

**REPORT OF THE JOINT WHC-ICOMOS REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION OF THE
WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY
“ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF PANAMÁ VIEJO AND HISTORIC DISTRICT OF
PANAMÁ”**

PANAMA

25 – 28 November 2013

Acknowledgements

The mission acknowledges gratefully the warm welcome of the authorities of Panama, the site managers of the different components of the World Heritage property of the Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá and the different institutions, including the national authorities in charge of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The mission appreciated the extensive information provided by these authorities in response to the Decisions of the World Heritage Committee. The mission also appreciatively acknowledges the time and availability of many organizations, including different management units at the Historic District and Panama Viejo and the experts of the management planning team. The mission expresses special thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ambassador of Panama to UNESCO for greatly facilitating its work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The city of Panama was founded in 1519, which made it the first European urban settlement on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. Given its strategic position, Panama became the departure point for the Spanish conquest and occupation of South America and for the interoceanic and intercontinental communication and trade through the Panama isthmus. Due to its prominent economic and geopolitical role, the town became the target of attacks by piracy; after destruction by a pirate attack in 1673, the city was abandoned and relocated on a small peninsula some 7.5 Km from its original location. The shallowness of the sea around the site and the presence of Ancón Hill at the back allowed better conditions for protection. The construction of the railway crossing the isthmus in the 19th Century and of the Panama Canal at the beginning of the 20th increased the role of Panama in the interoceanic communication. These developments had an impact on the town, reflected in the coexistence of architectural expressions and influences from colonial times up to the first decades of the last century, which is noticeable in both institutional and residential buildings. The remains of the first settlement are preserved in the archaeological site known as Panama Viejo.

The “Historic District of Panama City with the Salón Bolívar” was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1997, by Decision **21 COM VIII.C**, on the basis of criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi). In 2003, the World Heritage Committee, by Decision **27 COM 8C.40** approved the extension of the property to include the archaeological site of Panama Viejo together with the change of name which became the “Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and the Historic District of Panamá”. The Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property was adopted at the 37th Session of the World Heritage Committee in June 2013 (Decision **37 COM 8E**).

The state of conservation of the property was examined by the Committee at its 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th and 37th sessions in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively. Main concerns were related to the presence of the Via Cincuentenario in Panama Viejo, a

road that crossed the archaeological site, and the overall poor state of conservation of the Historic District, especially with regard to historic residential buildings.

In 2009 a joint UNESCO ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property noted potential impacts of the Cinta Costera project, a coastal freeway that would link different parts of the city and facilitate vehicular traffic. Since the Historic District is located in a small peninsula and next to Ancón Hill, alternatives for the Cinta Costera Phase III included the construction of a tunnel and a maritime viaduct that would surround the peninsula. Reactive monitoring mission reports in 2009 and 2010 focused on the impact that Cinta Costera Phase III could cause on the integrity of the Historic District, especially with regard to the relationship between the property and its surrounding seascape. In 2012, the State Party announced that they considered that the only alternative for consideration was the maritime viaduct. Although the State Party was requested to halt the construction of the maritime viaduct and to study alternatives that would not disturb views from and to the Historic District, the construction was launched and was almost finished when this mission visited the site in November 2013.

At its 37th session (Phnom Penh, June 2013), the World Heritage Committee adopted Decision **37 COM 7B.100**, by which the State Party is requested to submit by 1 February 2015 a significant modification to the boundaries that excluded the Cinta Costera freeway to allow it to justify a revision of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and to invite as soon as possible a high-level World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission, guided by the World Heritage Centre, to discuss the different possibilities of this modification.

The main purpose of the mission, agreed in the corresponding Terms of Reference, was discussing with relevant authorities alternatives of a significant modification of the boundaries of the property in order to allow a revision of its Outstanding Universal Value. Other issues were also included in the programme, among them the state of conservation of the property, the protection and management frameworks and ongoing and projected works regarding improvements of the conditions of the property. Since the legislative and institutional frameworks have been extensively discussed in previous reports produced over the last years, summarized information is included in this report, with the aim of concentrating on the main issues raised by the World Heritage Committee in Decision **37 COM 7B.100**.

The mission was able to notice that improvements have been made on the state of conservation of the property; among them the relocation of the Via Cincuentenario in Panama Viejo, works to improve the streetscape and the state of public spaces and restoration of historic buildings in the Historic District. A joint management plan for Panamanian cultural World Heritage properties was approved in September 2013; this includes an interesting broader territorial approach and defined strategies, objectives and sectorial plans to improve the conservation of the properties. An Executive Summary of the Management Plan was issued in May 2013; in November 2013 the State Party issued a booklet that reports on the implementation status.

The mission would like to invite the State Party to consider the following set of recommendations:

1. Boundary Modifications

The mission recommends that the authorities carefully consider the following options:

- I. Submission of a significant boundary change to focus the site only on Panama Viejo based on the original extension dossier of 2002, to also include the new buffer zone by law 91/2007 and review the statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

- II. Submission of option I with an addition of a reduced area in the Historic District where the attributes that convey the contribution of this component to the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial property are present.
- III. Submission of a (phased) approach by 1 February 2015 in which an overall new vision is included regarding components of the property as parts of a broader territorial system related to interoceanic and intercontinental commerce over five centuries. Further information on this option is included in the relevant sections of this report. The mission notes that this option would require a re-nomination for different values and a revised Statement of Outstanding Universal Value; it is further noted that the time-lines for submission are the same as for a major boundary modification as indicated in the *Operational Guidelines*.

The mission further recommends, for all of the options, reviewing the traffic schemes and urban cluster planning to ensure the overall integrity of the property in its revised boundaries in view of the rapid economic development of the country and specific development of the metropolitan area around the capital city (see also recommendations of the 2010 reactive monitoring mission);

2. State of conservation and management

The mission commended the authorities for the works on the management scheme and especially for the fact that the management plan was adopted on 12 September 2013 and is currently in its implementation phase. The mission recommends that the authorities ensure that all technical financial and human resources required for the adequate implementation of the Management Plan are guaranteed.

The mission recommends that the Historic District be further protected at national level and conservation enhanced by national programmes; at the same time further strong efforts need to be undertaken to prevent collapse of important buildings, as recommended already by previous monitoring missions.

