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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
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**Construction of underground parking facilities
in the historic centre of Puebla, Mexico**

Report of the ICOMOS mission, 12–14 May 2002

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Executive Summary

The historic centre of the city of Puebla (Mexico) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in December 1987 under criteria ii and iv. Whilst the original 16th century urban layout is almost unchanged, the architecture of the area illustrates the evolution of the town between the 16th and 20th centuries, and includes some highlights of religious and civil architecture of the 17th and 18th centuries, with particular features that permit the denomination of a typical Puebla style. Although more than 50% of the buildings in the historic centre belong to the 19th century, the area retains remarkable morphological coherence and integrity.

The growth of the town was slow between the 16th and early 20th centuries, but over the past sixty years Puebla has undergone a rapid and unplanned expansion that makes it today a town which, including the outskirts and surrounding towns, houses a population of about 1,600,000 inhabitants. The historic centre continues to be the central area of the city, where the main institutional, commercial, educational, and cultural facilities are concentrated. Although the population of the historic centre has decreased over the course of the 20th century, the concentration of public functions means that a significant number of people arrive every day in order to work in or make use of commercial, educational, or entertainment facilities. In this context, therefore, it is not surprising that the presence of vehicles exercises a considerable impact on the area; as in many other cities all over the world, motor traffic and parking are a major cause of trouble.

As a response to this situation, the local government launched the project of constructing underground parking facilities beneath four open spaces in the historic centre: the Plaza de la Constitución (or Zócalo), the atrium of Santo Domingo Church, and the small squares of San Luis and Los Sapos. The Zócalo is the main square of the town, surrounded by some of the finest examples of Puebla architecture and equipped with an ancient fountain, magnificent trees, and urban furniture, whilst the others are more or less small open spaces, each with particular features.

Taking into account the impact that this project could cause on both the urban and the architectural heritage, the World Heritage Committee requested ICOMOS to carry out a reactive mission. The mission was required to assess both the present condition of the historic centre and the characteristics of the places chosen for developing the project, and also to contact those involved with the management and preservation of the town, both in the governmental and the non-governmental spheres.

As a general conclusion, it is considered that the decision to construct the underground parking facilities lacks proper and deeper justifications, whilst no other alternatives seem to have been taken into account. There is also no relationship between the proposal and the overall framework of a plan for the city, together with a lack of agreement among different actors concerned. It is therefore recommended that more time should be dedicated to a study of alternative solutions to the problem presented by motor traffic in the historic centre, including the possibility of restriction before the final decision is taken and the encouragement of a deeper debate, which should include all levels of the community.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared during and after the visit to the city of Puebla. The mission was able to contact key individuals involved with both the project itself and with the conservation and management of the city, and also to visit the historic centre and the places where it was proposed that the parking facilities would be constructed.

I wish to thank all institutions and individuals who collaborated in the preparation and the undertaking of the mission. It was only thanks to their collaboration, their availability, and their openness and frankness during our discussions that I was able to gather, in a relative short period of time, sufficient information and opinions to enable me to prepare this report. The documentation I received during the mission provided the indispensable foundation for my work.

I once again extend my thanks and appreciation to the authorities and institutions that collaborated with the mission, and especially to:

Dr Gonzalo Abad Ortiz (Director, UNESCO, Mexico).

Dr Francisco Javier López Morales (Director of World Heritage, National Institute of Anthropology and History – INAH).

Mr Víctor Hugo Valencia Valera (Director of the INAH Centre, Puebla).

Mr Maximino Bear Sanz (Co-ordinator of Macro-Projects, Municipality of Puebla).

During the mission I had the constant support of the Mexican National Committee of ICOMOS. I wish to thank Mr Ramón Bonfil Castro, Ms María Teresita Rojas Ortiz, Mr Alfonso Vélez Pliego, Mr Francisco Vélez Pliego, Dr Nicolás López Tamayo, Ms Dolores Dib Alvarez, and Mr Rafael Barquero Díaz, who all gave me a great deal of valuable information.

