
Mont-Saint-Michel (France) No 80ter

1 Basic data

State Party

France

Name of property

Mont-Saint-Michel and its Bay

Location

Department of Manche,
Region of Basse-Normandie
France

Inscription

1979

Brief description

Perched on a rocky islet in the midst of vast sandbanks exposed to powerful tides between Normandy and Brittany stand the 'Wonder of the West', a Gothic-style Benedictine abbey dedicated to the archangel St Michael, and the village that grew up in the shadow of its great walls. Built between the 11th and 16th centuries, the abbey is a technical and artistic tour de force, having had to adapt to the problems posed by this unique natural site.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

14 March 2018

2 Issues raised

Background

The property was inscribed in 1979 without a defined boundary or buffer zone.

As a follow up to the Retrospective Inventory of this property made by the World Heritage Centre, the State Party provided a boundary clarification in 2006, which was approved by the World Heritage Committee in its decision 30 COM 11A.2. It indicated then that the property was a serial property of two components and covers an area of 6,650 ha, divided into 6,505 hectares for Mont-Saint-Michel and its Bay and 45 hectares for the second component Mill Moudrey.

In 2007, the State Party submitted a boundary modification request to formally establish a buffer zone. The 57,510 hectares buffer zone was approved by the World Heritage Committee decision (31 COM 8B.68), with its boundaries mostly following the extensions of the concerned municipality boundaries but did not take into

consideration the view perspectives and axes of and to the property.

In 2010, challenges occurred in form of wind park projects approved outside the buffer zone, yet found to negatively impact the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. This led to further view corridor and sight relation studies and towards the formal establishment of "area of landscape influence" of Mont-Saint-Michel and a wind turbine exclusion zone outside the formally designated buffer zone. The proposal of an extended buffer zone covering both areas was already integrated in the finalization process of a site management plan in 2014. The minor boundary modification request presented now, seeks to officially acknowledge this enlarged protection zone at the international level.

Modification

The extension request concerns exclusively modifications to the buffer zone while the property area remains unchanged. The overall area of the buffer zone will be enlarged from previously 57,510 hectares to now 191,858 hectares. The modification is presented for both marine and terrestrial areas, which will be described separately below.

The marine buffer zone extension includes areas to the north and west of the existing buffer zone and also newly encompasses the islands of the archipelago of Chausey. This marine extension aims at covering the entire marine surface visible from Mont-Saint-Michel and its Bay as well as the islands of Chausey, which are equally visible from the property. The buffer zone extension connects to the formerly designated buffer zone limits at the Pointe du Roc near Granville in the north and the Pointe du Grouin near Cancale in the west.

The terrestrial buffer zone is requested to be significantly extended while some comparatively smaller previously designated areas are now excluded. This buffer zone is defined according to sight relationships both from and to Mont-Saint-Michel, paying special attention also to coastal towns which have historical ties to Mont-Saint-Michel and the main areas of the bay protected under the Ramsar Convention, even if visibility is not the prime determinant. In this context it is suggested to also include the historic centre of Dol-de-Bretagne, the *mare de Bouillon* in Jullouville and parts of the *marais de Saint Coulban*.

Smaller areas which were previously within the buffer zone, have now become excluded. This concerns smaller areas east of St. Michel des Loups, south of Roz-sur-Couesnon and south of St-Broladre and west of St-Meloir-des-Ondes and St-Jouan. Based on the extensive view and sight relation studies undertaken, these areas were proven to have neither historic nor sight relations to and from the property and due to their relative distance do not contribute to the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value.

Based on the lately promulgated state legislation on freedom of expressions, architecture and heritage of 7 July 2016, all municipalities in the bay area have been encouraged to have all of their involved territories recognized as remarkable heritage resources (SPR). Several communities have already implemented such recognition, while others are still in progress. The new maritime extension covers the territories of two Natura 2000 sites, established for the protection and conservation of bird habitats, the Habitat of Birds area (FR2500071) and Bay of Mont-Saint-Michel (FR2510048). The area also includes a wetland of international importance recognized under the Ramsar Convention (FR012 of 1994).

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the proposed modifications to the buffer zone will contribute to maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value of Mont-Saint-Michel and its Bay and will have a positive impact on its integrity and protection.

3 ICOMOS Recommendations

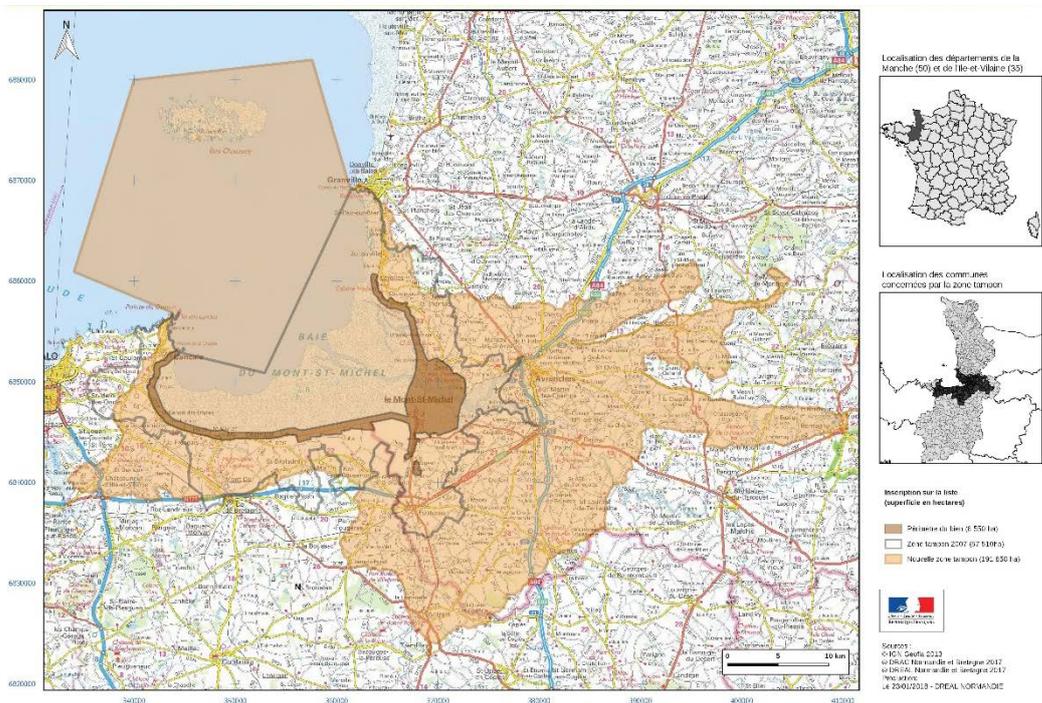
Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for Mont-Saint-Michel and its Bay, France, **be approved**.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following points:

- a) Completing the designation of relevant municipal territories as remarkable heritage resources,
- b) Submitting the Management Plan, when available, to the World Heritage Centre for consideration.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the buffer zone