It is strongly recommended that studies be carried out to regulate new developments in the neighbouring areas of both components of the currently inscribed World Heritage property in order to avoid new visual impacts that could jeopardise their integrity. Regulations on height and volumes of new buildings appear as the priority issue to be treated. The State Party should also consider the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape to integrate urban heritage values into a wider framework of city development, which shall provide indications of areas of heritage sensitivity that require careful attention to planning, design and implementation of development projects and to prioritize actions for conservation and development;

3. Other recommendations

The mission also noted the importance of the Salon Bolivar hosting a small museum with documents about the 1826 multinational Congress; while issues remain concerning the authenticity of the building itself, the associative values are important not only for Panama, but for Latin America and the world; the mission strongly recommends that the documents exposed at Salon Bolivar be brought forward for the UNESCO Programme "Memory of the World"; this could be a joint proposal for the registry by the authorities of Brazil and Panama.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

1.1 Introduction

Based on Decision **37 COM 7B.100** adopted by the World Heritage Committee (Phnom Penh, June 2013) at its 37th session, concerning the state of conservation of the World Heritage property “Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá”, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1997 and extended in 2003, the key objective of the World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Mission was to assess issues related to the overall state of conservation of this property with particular regard to the major boundary modification requested by the Committee to justify a revision of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

1.2 Inscription history and World Heritage values

The property was first inscribed in 1997 as a cultural site under criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi) at the 21st session of the World Heritage Committee, by Decision **21 COM VIII.C** ‘Historic District of the Town of Panama with the Salon Bolivar’. In 2003, at its 28th session, the World Heritage Committee adopted an extension under the same criteria to the property: ‘Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá’ by Decision **27 COM 8C.40**. The Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property was adopted by the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee in June 2013 (Decision **37 COM 8E**) in parallel to the Decision concerning the state of conservation of the property with the following criteria:

Criterion (ii): Panamá Viejo is an exceptional testimony of town planning of its period and culture. It exhibits an important interchange of human values since it bore great influence on subsequent developments in colonial Spanish town planning, even in areas vastly different in climate and setting. The Historic District’s layout reflects the persistence and interchange of human values, which have been oriented towards interoceanic and intercontinental communications for several centuries at this strategic site on the Central American Isthmus.

Criterion (iv): In both Panamá Viejo and the Historic District, house and church types from the 16th to the 18th centuries represent a significant stage in the development of Spanish colonial society as a whole. Panamá Viejo is an exceptional example of the period’s building technology and architecture. In the Historic District, surviving multiple-family houses from the 19th and early 20th centuries are original examples of how society reacted to new requirements, technological developments and influences brought about by post-colonial society and the building of the Panama Canal.

Criterion (vi): The ruins of Panamá Viejo are closely linked to the European discovery of the Pacific Ocean, the history of Spanish expansion in the Isthmus of Central America and in Andean South America, the African diaspora, the history of piracy and proxy war, the bullion lifeline to Europe, the spread of European culture in the region and the commerce network between the Americas and Europe. The Salón Bolívar is associated with Simón Bolívar’s visionary attempt in 1826 to establish a multinational congress in the Americas, preceding the Organization of American States and the United Nations.

The Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was prepared within the framework of the second cycle of periodic reporting for the Latin America and Caribbean region. Although it was expected that it be adopted at the 36th session of the World Heritage

Committee it was finally adopted at the 37th session in 2013. The mission notes the discrepancy between the Decision taken on the state of conservation while at the same time adopting a Decision concerning Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

1.3. Integrity/authenticity issues raised at time of inscription

At the time of inscription of the property “The Historic District of Panama City, with the Salón Bolívar” (Decision **21COM VIII.C**), the World Heritage Committee expressed no concerns on its authenticity. The evaluation by the Advisory Body stated *“the urban layout of the Historic District of Panama City may be considered to be entirely authentic, preserving its original form unchanged. The organically developed stock of buildings from the 18th to 20th centuries has been little changed over time, largely owing to neglect”*. At the time of the extension of the property to include the archaeological site of Panama Viejo, it was agreed that the site kept its full authenticity and integrity.

The Decision concerning the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of June 2013 notes: *“Both components of the Property meet the conditions of integrity. As a Pre-Columbian and Historic Archaeological Site with both historic ruins and stratified contexts, Panamá Viejo includes all the elements necessary to convey the Outstanding Universal Value for which this component was included as an extension of the Historic District and Salón Bolívar’s original inscription. The size of the protected area is consistent with the distribution of the relevant physical attributes, constituting a coherent and clearly defined whole... Development and significant conservation challenges are the most critical aspect threatening the integrity of the Historic District. To address threats, the legislative and regulatory framework needs to be enforced and comprehensive interventions implemented to reverse lack of maintenance of historic buildings.”*

The mission notes that, among the attributes of the Historic District that convey its contribution to the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial property, the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value adopted by Decision **37 COM 8E** makes reference to the urban layout, the dimensions and distribution of the ground plots, the remaining colonial fortification and non-residential buildings of monumental values together with a great variety of residential buildings typologies. Although the word setting, instead, is not specifically mentioned in the statements of authenticity and integrity, the Brief Synthesis in the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value emphasises the maritime context of the small peninsula on which the historic district was constructed, close to the islands that were used as the port and near the mouth of a river that eventually became the entrance of the Panama Canal, and also the survival of most of the seaward walls of the colonial fortifications. At the same time, by Decision **37 COM 7B.100** the World Heritage Committee *“regrets that the State Party decided to launch the construction of the Cinta Costera Phase III (Maritime Viaduct) that modifies in an irreversible manner the relation of the historic centre with its wider setting”*.

1.4. Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee

The state of conservation of the property was examined by the Committee at its 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th and 37th sessions in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively. In 2009 a joint UNESCO / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited the property to assess the state of conservation, in March 2010 a joint UNESCO / ICOMOS technical visit to the property was undertaken as a part of a reactive monitoring mission to Portobelo and San Lorenzo as requested by the authorities of Panama, and in October 2010 a joint World Heritage Centre/ ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission visited the property.

In 2013 the State Party submitted a state of conservation report to the World Heritage Committee which was reviewed by the World Heritage Committee in June 2013 and which led to the Decision by the Committee to dispatch a high-level World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission which took place from 25-28 November 2013. A significant modification to the boundaries is due by 1 February 2015 as indicated in Decision **37 COM 7B.100**.

In 2002 the State Party submitted a map of the delimitation of the property and its buffer zone for the extension to include the Archaeological site of Panama Viejo. Furthermore, in January 2013 the State Party submitted "Minor Modifications to the Boundaries of the Property C790bis: Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama", which were considered incomplete.

2. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

2.1. Protected area/national legislation

Different legislation ensures protection and conservation of the property: The original delimitation and conservation regulations for the areas of heritage protection date back to 1976 (Law 91/1976). This law recognizes and legally defines national culture and heritage. It was complemented by the National Heritage Law of 1982 (Law 14/1982), which created the National Heritage Directorate as part of the National Institute of Culture and became the State entity responsible for the protection and management of Panamá Viejo and the Historic District. An Advisory Commission was also created by this law. The heritage law provides for administrative sanctions for destroying heritage assets; fines were increased by a 2003 law (Law 58/2003). Moreover, the Penal Code was modified in 2007 to include jail sanctions for the criminal destruction of heritage assets (Law 14/2007).

Law 16/2007 modified the buffer zone of Panama Viejo, establishing a considerable extension to include part of the sea in front of the archaeological site. However the mission notes that these changes to the boundaries and buffer zones of this component of the property were not submitted to the World Heritage Centre. Therefore any boundary modifications have to be made on the basis of the maps originally submitted with the extensions to the nomination and inscribed on the World Heritage List.

With regard to the Historic District's buffer zone, Decree-Law 9/1997 established a landward area around the site; Executive Decree 51/2004 established a seaward buffer zone of 200 metres around the peninsula but it was not submitted to the World Heritage Centre for approval by the World Heritage Committee. Therefore also in this case any boundary modifications have to be made on the basis of the maps originally submitted with the nomination and inscribed on the World Heritage List.

2.2. Institutional framework and management structure

Each component of the property has been provided with a corresponding management framework. Other institutions have complemented the management role of the National Institute of Culture for protected historic sites. In the case of Panamá Viejo, the *Patronato Panamá Viejo*, a mixed private-public non-profit organization with a legal mandate to administer central government subsidies and raise its own funds, supports site maintenance, architectural conservation and research projects.

The protection and management roles of the National Institute of Culture are complemented by the Oficina del Casco Antiguo (OCA), which produced a Master Plan and assumes inter-

institutional coordination. The approval of architectural plans and documents for projects located within the Historic District remains the responsibility of the National Heritage Directorate.

As for coordinated management of the two components of the serial property, as required by Paragraph 114 of the *Operational Guidelines*, an agreement exists between the Patronato Panama Viejo and the Office of the Historic District (OCA). A National Committee for Cultural and Natural World Heritage was created by Presidential Decree 119/2011; the Committee is ascribed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and presided by the Minister.

A joint management plan for the two Panamanian World Heritage cultural properties (“Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama” and “Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo - San Lorenzo”), the Panama UNESCO Heritage Management Plan”, was completed in 2013, with the coordination of Spanish experts and the participation of Spanish and Panamanian experts. The plan, which includes a detailed analysis of the current situation, defines objectives and strategies and proposes sectorial action plans, was approved on 12 September 2013 by Resolution 186 of the DNPH (National Direction of Historic Heritage), which will act as responsible organisation for the implementation of the Plan, which encompasses previous plans and programmes. An implementation status report dated November 2013 provides detailed information on actions undertaken to implement the management plan including monitoring measures. The mission considers that the Plan constitutes a complete and useful instrument for the appropriate management of the properties and commends the idea of an integrated territorial approach. The mission recommends that ICOMOS further review the November 2013 report.

3. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES / THREATS

3.1. Management effectiveness

The effectiveness of management can be seen differently in the two components of the serial property. In Panama Viejo the management system proves to be effective taking into account recent and ongoing works that improve the conditions and state of conservation of the archaeological site. The Historic District presents different problems if compared with the archaeological site since it is a living heritage of the city and the institutional heart of the country. Progress in conservation of public spaces and historic buildings is noticeable, together with projects to improve the conditions of traffic flows and parking. Although the problem of the bad state of conservation of historic residential buildings has been addressed by relevant authorities, there is still necessary work to be undertaken, as recommended by previous monitoring missions. The Panama UNESCO Heritage Management Plan defines strategies and objectives and provides guidelines for the improvement of this situation. Enhanced implementation is strongly recommended.

3.2. Nature and extent of threats to the property, taking into consideration the cultural values for which the property was inscribed and specific issues outlined by the World Heritage Committee

Three different monitoring missions took place prior to the current one: in March 2009 a joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission was carried out. A year later, in March 2010, on the occasion of the joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to Portobelo and San Lorenzo (Panama), a technical visit to the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and the Historic District was undertaken, which was specifically requested by the authorities of Panama and finally, the October 2010 joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission.

For a number of years, the World Heritage Committee expressed concerns about the state of conservation of the property, especially concerning deteriorated historic buildings in the Historic District, for which an Emergency Plan was requested already in 2009 as well as an outline Management Plan.

The 2009 mission proposed the relocation of the *Via Cincuentenario*, and progress on this was reported to the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee. Furthermore, as requested by the Environmental Impact Study (EIS), a Plan for the Archaeological Rescue in Panama Viejo was implemented. However, no Heritage Impact Assessment has been completed for review.

Concerning the Cinta Costera project, the 2009 reactive monitoring mission informed that the Phase II of the Cinta Costera project had been constructed without carrying out heritage impact assessments, and without informing the World Heritage Committee. The same mission also informed that the Phase III project could have an impact on the property; Therefore the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session in 2009 requested the State Party to provide reports on both, the analysis and monitoring of the impacts derived from the construction of the Cinta Costera Phase II and the potential impacts on the property from the continuation of Phase III. In 2010 the World Heritage Committee was informed that Phase III of Cinta Costera was expected to continue at the time with a tunnel that would cross approximately 1 km. of the Historic District or by surrounding the Peninsula of the Historic District. The 2010 reactive monitoring mission noted that the proposal of Cinta Costera Phase III to surround the Peninsula where the Historic District is located could have a serious impact on important views and view sheds to and from the Historic District, thus impacting on the conditions of authenticity and integrity of the property. The Committee noted that no other alternatives for the continuation of the project at Phase III had been sufficiently explored. In Decision **34 COM 7B.113**, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to halt the Cinta Costera Project and to submit the necessary technical studies and impact assessments prior to approval and implementation, as well as to explore and submit other alternative proposals to address the traffic concerns effectively. At its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011) the World Heritage Committee noted the commitment made by the State Party at the Committee session to submit all projects, studies and proposals related to alternatives for future works of the Cinta Costera Phase III for evaluation, including technical specifications and heritage impact assessments. The Committee also requested that the construction of Phase III of the Cinta Costera be discontinued, as it would potentially have an adverse impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

In 2012, the State Party presented a definitive proposal to construct a Maritime Viaduct, Phase III of the Cinta Costera, which was examined by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in June 2012. The Committee noted, based on the evaluation of the Heritage Impact Assessment, that the project posed a potential threat to the integrity and authenticity of the property as it would transform the Historic District's traditional form, its appearance on the coastline and would irreversibly compromise the existing relationship between the Historic Centre and the sea and particularly impact the setting of the property in the peninsula and the singularity of the fortified precinct. The World Heritage Committee requested, in Decision **36 COM 7.B103**, that impact studies on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property be carried out and also requested the State Party to implement a series of measures to comprehensively address the precarious state of conservation of the property. In January 2013 the State Party provided a report "Solution for the future traffic demand of Panama City" explaining the rapid growth of Panama City and detailing increasing traffic problems as reason for the construction of the Maritime Viaduct. The working document presented to the World Heritage Committee in June 2013 noted:

"The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies underscore the negative visual impacts of the Maritime Viaduct that will adversely impact on and transform the setting of the Historic

Centre. They further note that the Maritime Viaduct is a structure of a very strong shape with a high visual impact which does not integrate harmoniously with the Historic District and establishes an undesirable contrast with regard to its maritime context. They consider that the ability of the property to convey its Outstanding Universal Value, as a fortified settlement in a Peninsula and as a testimony to the nature of the early settlements, with a layout and urban design adapted to a particular context, are being adversely compromised. The urban layout and scale and the relationship between the city and its setting, attributes crucial to the understanding of the evolution of the property, will also be adversely impacted. The Maritime Viaduct, which, when complete in a few months' time, will closely encircle the coastline that has been the edge of the Historic District since its foundation in the 17th century, will alter view sheds to and from the Historic Centre. Furthermore, the work already carried out on this large-scale infrastructure is impacting significantly and adversely on the integrity and the authenticity of the property, in terms of the way it conveys its historic strategic and defensive location on the Central American isthmus, a crucial attribute of its Outstanding Universal Value. Given the current degree and extent of the adverse impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property derived from the construction of the Maritime Viaduct and the state of conservation of the built fabric, the World Heritage and the Advisory Bodies note that the World Heritage Committee might wish to inscribe this property on the List of World Heritage in Danger."

The Committee considering the analysis, did not inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, but came up with Decision **37 COM 7B.100** that provided as a solution to the problem identified, a significant boundary modification.

The mission informs that the project of the Maritime Viaduct is in its final construction phase and surrounds the coastline of the Historic Peninsula at a close distance. It further notes, especially to avoid any misunderstanding, that the Viaduct during the construction phase is a dyke structure, but that the dyke will be removed on completion to allow water to flow. The photos in the Annex provide an overview of the current situation as of November 2013.

3.3. Positive or negative developments in the conservation of the property since the last report to the World Heritage Committee

The mission noticed that a number of positive developments in the conservation of the property have occurred. The reactive monitoring mission of 2009 noted issues concerning the state of conservation of Panamá Viejo, which the mission reviewed as follows:

1. Deviation of the Avenue Cincuentenario to prevent the deterioration or loss of the site's outstanding universal value, its integrity and authenticity;
2. Relocation of the projected visitor's facility at a considerable distance from the Main Square and the Cathedral Tower to preserve the visual integrity of the site and its setting;
3. Achieve stakeholder participation;

Regarding the issues above at Panamá Viejo, positive developments include:

- a) Relocation of Via Cincuentenario, which divided this component of the property in two sections. The new route, inaugurated in May 2013, is located at the boundary between the property and the buffer zone. Parts of the route pass through a small portion of the property in the area located between the main ruins area and the Puente del Rey (King's Bridge). This area does not contain visible archaeological remains, except the historic bridge, and the route does not constitute a threat to the integrity of the property. The route is separated from the archaeological site by a low and light fence that creates no visual impact on the property. The project of the relocation has been finalized including works on sewage, stabilization of river banks

etc. and the relocation greatly enhances the integrity of this component of the property;

- b) Relocation of visitors centre and museum: The mission visited the new visitor facilities and museum located at the main entrance of Panama Viejo. Located in two buildings, new facilities include administrative area of the Patronato Panamá Viejo, laboratories and exhibition areas that facilitate interpretation of the site by visitors. The mission considers that the 2009 recommendation is fully implemented;
- c) Conservation of remains and open spaces, including ongoing process of intervention in Plaza Mayor. The mission noticed an overall acceptable state of conservation of archaeological remains, enhancement of open spaces and ongoing works of conservation and maintenance;
- d) Project of controlling the mangroves between the property and the sea. As a result of the natural evolution of the environment, mangroves grew in the saline coastal sediments along the maritime boundary of the property, disturbing views to the sea. Since this natural formation is in a process of expansion, the mission was informed that a project to control its expansion is under elaboration and will be implemented; In this process it should be carefully evaluated whether the mangrove habitat provides also protection from coastal erosion of the archaeological site, although not originally present;
- e) Stakeholders participation: The mission was informed of the evolution of the work with different communities living around the site and noted the improvements of community facilities, including playgrounds.

Regarding the Historic District/Casco Antiguo:

- a) Improvement of public spaces. Over the last years, works to improve the quality and conditions of the public spaces have been undertaken. The streets of the historic district have been provided with new tiling maintaining the style of the traditional pavement, which allows not only a better aspect but also better conditions for vehicle circulation. Sidewalks have also been repaired together with the improvement of squares and small squares (plazoletas), which includes repair or provision of new floors, restoration of green areas and urban furniture. These works of repair of streets were complemented with the improvement of infrastructure in the Historic District, which includes:
 - New pluvial drainage system. The works imply a completely new system with adequate dimension of water conducts according to amount of water to be drained, new inspection cameras and sewers.
 - Relocation of electricity and communications network. Cables have been buried, which allows liberating facades of historic buildings and improving the visual quality of public spaces.
 - Rehabilitation of the water supply system.
 - Reversion of the sanitation system. New works undertaken allow re-conduction and treatment of sanitation waters before pouring into the sea. Works are being carried out to construct a pump station.
 - Lighting of public spaces. Works to improve lighting of public spaces include restoration and repair of post lamps and incorporation of new lighting artefacts.
 - In order to reduce the number of cars in the Historic District and to increase the capacity of parking space, a parking building has been constructed next to the San Felipe neighbourhood. The building will provide for 117 parking lots and its height, four storeys, can be considered compatible with the overall scale of the specific area.

During the execution of works in public spaces archaeological surveys were carried out; relevant authorities informed the mission that immovable findings have been protected by means of geo-textile covers. In summary, the mission noticed that the state of public spaces in the Historic District (streets, pavements, squares, plazoletas) is acceptable and that improvements are easily identifiable.

- b) Restoration and conservation of historic buildings. Reactive Monitoring mission reports of the last years expressed deep concern on the overall state of conservation of historic buildings in the Historic District; the last reports informed that some 50% of the buildings in the historic district, especially historic houses, were in bad state of conservation. The mission noted that over the last years several buildings have been restored and that works of restoration and maintenance are currently being carried out. Although the short visit to the Historic District allowed no specific quantification of restoration works, relevant authorities reported that currently 75% of the historic buildings in the area could be considered in good state of conservation. It is recommended that restoration and conservation actions focus on some significant spaces of the Historic District, as Plaza Independencia, where, next to the Cathedral and other architectural assets, some historic buildings still display a serious state of conservation, with its negative impact on the overall appearance of this urban site.
- c) Project of improvement of the maritime façade. The mission was informed on projects for the improvement of the maritime façade of the Historic District. Since views from the sea were not customary, several buildings, including historic monuments, present poor state of conservation or maintenance of parts facing the maritime border of the property. Projects to improve the maritime façade include interventions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, part of which is the former San Francisco convent and includes the Salón Bolívar.

Negative developments on both Panama Viejo and the Historic District are in general related to their wider setting and integrity rather than to the World Heritage components themselves. The main cause of disturbances are developments from neighbouring areas, in some cases far beyond the boundaries of the buffer zones, that are perceivable from the property, especially high-rise buildings. In the framework of the present rapid economic development of the country, which allows predicting that major new developments will occur over the next years, it is recommended that the State Party rapidly carries out studies and implement measures that prevent disturbances of the perception of open and public spaces within the components of this serial property.

3.4. Information on any specific threat or damage to or loss of outstanding universal value, integrity and/or authenticity for which the property was inscribed

In order to identify and assess specific threats or damage to or loss of outstanding universal value, integrity and/or authenticity for which the property was inscribed, the mission considers that it becomes necessary to revise the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 37th session (2013).

In Panama Viejo the mission noticed no major threats or damages, although it is recommended that measures be adopted to prevent visual impacts of new developments in the neighbouring areas and to protect important views. In the Historic District, serious conditions of historic buildings continue to constitute a threat to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its integrity. On the basis of an inventory dated April 2013, the State Party reports that out of 845 plots in the Historic District 72.1% show good state of conservation, 6.7% are vacant plots, 14.3% display bad state of conservation and 6.5% of the buildings are ruined or abandoned. The map corresponding to this inventory is included

in Annex V of this report. The mission considers that the situation has improved over the last years; recent and ongoing restoration works allow considering that efforts are being made in that direction.

The mission visited the Salón Bolívar, which was included as a specific and significant component of the Historic District and cited to justify the application of criterion (vi). The hall was a part of the former Franciscan convent, which was the subject of successive interventions and is currently integrated into the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A special project detached the Salón Bolívar from the main body of the building; the Salón is today protected by a special structure (cover building) that links it to the Ministry. The mission verified, discussed and concluded that there are some issues regarding the authenticity of the tangible components and that a number of unsatisfactory responses to technical questions remain, i.e. different levels of floors of the ground-floor. The intangible, associative and symbolic aspects of the Salon are nevertheless undeniable, demonstrated by the collection of documents of the meeting convened by Simón Bolívar in 1826. The mission recommends the State Party that the documents exposed at Salon Bolivar be brought forward for the UNESCO Programme "Memory of the World" possibly as a joint project by Brazil and Panama. This would further enhance recognition at a global scale.

The construction of Cinta Costera Phase III causes an evident impact on the relationship of the Historic District and its maritime wider setting. This was already a key conclusion by previous missions and the Decisions of the World Heritage Committee.

It is worth mentioning that the visual relationship between the Historic District and its wider setting had already been impacted even before the construction of the maritime viaduct Cinta Costera Phase III. Considering its location in a peninsula, views from the Historic District can be directed to two main directions: the bay between the San Felipe area (Historic District) and Punta Paitilla, part of Panama City downtown, and the sea and the islands Naos, Perico and Flamenco including the entrance to Panama Canal. Over the last two decades, new developments in both areas resulted in impacts on the views from the Historic District. Punta Paitilla became the location of a new area of high-rise buildings housing both dwelling and offices; the presence of these tall buildings has altered the profile of the shore and coastline; this has the effect that the maritime viaduct Cinta Costera Phase III may not so evidently noticeable when looking in this direction. The use of the islands for sports and recreation activities resulted in the construction of a causeway (Amador Avenue) which links the island to the mainland and facilitates vehicular communication. The causeway is easily perceived from the historic district; located beyond the maritime viaduct of Cinta Costera Phase III, it is nevertheless apparent when looking at that direction.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY AND RESPONSES TO THE COMMITTEE DECISIONS

4.1. Review whether the values, on the basis of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List and the conditions of integrity are being maintained

Regarding Panama Viejo, the mission considers that the values on the basis of which this component of the serial property was inscribed on the World Heritage List are currently maintained. The deviation of Via Cincuentenario clearly improves the conditions of integrity of this area if compared to the situation at the time of inscription. Nevertheless, it is recommended that measures be adopted to avoid any negative visual impact of new developments, especially construction of high-rise buildings that could be perceived from the property.

As for the Historic District, the mission considers that most of the attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value on the basis of which this component of the serial property was inscribed on the World Heritage List have been preserved and thus most of the values are maintained. Although located outside the maritime buffer zone established by Executive Decree 51/2004 (which was not officially submitted and therefore not adopted by the World Heritage Committee), the main threat to the integrity of the site is the maritime viaduct Cinta Costera Phase III; on this basis and as requested by the World Heritage Committee, recommendations for a major revision of the boundaries of the property is proposed in the following section of this report.