Alfredo Conti

June 2002

1 Introduction

The *Ciudad de los Angeles* (City of the Angels), now Puebla de Zaragoza, was founded on 16 April 1531 in the valley of Cuertlaxcoapan, on the road linking Mexico City with the harbour town of Veracruz. It is known to be the first Renaissance town in the Americas, on account of its geometric rational urban layout, one of the first examples of the employment of the grid pattern that was to spread throughout the whole Spanish Empire in the Americas. The pattern is based on rectangular blocks 168m long and 84m wide. The urban layout proved to be so perfect that, according to the legend about the original name of the town, the angels themselves would have participated in its conception and materialization.

Although Puebla became the second town of the Vice-Kingdom of Nueva España, the evolution between the 16th and early 20th centuries was slow. Until the 1920s the road linking Mexico City and Veracruz transfixed the centre of the town, which at that time had scarcely exceeded the original boundaries. From 1940 onwards Puebla underwent a rapid process of development, increasing its population and size many times over. The present population of the metropolitan area (including the valleys of Puebla and Tlaxcala) is about 1,600,000, of whom 69,000 live in the historic centre, the 16th century town. It is worthy of note that the population of the historic centre has decreased over time: by 1900, when the entire town was the present historic centre, there were about 100,000 inhabitants, rising to 72,000 in 1995 and about 69,000 in 2000.

Whilst the original urban layout of the historic centre is almost unchanged, the architecture of the area shows the evolution of the city between the 16th and 20th centuries, including some outstanding examples of religious and civil architecture of the 17th and 18th centuries, which display particular features (ie the combination of brick, tiles, and plasterwork in the facades) that make it possible to talk of a typical Puebla style. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries considerable renovation work was carried out in the town. New buildings were erected, in the Academic and Eclectic styles of the time, incorporating some other architectural highlights, among them the Town Hall.

The historic centre of Puebla was inscribed on the World Heritage List in December 1987, during the 11th session of the World Heritage Committee, under criteria ii and iv.* The nomination dossier included the archaeological zone of Cholula, 12km from the centre of Puebla, but the Committee considered that “*the complementarity of the colonial city of Puebla and of the Pre-Hispanic site of Cholula had been weakened by the urbanization of the area and that it was therefore not possible in the present circumstances to proceed with a joint inscription*”.

The citations for the criteria were:

...From the 16th century onwards, the influence of Puebla was in accordance of the architectural qualities of this new town. (criterion ii)

Puebla is an intact urban grid, the historic centre locates important religious buildings ..., but also palaces ... and numerous houses covered in tiles (azulejos)... Even if transformations appeared in the 19th century ... modified townscape, determined the close of numerous convents, also provided Puebla with public and residential architecture of high quality.” (criterion iv)

* The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention at the time refer to these criteria as follows:

(ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over an span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments on architecture and technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design.

(iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in history.

After the earthquakes of 1999, the Committee requested a report on the state of conservation of monuments in the historic centre. In view of the fact that the town is located in a seismic area, works were and are undertaken in order to repair damage and to prevent future effects.

2 The legal and administrative framework

The historic centre of Puebla is under both federal and local protection. Conservation policies started in 1932, with the enactment of the *Law concerning the protection and conservation of monuments and natural beauties of the State of Puebla*.

In 1972 the Congress of the United States of Mexico promulgated the *Federal Law on Archaeological, Artistic and Historic Monuments and Zones*. In Article 7, this Law states that, when proceeding to restoration or conservation of archaeological or historic monuments, the authorities of States and Municipalities may only act after permission has been obtained from and under the direction of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). Works executed without authorization will be halted by the competent Institute (Article 12).

Articles 37 and 38 establish that the President of the Republic will proceed by decree to the declaration of zones of archaeological, artistic or historic monuments. In zones of monuments every project for advertising matter, parking area, gasoline station, cables, and lighting installations, among other items, must be executed according to the regulations established by the Law (Article 42), and the competent institute will proceed to the previous authorization of works (Article 43).

The Regulation decree of the Federal Law, issued in 1975, states in Article 42 that, in order to proceed to authorization of works, the presentation will include plans and specifications of the works and plans, description and photographs of the present state of the monuments and their surroundings.

In the framework of the Federal Law of 1972 and the Regulation of 1975, the Federal Government approved, on 11 November 1977, the *Decree on Zone of Historic Monuments of the City of Puebla de Zaragoza*. The National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) has a local Centre in Puebla.

According to the National Plan for Urban Development, where Puebla is included in Zone 1 (Megalopolitan Zone), every municipality is responsible for preparing its own local plan. At local level, responsibility for urban planning rests with the Directorate of Urban Development of the Secretariat for Urban Administration. The Direction manages the Programme for Municipal Urban Development. The programme includes different partial plans, among them the Plan for the Recuperation of the Zone of Monuments of the City of Puebla. This Plan was first formulated in 1995 as the Partial Programme for Urban Development and Conservation of the Historic Centre of Puebla and completed in 2000 under its current title. The Plan has been approved and is currently being implemented; among specific programmes it includes improvement of accessibility to the zone and proposes 21 strategic projects, among them several relating to motor traffic in the zone and one to street parking.

A strategic plan is being prepared with the participation of various governmental and non-governmental actors; the Bureau for Strategic Decisions was established on 11 March 2002 to develop the plan for the strategic development of Puebla over the next thirty years. Representatives of the federal, state and local governments, universities, and enterprises are integrated into the work of the Bureau. Some non-governmental organizations expressed their disappointment at not being invited to join the Bureau. Other non-governmental organizations are also concerned with the conservation of the historic centre, among them the College of Architects of Puebla, the *Mujeres por la Democracia* (Women for Democracy) Association, and the *Voz y Fuerza Ciudadana* (Citizen Voice and Strength) Association.

3 The overall state of conservation of the zone

The historic centre or “Zone of Historic Monuments”, according to its legal status, includes an area of 6.9km², comprising the 16th century Spanish grid town and some outlying areas, originally intended for the indigenous population. The zone includes 7394 plots, of which about 2900 are registered as historic monuments and 377 (5,1%) are vacant. Housing continues to be the predominant land-use in the historic centre, though there is evidence of the impact of commercial and educational uses.

The historic centre continues to be the central area of the town, especially regarding commercial and educational functions. The public administration and banks having undergone a process of decentralization, several governmental institutions and bank branches are located outside the zone. The grid town is laid out on two axes, with the central square, or Zócalo, as the core of the composition. Two of the axial streets, Reforma Avenue and 5 de Mayo, house the main concentration of commercial facilities. The former carries motor traffic, but the latter is reserved for pedestrian use along the six blocks in which commercial buildings are concentrated.

A special feature of the zone is its architectural heterogeneity. The nomination dossier prepared in 1986 indicates that 57.3% of the buildings belongs to the 19th century, 18.2% to the 18th, 23.4% to the 17th, and 1.1% to the 16th. There are also examples of 20th century trends, among them some pieces of *Art Deco* architecture, originally cinemas, and some post-war building without significant architectural value. The present situation illustrates the evolution of the town over time within the framework of a remarkable morphological homogeneity, expressed in the ways in which the plots are built on or in the height of buildings. Some 20th century buildings, particularly that from after World War II, appear alien to the character of the historic centre, but they do not jeopardize its integrity. Towards the east, one boundary of the grid town is the Héroes del 5 de Mayo Boulevard, constructed during the 1960s on the course of the San Francisco River; some popular residential areas are located beyond the boulevard, together with significant architectural pieces, like the Church of San Francisco and the new Convention Centre.

The state of conservation of public spaces is quite acceptable. The urban layout appears to have been practically unaltered, the grid of the Renaissance town being clearly legible. The situation is different so far as buildings are concerned; it is possible to observe a range that goes from excellent to very bad state of conservation. The public buildings, churches, palaces, and main residences that make up the corpus of the most significant architectural heritage are in very good condition, which is important considering the seismic condition of the site. When private buildings are being considered, the differences in states of conservation depends in part on the areas in which the buildings are located. Buildings along the main streets or historic sectors show the best state of conservation, whilst those in more popular or poorer sectors appear to be deficient in works of restoration or conservation or in proper maintenance.

