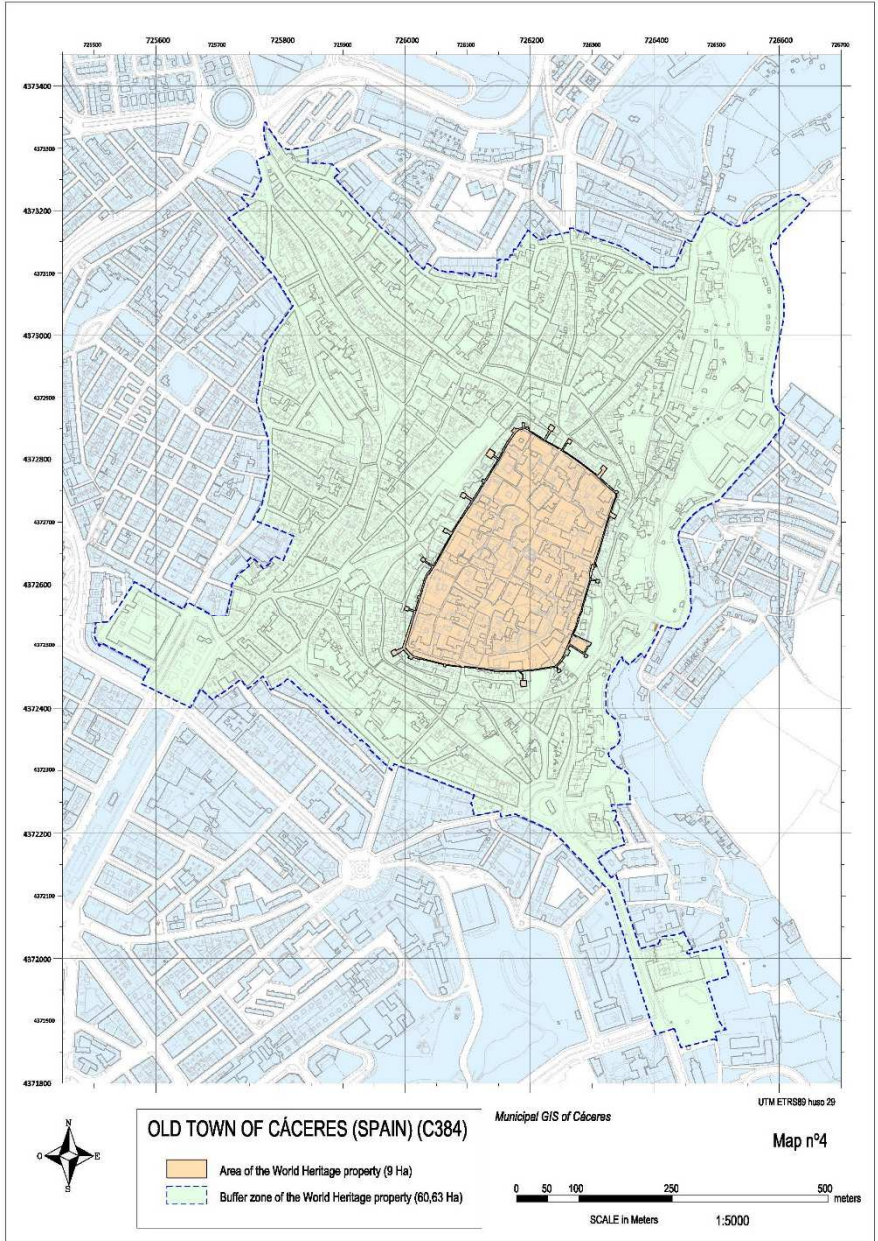
### **3 ICOMOS recommendations**

#### **Recommendations with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Old Town of Cáceres, Spain, be **approved**.

#### **Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party submit to the World Heritage Centre and to ICOMOS for consideration the management plan and the Special Revitalisation and Protection Plan of the Architectural Heritage of the City of Cáceres when they have been finalized.



Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone