

# SPAIN

## Cathedral, Alcázar and Archivo de Indias in Seville

### Brief description

Together these three buildings form a remarkable monumental complex in the heart of Seville. The cathedral and the Alcázar – dating from the Reconquest of 1248 to the 16th century and imbued with Moorish influences – are an exceptional testimony to the civilization of the Almohads as well as that of Christian Andalusia. The Giralda minaret is the masterpiece of Almohad architecture. It stands next to the cathedral with its five naves; the largest Gothic building in Europe, it houses the tomb of Christopher Columbus. The ancient Lonja, which became the Archivo de Indias, contains valuable documents from the archives of the colonies in the Americas.

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription** 1987

#### Agency responsible for site management

Andalusian Regional Government, Department of Culture

### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** C (i), (ii), (iii), (vi)

#### Justification provided by the State Party

L'ensemble constitué par la Cathédrale avec la Giralda, l'Alcazar et l'Archivo de Indias de Seville est le cœur de la cité historique, et il a hérité le caractère de noyau urbain agglutinant que l'endroit a toujours eu depuis l'Antiquité. Ces édifices sont un résumé de l'histoire d'Espagne et une représentation de la structure sociale de la nation sous l'Ancien Régime: en intégrant des vestiges de la culture islamique, ils ont abrité les sièges du pouvoir ecclésiastique, du pouvoir royal, et du pouvoir commercial que l'Espagne obtint à travers ses colonies dans le Nouveau Monde.

La Cathédrale, le temple gothique le plus grand de l'Europe, accumule sept siècles d'histoire d'Andalousie, conservant des éléments de l'ancienne mosquée si caractéristiques que le « Patio de los Naranjos » ou si importants que le

minaret, appelé de nos jours « La Giralda » qui est un des exemples les plus importants du syncrétisme culturel de l'architecture universelle grâce à son couronnement Renaissance, du à Hernán Ruiz, ainsi que la « Sala Capitular » de la Cathédrale est le premier exemple connu de l'emploi de la plante elliptique dans la culture occidentale.

L'Alcazar est également important car il constitue une synthèse de cultures assez rare. A côté des vestiges almohades, comme le « Patio del Yeso » et les « Jardines de Crucero », cet ensemble a un noyau d'une valeur exceptionnelle, constitué par les dépendances du Palais de Pedro I, représentatives d'une forme culturelle caractéristiquement hispanique, l'art mudéjar. En outre, les constructions proprement occidentales contiennent tous les styles cultes depuis la Renaissance jusqu'au Néoclassique.

L'Archivo de Indias, ancienne « Lonja de Comercio », est caractérisée par sa conception unitaire et son intégrité culturelle. C'est un des exemples les plus clairs d'une façon particulièrement espagnole de comprendre l'architecture de la Renaissance, liée à l'auteur de son projet, Juan de Herrera. Son influence sur l'architecture baroque andalouse et sur le néoclassicisme espagnole a été très significative. Son utilisation actuelle, aussi bien que sa destination originaire, constitue un vrai symbole de la relation entre l'Europe et l'Amérique, entre le Vieux et le Nouveau Monde.

#### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

(May 1987): At the request of ICOMOS, the government of Spain has included in one nomination three leading monuments in Seville, the Cathedral, the Alcazar and the Lonja, which originally were to be nominated separately. The proximity of these three monuments to the heart of the city, their obvious complementarities, and the fact that all the high points of the history of Seville are represented, give this nomination great coherence.

ICOMOS recommends that the monumental complex formed by the Cathedral, the Alcazar and the Lonja in Seville be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (vi).

- Criterion (i). In the restricted perimeter covered by the proposal, the Giralda constitutes a unique artistic achievement, a masterpiece of Almohad architecture. The immense Cathedral with five

naves which replaced the mosque is the largest Gothic edifice in Europe.

The elliptical space of the Cabildo, created by Hernan Ruiz, is one of the most beautiful architectural works of the Renaissance.

- Criterion (ii). The Giralda influenced the construction of numerous towers in Spain and, after the conquest, in the Americas.

- Criterion (iii). The Cathedral and the Alcazar of Seville bear exceptional testimony to the civilization of the Almohads and to that of Christian Andalusia dating from the reconquest of 1248 to 16th century, which was thoroughly imbued with Moorish influences.

- Criterion (vi). The Cathedral, the Alcazar and the Lonja are directly and tangibly associated with a universally important event: the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1492/1493. The tomb of Christopher Columbus is in the Cathedral. Plans were made in the Admirals Hall for a number of history's greatest explorations, notably the circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan and S. del Cano (1519-1522). In the Lonja are conserved the most precious documents from the archives of the colonies in the Americas.

#### Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site

#### Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: no buffer zone has been defined; buffer zone not needed because The Alcazar is a walled, protected site. Need for measures to protect against environmental factors.

#### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

### 3. Protection

#### Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Listed as Assets of Cultural Interest under the Spanish Historical Heritage Law; Spanish Historical Heritage Act; Andalusian Historical Heritage Act
- Special Preliminary Plan for Seville's Historical Sector; General Urban Planning Scheme
- The protection arrangements are considered highly effective

### 4. Management

#### Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, urban centre, religious use, other: Alcázar as urban cultural and education forum. Archive of the Indies as research

#### Management /Administrative Body

- Cathedral: The Archbishopric of Seville - Cathedral Chapter.  
Alcázar: Town Hall of Seville - Board of Trustees of the Royal Alcázar: Municipal body responsible for taking the most important decisions in respect of maintenance and conservation  
Archive of the Indies: Ministry of Culture, Directorate-General of Archives and Libraries
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national regional; local; National: Ministry of Culture, Directorate-General of Archives and Libraries  
Regional: the Department of Culture of the Andalusian Regional Government is the body ultimately responsible for cultural assets in Andalusia  
Local: Board of Trustees of the Royal Alcázar. The Archbishopric of Seville, Cathedral Chapter
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

### 5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: 1999
- Management of the Cathedral is provided for under Chapter Statutes; moreover, the Cathedral is included under the National Cathedral Plan which is the fruit of a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Culture through its Directorate-General of Fine Arts and Cultural Assets and the Governments of the autonomous communities. The Cathedral has a broad-based Master Plan which was drawn up in 1999; Management of the Alcázar is run by the Board of Trustees of the Royal Alcázar, a municipal body. Management of the General Archive of the Indies is the responsibility of the Directorate-General of Archives and Libraries of the Ministry of Culture

### 6. Financial Resources

#### Financial situation

- Cathedral: revenues from visitors.  
Alcázar: funds are obtained exclusively by

means of entrance fees and three concessions (stores, self-guided tours and cafeteria). Archive of the Indies: the Archive is under the auspices, from a structural and functional standpoint, of the Ministry of Culture as an administrative unit under the latter. It only disposes of a few sections under chapter II (current costs) and therefore does not have its own budget

- Sufficient

### 7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 160

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Good: conservation, management, education, visitor management
- Average: promotion, interpretation

### 8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Not provided

### 9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 1,210,094 ticket sales
- Trend: Cathedral and Alcázar: slight decline
- Visitor facilities: Ticket and information office, audio guide service, free guided tours for educative and cultural centres, cafeteria, souvenirs shop, toilets, free maps. The Archive offers guided visits by appointment led by personnel from the Centre; educational video presentation; space rental for the celebration of special events
- Visitor needs: archive, visitors centre, information personnel and guides, educational programmes for students, information brochures, self-guided tours, store
- Websites: [www.patronato-alcazarsevilla.es](http://www.patronato-alcazarsevilla.es)  
[www.catedralsevilla.org](http://www.catedralsevilla.org)  
The Archive does not have its own web page but reference information in this regard is available on the Ministry of Culture's web page: [www.mcu.es/index.html](http://www.mcu.es/index.html)

### 10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment, studies related to the value of the site, monitoring exercises, condition

surveys, impact of WH designation, archaeological surveys

- Studies used for management of site
- A large number of studies focusing on a broad range of topics have been published regarding these three monuments, especially in respect of the Cathedral and the Alcázar. Alcázar: Annual archaeological excavation programme since 1997. Cathedral: studies on Construction Materials and Construction Reports.