Despite these remarks, however, the historic centre retains the integrity and valuable urban and architectural features that made it worthy for inscription on the World Heritage List. Authenticity must be considered in the framework of a living city that has evolved over time and whose present appearance is the result of the superposition of different periods and conceptions of urban planning and architecture.

The historic centre has, however, reached a critical point in certain respects. In some areas or streets there is an excess of publicity material, cables, or informal commercial installations that disrupt the townscape and the appreciation of the architectural qualities of some of the buildings. Motor traffic is also a cause of trouble in some streets, particularly in Reforma Avenue and other predominantly commercial streets, where the pavements seem to be too narrow for the amount of pedestrian traffic. All these considerations should be taken into account when considering the development of the historic centre as a whole, including urban, architectural, publicity, infrastructure and circulation issues.

4 The underground parking project

4.1 The project

As in so many other towns all over the world, the presence of motor traffic in the historic centre of Puebla is a cause of disturbance. The mission made it possible to verify that the Renaissance grid demonstrated an acceptable capacity for adaptation to the requirements of modern traffic; the main problem seems to be the amount of vehicles concentrated in certain streets of the area. As a result of the lack of restrictions to accessibility to the very centre of the town, the lack of enough places for parking appears as a major problem.

The idea of constructing underground parking facilities in the historic centre was announced in 1990 by the architect Luis Eduardo Paredes Moctezuma in his book *Puebla: Hacia el tercer milenio* (*Puebla: Towards the third millennium*). The book presents a detailed study and proposal for traffic in Puebla, including the possibility of constructing an underground two-storey car park beneath the main square, the Zócalo. Mr Paredes Moctezuma recently became President of the Municipal Government recently and the idea of underground parking areas was then relaunched. The places selected are the Zócalo, Santo Domingo atrium, and the small squares of San Luis and Los Sapos.

It is interesting to quote some aspects of the study undertaken in order to define the possibilities and to justify the project. Of the vehicles in the historic centre, 62% are private cars, 20% taxis, and 18% vans. The main concentrations of vehicles are in the periods 10.10–10.35, 12.40–13.05, 13.55–14.20, and 18.05–18.30, leading to the main demand for parking places. There is an assumption that the number of vehicles will increase by 22% over the next three years, and it could double over the next ten years. The conclusions state that many traffic problems in the historic centre are a direct result of the lack of parking places; all the disposable places are not enough to satisfy the demand, which explains why vehicles are double-parked and/or circulate whilst waiting or looking for places. These are the reasons put forward to justify the construction of underground parking areas.

The parking areas would be equipped with special facilities for handicapped people, water and fresh air provision, public telephones, electric stairways, and automatic cashpoints. A video monitoring system will be installed in order to ensure the security of users and vehicles. In combination with the new facilities, parking will be prohibited in the main streets of the area. The project will be financed by means of a concession to private investors, during a span of time related to the recuperation of the investment. The role of the local government will concentrate on facilitating the necessary proceedings for the execution of the project. Works are planned to start by mid 2002.

It is noticeable that in the document there is no mention of ways of entering the underground areas. The notes on treatment of existing spaces concentrate on the Zócalo (almost no mention is made to the other spaces) and there are no comments on the potential impact on the urban and architectural heritage. Even if preliminary design plans have been elaborated, the idea is that the selected enterprises will be responsible for drawing up the final documentation.

At the time of the mission, a model of the Zócalo, including the underground parking area, was exhibited at the Puebla Fair, held during May. The model showed the surface of the square as it is today, including fountain and trees, without any evident explanation of the possible damages that these elements could suffer. A survey was also being undertaken in order to know the reaction of local people; according to the local government, almost 70% of the population agrees with the project.

Concerning the possible impact of the construction of parking beneath the Zócalo, where an important plantation exists, the study proposes two possibilities of treatment. The first is to maintain the Zócalo with its present aspect and the second is to proceed to a complete change in its appearance, including removal of the trees and a complete redesign of the square. The local government argues that the latter would allow better views of the surrounding monuments.

4.2 Present condition

4.2.1 PLAZA DE LA CONSTITUCIÓN (ZÓCALO)

The *Plaza de la Constitución*, or Zócalo, constitutes the main square of the historic centre and the heart of the town. Among the buildings surrounding the Zócalo, the Cathedral, the finest building of Puebla, occupies an entire block. On the opposite side, the Town Hall is a remarkable piece of *Beaux Arts* architecture of the early 20th century. Other buildings surrounding the square house residential and commercial facilities, including restaurants and cafés which occupy the typical arcades surrounding Mexican plazas. Most buildings belong to the 19th century and show, in addition to the different architectural languages, a noticeable morphological harmony.

The Zócalo itself underwent several changes over time. The current appearance is that of the late 19th century, including green surfaces and magnificent examples of various species of trees and palms. These trees constitute today a remarkable feature of the Zócalo, which is not only the main open space in the historic centre but also the main planted area which provides good shade and refreshment of the air in a centre that is considered to be one of the most polluted of the country and where green spaces are practically absent. The ornamentation and equipment of the square includes the ancient Fountain of the Archangel Michael and fine ironwork benches and lamp-posts. On account of its significance and appearance, the Zócalo should be considered a historic garden, as defined in the ICOMOS-IFLA Charter of 1982.

The Zócalo is, moreover, the setting for social and cultural manifestations. During the mission, it was possible to visit the site at different hours, on week-end and labour days. It was always full of people walking, sitting, talking, eating, or watching planned or spontaneous artistic performances. The Zócalo is therefore the heart of the everyday life of Puebla, the place that synthesizes social and civic exchange.

4.2.2 SANTO DOMINGO ATRIUM

The Church of Santo Domingo is located on a corner plot facing 5 de Mayo Street, one of the urban axes of the historic centre. In part reserved for pedestrians, it links the Zócalo with the area in which public transportation vehicles are concentrated.

The open space is the atrium of the church and of the Capilla del Rosario, one of the highlights, if not the main example, of the Puebla style of 18th century Baroque interior plasterwork. Whilst the entrance to the chapel is linked to the interior of the church, there is also an entrance opening directly to the atrium.

The atrium has no trees and is separated from the street by a grid of fine ironwork. As there is no urban furniture, it is used principally for circulation between the two streets, and occasionally as a place for staying. It constitutes, however, a site of tranquillity, in contrast with the busy commercial streets that form its boundaries.

4.2.3 SAN LUIS SQUARE

This small open space is located in a corner plot on 5 de Mayo Street, two blocks north of the Church of Santo Domingo. It includes green surfaces and trees, constituting a peaceful corner in one of the busiest areas of the historic centre.

4.2.4 LOS SAPOS SQUARE

As the route of an old water-supply canal, Los Sapos Square is almost an accident in the perfect geometry of the grid layout. Located in a popular area of the historic centre, next to one of the boundaries of the original grid town, it is surrounded by the shops of antiquities dealers and artisans, restaurants, and cafés. On Sundays Los Sapos hosts an antiquities fair, a colourful spectacle in which artisans, local people, and tourists gather in a typical Mexican festive atmosphere.

5 Specific issues

5.1 *Conceptual framework*

The presence of motor traffic is a natural and unavoidable circumstance in towns, something that can cause considerable trouble, depending on the physical features of the individual towns and the number of vehicles circulating in and through them.

As a first response to the requirements of motor traffic in pre-industrial historic centres, two basic possibilities may be contemplated: to control the circulation of vehicles stringently or to adapt the town to the traffic and parking requirements. Achieving a balance between adapting the city to the requirements of modern life and preserving the features that give the town its special character and identity seems to be the most suitable way of dealing with the situation.

It is true that modernization of the town cannot be disregarded, since the town houses a society that has evolved over time in response to changing ideals and expectations, but it is also true that the introduction of changes should be controlled in some towns which are unique because of their rich urban and architectural heritage. This is particularly important in towns or urban areas inscribed on the World Heritage List, where conservation is a major objective of urban planning.