4.2. Review any follow-up measures to previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the property and measures which the State Party plans to take to protect the outstanding universal value of the property

Positive developments in both components of the property and in the management system have been commented in previous sections of this report. Since the main purpose of the high-level mission was discussing with the State Party possible responses to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee to “...submit by 1 February 2015 a significant modification to the boundaries to allow it to justify a revision of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property”, this section will focus on that specific issue.

The mission appreciated the comprehensive work by the Panamanian authorities to review best practice examples of boundary modifications including through review meetings at UNESCO prior to the arrival of the mission; it recommended that the original submission of the Historic District (Decision **21 COM VIII.C**; surface 29.4 ha) and the extension to include Panama Viejo (Decision **27 COM 8C.40**; surface 28ha with a buffer zone of 85ha) totalling plus 57,4ha be referred to when submitting any modifications;

The mission welcomed the studies carried out on boundary delimitations of the two components of the World Heritage property and recommends submitting by 1 February 2015 a major boundary modification as requested by Decision **37 COM 7B.100**.

The mission recommended the authorities to consider the following four options:

Option I: Submission of a significant boundary change to focus the property only on Panama Viejo, based on the original extension dossier of 2002, to also include the new buffer zone defined by Law 91/2007.

The mission considers that this option could facilitate a direct response to the concerns of the Committee regarding the state of conservation and adverse impacts of the Cinta Costera Phase III project on the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity of the Historic District. However the removal of the Historic District from the present serial site would prevent any understanding and comprehension of the process that explains the relocation of the town in the 17th century and the evolution of urban and architectural types and expressions.

Should this option be considered, there would no need to revise the choice of criteria for inscription adopted by the Committee, being (ii), (iv) and (vi), but a new statement of Outstanding Universal Value would have to be drafted, with revised justification of these criteria for Panama Viejo using parts of the text of the adopted Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of 2013.

Option II: Submission of a boundary modification keeping the present boundaries of Panama Viejo and its buffer zone (attention: submission needs to show the

modifications in comparison to the original submission to include the adopted buffer zone by law) and reducing the boundaries of the Historic District to a smaller area where some of the main attributes that convey Outstanding Universal Value are present. The remaining area of the Historic District would be part of a buffer zone, together with the maritime area designed by the national law of 2007.

The mission considers that this option could contribute to avoiding visual impacts from developments of the last decades on the Historic District but it would take to focus mainly on urban and architectural features instead of promoting the comprehension of the town as a complex system of interrelated natural and cultural elements. In this case the criteria for inscription (ii), (iv) and (vi) could be used but with a Redrafting of the justification text to focus on the key elements in the centre of the Historic District. Concerning boundaries, the boundaries of Panama Viejo would remain (with the new 2007 buffer zone), while the boundaries of the Historic District would have to be substantially revised.

Option III: Submission of a (phased) approach by 1 February 2015 in which a new vision is included regarding components of the property as parts of a broader territorial system related to interoceanic and intercontinental commerce over five centuries.

The mission observed that both Panama Viejo and Casco Antiguo are components of a large-scale territorial systems established by the Spaniards at the 15th Century to link the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and favour interoceanic and intercontinental commerce. At colonial times, this system encompassed the fortifications of the Caribbean side of Panama isthmus, the port-city of Panama (relocated in 1673) on the Pacific coast and a network of land and fluvial routes, such as the Camino Cruces and the Camino Real, linking the two sides of the isthmus. After independence from Spain and throughout the 19th Century, the same system evolved with the modernization of port facilities, the incorporation of the railway lines and, finally, by the construction of the Panama Canal at the beginning of the 20th Century. This long process emerged on the basis of facilitating communication between the two oceans and is illustrated by a series of tangible and intangible heritage components.

A future serial nomination that highlights the testimonies to this process might have the potential to be a significant addition to the World Heritage List. In this context, the significance of the Panamanian cultural World Heritage properties would reach a different understanding on the basis of their contribution to the potential outstanding universal value of a series that testifies to the above-mentioned process. This option would require a substantive revision of the statement of outstanding universal value with a new vision of the components of the present property.

This approach would constitute a significant change to the current outstanding universal value of the property, which implies identification of key elements and justification of the criteria for inscription, as well as major revisions to the boundaries. In essence it would be a re-nomination considering the issues above. The mission notes that this option would require a re-nomination for different values and a substantively different Statement of Outstanding Universal Value; the time-lines for such a re-nomination are the same as for a major boundary modification as indicated in the *Operational Guidelines*.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As general conclusion, the mission notes that efforts have been made by the State Party to respond to issues and concerns raised by different reactive monitoring mission reports and Decisions of the World Heritage Committee over the last years.

As for the state of conservation of the property, concerning Panama Viejo, the mission very much welcomed the work on the rehabilitation of the site and the implementation of a great number of recommendations and requests from previous World Heritage Committee sessions. Most importantly, the four recommendations concerning this component from the 2009 reactive monitoring mission have all been implemented, including the relocation of the Via Cincuentario Road outside the property, the rehabilitation of public space and visitor management.

The mission noted that the Cinta Costera Phase III is in its final construction phase and surrounds as a maritime viaduct the historic centre as anticipated by the World Heritage Committee, which had requested halting the project to prevent impacts on the integrity and Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

While noting the requests of previous Committee sessions specifically at its 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th sessions concerning the state of conservation of the property component of Historic District, the mission recognized the value of individual houses which have been restored in great detail; the site should be further protected at national level and conservation enhanced by national programmes; the mission commended the authorities for the results, especially that, according to the inventory dated April 2013, some 75 % of the buildings present good state of conservation in the Historic District. ; However, further efforts need to be undertaken to prevent collapse of important buildings. Works to improve the quality of public spaces and streetscape constitute an important progress on the overall state of conservation of this component.

Regarding management, the main progress is the completion and approval of the Panama UNESCO Heritage Management Plan. Although recently implemented, sectorial plans and the inclusion of timelines and monitoring system allow foreseeing an adequate management that will impact on the conservation of the World Heritage property. The report dated November 2013 provides detailed information on the implementation status of the Management Plan.

The mission would like to invite the State Party to take into account the following recommendations:

1. Boundary Modifications

The mission recommends the authorities to consider the following options:

- I. Submission of a significant boundary change to focus the site only on Panama Viejo based on the original extension dossier of 2002, to also include the new buffer zone by law 91/2007 and review the statement of Outstanding Universal Value.
- II. Submission of option I with an addition of a reduced area in the Historic District where some of the main attributes that convey the contribution of this component to the outstanding universal value of the serial property are present.
- III. Submission of a (phased) approach by 1 February 2015 in which an overall new vision is included regarding components of the property as parts of a broader territorial system related to interoceanic and intercontinental commerce over five centuries. This option would imply a re-nomination of the property.