### 11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- Not enough signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem not used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- Need for awareness raising
- Heritage days; Important exhibitions are held at the Cathedral such as the Magna Hispalensis exhibition in 1992. Today, periodic exhibitions are held in the area behind the Cathedral's choir stalls with a view to disseminating monographic aspects related with the diocese and focusing on artistic, documentary and bibliographic heritage (in nearly all cases the items form part of the Cathedral's historical heritage)  
Cultural activities are also organised at the Alcázar: exhibitions, concerts, theatre, publications, etc.  
And lastly, temporary documentation exhibitions are held at the Archive
- Scientific dissemination and debate, the Cathedral houses the "Hernán Ruiz Classroom" used to organise and hold instructional activities related to the building; activities include conferences, courses, visits to monuments and publications. The "San Isidoro Classroom" offers conferences on subjects related to the civil or ecclesiastical history of the Archdiocese of Seville. The Alcázar has its own series of publications; Free guided visits for schools and cultural associations are available; The Pedagogical Centre of the Provincial Delegation of the Department of Culture also conducts courses on Historical Heritage as a Teaching Resource targeting teachers. The Archive is a research institution far removed from the daily life of the city and that

explains why it is under-used as a teaching resource

- Website available
- Local participation

## 12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

### Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

### Conservation interventions

- An extensive list of conservation and restoration works including cleaning, structural consolidation, archaeological research and maintenance actions on the Cathedral, the Alcázar and the Archive of the Indies
- Present state of conservation is considered adequate

### Threats and Risks to site

- Development, environmental, visitor/tourism pressure
- Urban environment problems of Seville's historical centre; visitor number to the Cathedral and the Alcázar; Alcázar is also one of the city's major ceremony halls and in 2003 alone 450 different activities were held there. All of this points to the need for a great degree of coordination although excessive pressure is difficult to avoid; the loss of the residential aspect of these neighbourhoods due to tourism pressure; the urban setting, its landscape, the invasion of public space and the façades of urban buildings and tourist advertising
- The degradation of the stone is especially worrisome in the case of the Cathedral both in terms of the accumulation of soot and the physical and chemical wear and tear produced. Water leaks are another problems suffered by the Cathedral
- Tourism use and worship-related visits to the Cathedral ; need for more public awareness of the Archives
- Rehabilitation of public spaces
- Actions / measures taken: Specific projects for the Cathedral (consolidation of pillars, sealing of leaks, recuperation of façades, etc.).

## 13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken: The three monuments are equipped with precision measurement devices to assess the evolution of their state of conservation. They all have sensors to detect

humidity level, temperature, wind speed, seismic movement, tensions, air and noise pollution, visit indicators, assessment of traffic in the vicinity, level of integration of monuments in the city's cultural dynamics and degree of heritage use vis-à-vis the city's cultural offering; importance of monuments in the everyday life of the citizens (degree of awareness, percentage of residents of Seville who have actually visited the monuments, etc.); state and comfort level of surrounding areas, especially public spaces

## 14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social
- Weaknesses of management: The level of maintenance, conservation and overall care are quite suitable in the case of these three monuments

### Future actions:

- Enlargement of the area to include for example Alcázar's interesting "Torre de Oro" or Golden Tower looking out over the Port of Seville
- The formation of a consortium or board of trustees
- The Town Hall should come up with a special plan addressing the three buildings; of special urgency is the conversion of the Avenida de la Constitución into a pedestrian thoroughfare
- Programmes must be developed to disseminate the fact that Seville is host to a World Heritage site beginning with the clear, explicit and visible placing of the UNESCO emblem on tourist monuments and publications.