The mission further recommends reviewing the traffic schemes and urban cluster planning schemes to ensure the overall integrity of the property in its revised boundaries in view of the rapid economic development of the country and its capital city (see also recommendations of the 2010 reactive monitoring mission);

2. State of conservation and management

The mission commended the authorities for the works on the management scheme and especially that the management plan was adopted on 12 September 2013 and is in its implementation phase. The mission recommends that the authorities ensure that all technical financial and human resources required for the adequate implementation of the Management Plan are guaranteed.

The mission recommends that the Historic District be further protected at national level and conservation enhanced by national programmes; at the same time further efforts need to be undertaken to prevent collapse of important buildings.

It is strongly recommended that studies be carried out to regulate new developments in the neighbouring areas of both components of the World Heritage properties in order to avoid new visual impacts that could jeopardise their integrity. Regulations on height of new buildings appear as the main issue to be treated.

3. Other recommendations

The mission also noted the importance of the Salon Bolivar; while issues remain concerning the authenticity of the building itself, the associative values are important not only for Panama, but for Latin America and the world; the mission strongly recommends that the documents exposed at Salon Bolivar be brought forward for the UNESCO Programme "Memory of the World";

Annexes

Annex I Terms of Reference.

In accordance with Decision **37 COM 7B.100** adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, June 2013), the high-level reactive monitoring mission will undertake the following tasks:

1. Provide guidance to the State Party for any proposed submission of a significant boundary modification of the property, in accordance with paragraph 165 of the *Operational Guidelines*, and in response to the concerns expressed by the World Heritage Committee;
2. Review and analyse with the State Party authorities the implications of proposed boundary modifications on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and provide guidelines for the submission of a revised statement of OUV in relation to the criteria that warranted the inscription and extension of the property and to the value of any proposed modification of the boundaries;
3. Provide guidance for the establishment of a buffer zone for any modification of the boundaries and for related regulatory measures to control and regulate further development;
4. Review further progress achieved with the development of a Management Plan for the property and provide advice in view of any future submission of a significant boundary modification for the property;
5. Prepare a joint mission report, following the attached format, in English or French, for review by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session, and provide the State Party with precise recommendations and clear guidelines and orientations for the submission of both the required documentation and the cartographic requirements of the significant boundary modification Dossier.

Annex II Programme for the Mission

Monday Nov 25

- Arrival. Airport pick up and hotel transfer.
- Dinner in Hotel

Tuesday Nov 26

09.00 Meeting Welcoming Breakfast

13:00 Room Presentation

- OUV Studies, Archaeologist Carlos Fitzgerald, arch. Eduardo Tejeira

- Attributes of Historic District and the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo

- Actual boundaries and Buffer Zone of the Property C790 bis.

- Actualization of the Panama UNESCO Heritage Management Plan

- State Party Investment in Patrimonial Policy and Strategies (Urban Projects and Studies)

- New Urban Transportation network. Pedestrian Areas of Historic District

13:00 Hotel Lunch

14:00 transfer Visit to Historic District and Salón Bolívar

18.30 Transfer Hotel

Wednesday Nov 27

09.00 Meeting Workgroup

13:00 Room Presentation and Discussion of the Proposal for Significant Boundaries Modification

13:00 Hotel Lunch

15.00 Transfer Visit to Panama Viejo Visitors center and Museum

18:00 and

Visit: City of Knowledge, current site of United Nations Regional Latin American Headquarters (former US Military Base Clayton)

19:30 Dinner Traditional Panamanian Restaurant

Thursday Nov 28

09.00 Meeting Workgroup

13:00 Room Presentation and Discussion of the Proposal for Significant

Boundaries Modification

13:00 Hotel Lunch Hotel

14:00 --- Transfer--- Hotel, free until time to transfer to airport

15:30 Hotel Check out Transfer to the airport

Annex III Composition of mission team

Dr Mechtild Rossler (Head of Mission)

Deputy Director

UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Mr. Alfredo Conti (Argentina)

Vice-President of ICOMOS

Annex IV List and contact details of people met

LIST OF PERSONS MET DURING THE MISSION

1. Authorities of Panama

D^a Maruja Herrera, Directora General de INAC (Instituto Nacional de Cultura)

D. Raúl Castro Zachrisson, Subdirector General de INAC

D^a Sandra Cerrud, Directora Nacional de Patrimonio Histórico

D. Flavio Mendez, Embajador ante UNESCO del Estado de Panamá

D. Carlos Martínez. Director de la Oficina del Casco Antiguo de Panamá

D^a Monalisa Arias, Jefa del Departamento de Ciencia, Tecnología y Cultura DGOCl

D. Carlos Ho González, Ingeniero. Director de Proyectos Especiales. Ministerio de Obras Públicas. Panamá

D. Julieta Arango, Directora Ejecutiva del Patronato de Panamá Viejo

D. Ernesto Boyd Saso, Presidente del Patronato de Panamá Viejo

2. Experts met

D. Eduardo Tejeira Davis, Arquitecto, Dr en Historia del Arte (Panamá)

D. Carlos Fitzgerald, Arqueólogo (Panamá)

D. José María Ezquiaga, Dr Arquitecto y Sociólogo (España)

D. Juan Herreros Guerra, Dr Arquitecto (España)

D^a Gemma Peribáñez Ayala, Arquitecto (España)

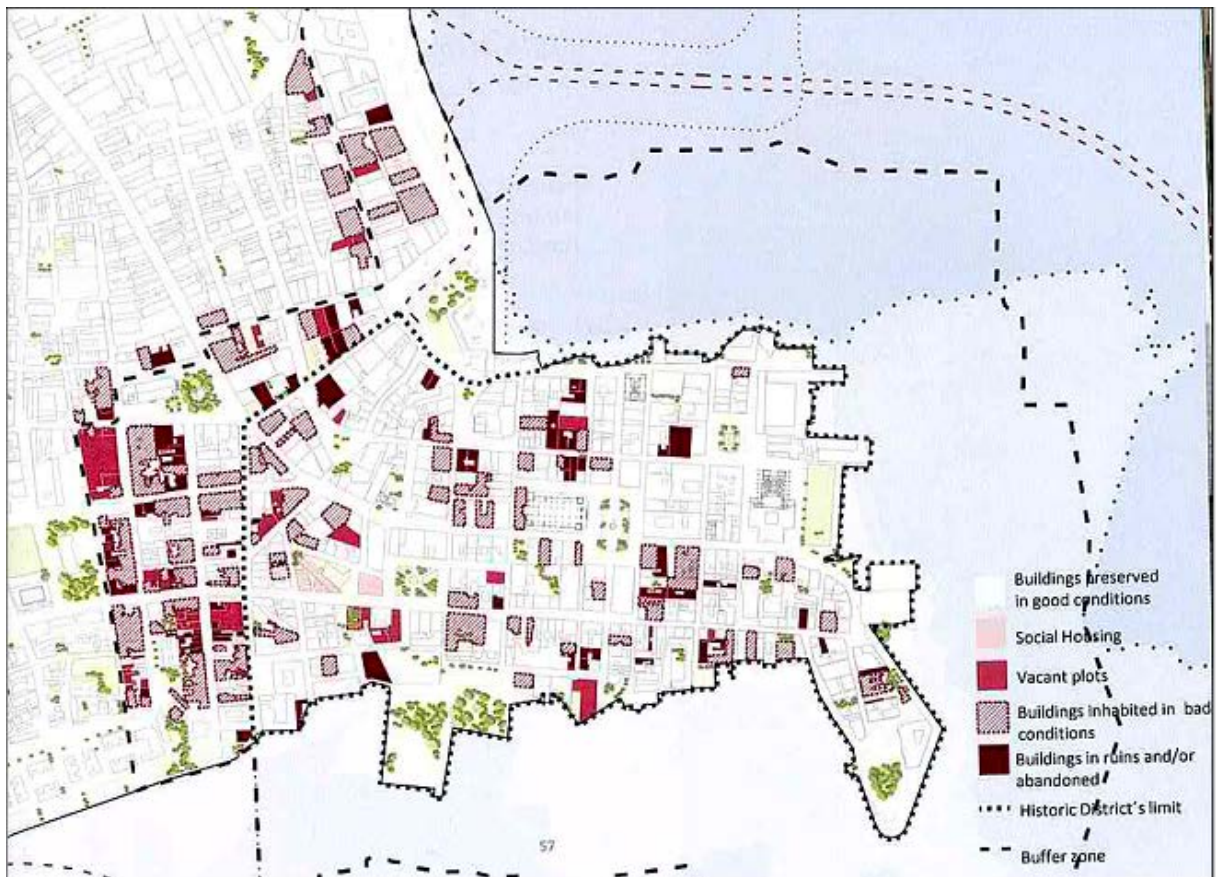
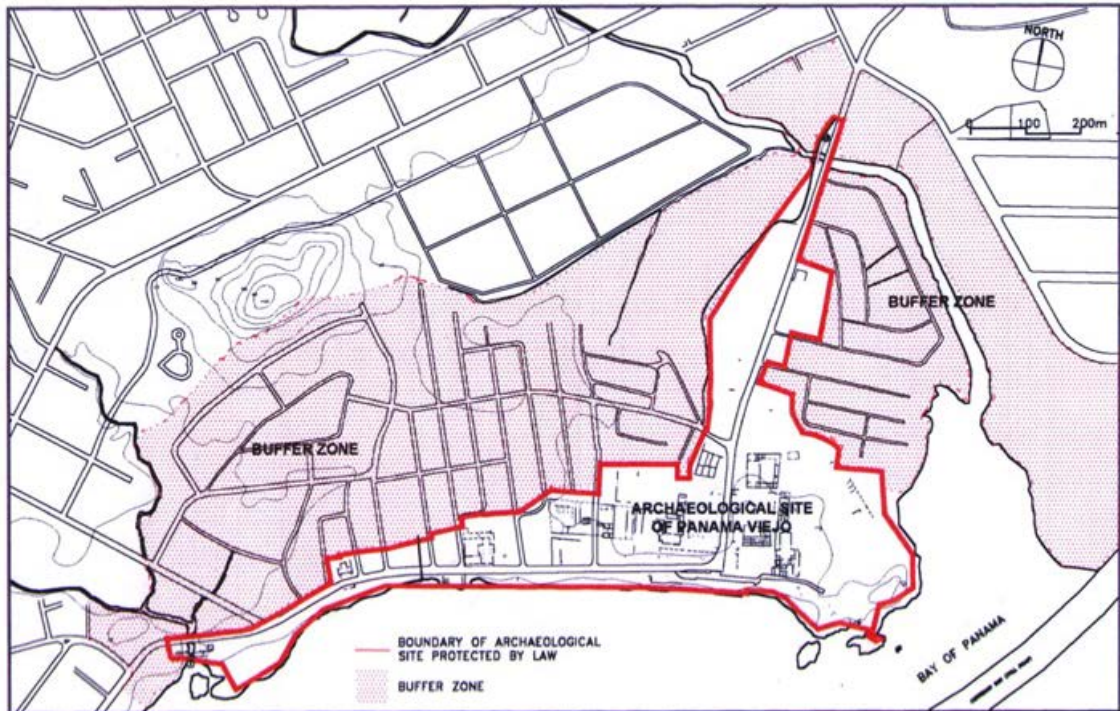
D. Álvaro Uribe , Arquitecto, (Panama)

Annex V Maps

1. Map submitted with the original nomination of 1997 – total area of property 29,4 ha



2. Map submitted with the extension approved in 2003 by the World Heritage Committee – total area of extension 28ha, buffer zone 85 (partially outside of map)



3. The Historical District Buildings data (source: Panama UNESCO Heritage Management Plan, May 2013)

Annex VI Photos



Panama Viejo, state of conservation of the remains and public spaces.



Panama Viejo, visual impacts of major developments in neighbouring areas.



Panama Viejo, visual impacts of major developments in neighbouring areas.



Panama Viejo, visitor centre.



Historic District, improvement of public spaces and restored buildings.



Historic District, improvement of public spaces and restored buildings.



Restoration of historic buildings in the Historic District.



Buildings in a desolate state of conservation to be restored in the future, around Plaza de la Independencia.



View of Cinta Costera Phase III and Punta Paitilla from the Historic District.



View of Cinta Costera Phase III and entrance of Panama Canal from the Historic District.



View of Cinta Costera Phase III from the Historic District.