International documents include statements that should be taken into account when planning or assessing motor traffic and parking. The UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the safeguarding and contemporary role of historic areas* (Nairobi, 1976) states that:

Member States and groups concerned should protect historic areas and their surroundings against the increasingly serious environmental damage caused by certain technological developments – in particular the various forms of pollution – by banning harmful industries in the proximity of these areas and by taking preventive measures to counter the destructive effects of noise, shocks and vibrations caused by machines and vehicles... (§31)

Member States should encourage and assist local authorities to seek solutions to the conflict existing in most historic groupings between motor traffic on the one hand and the scale of the buildings and their architectural qualities on the other. To solve the conflict and to encourage pedestrian traffic, careful attention should be paid to the placing of, and access to, peripheral and even central car parks and routing systems established which will facilitate pedestrian traffic, service access and public transport alike (§32).

The ICOMOS *Charter for Historic Towns and Urban Areas*, adopted in 1987, states, as a general principle, that “in order to be most effective, the conservation of historic towns and other historic urban areas should be an integral part of coherent policies of economic and social development and of urban and regional planning at every level.” In other words, historic centres or areas should not be considered as separate items in the framework of the total urban organism but should be integrated into it. In respect of vehicular traffic, the Charter states that “traffic inside an historic town or urban area must be controlled and parking areas must be planned so that they do not damage the historic fabric or its environment.”

5.2 *Theoretical and technical issues*

From a theoretical point of view, two aspects of underground parking projects may be considered to be critical: the idea of encouraging the vehicular access to the historic centre and the relationship between the proposal and the city as a whole.

On the one hand, the project implies the acceptance of motor traffic in the historic centre with no restrictions and the encouragement of travelling by car to the very heart of the town. This view is contrary to the statements of the international documents quoted above. According to these

documents, it is desirable to control or limit the access of cars to the historic centre. By contrast, the construction of underground parking facilities encourages more vehicles to enter the historic centre. This would increase problems such as greater air pollution, which is dangerous not only for people but also for historic monuments, increase of vibrations, also a possible cause of damage to architectural monuments, increase in noise levels, and the possibility of jamming central streets.

On the other hand, underground parking areas appear to be a response to a specific problem without considering the context of the urban organism. It would be therefore necessary to undertake a broader study of the situation in order to define a more comprehensive traffic and parking plan in the historic centre in relation to the town as a whole.

According to the available documentation in the case of Puebla, no other alternatives were proposed and evaluated, such as locating parking areas outside or on the borders of the historic centre, the use of vacant plots, the adaptation of existing buildings for parking, the encouragement of pedestrian circulation, or the improvement of public transport as a means of reducing the number of vehicles in the historic centre.

The site most likely to be affected would be the Zócalo. A total change of its present appearance would imply grave damage to the main open space of the town, which has important urban, landscape, and social values. Its maintenance, including trees and palms, is not ensured, according to technical requirements. In the case of the Santo Domingo atrium, the excavation will reach the edge of the church and the Capilla del Rosario; a very careful study of the situation would be required in order to avoid any kind of damage provoked by the excavation itself, or by vibrations provoked by the circulation of cars. In the Los Sapos and San Luis squares, the existing trees could be threatened by the excavation. One of those responsible for the project said that the potential investors who had been consulted declared that in Los Sapos, when account was taken of the likely number of parking places that would result, it would be difficult to justify the investment in economic terms.

One main problem is that of the entrances to the underground parks. In the Zócalo, the proposal is to locate the four surrounding streets underground, linking the square with the adjacent blocks by means of pedestrian streets. The idea of underground streets implies the use of long ramps which would affect the appearance of the neighbouring blocks and streets. In the other selected spaces, the entrances would be formed by making use of one side of the streets; however, the reduction in width of the carriageway would reduce circulation and lead to jamming of the streets.

5.3 Legal and management issues

As stated by the Federal Law, authorization by INAH is required for undertaking the project. The local government contacted the INAH Centre in Puebla for its opinion and eventual approval of the project. Authorization cannot be given without details of the corresponding project. However, the only documentation received up to the time of the mission was the study carried out in order to justify the project; no detailed plans had been presented. INAH was therefore unable to express its opinion on account of the lack of proper documentation. Despite not having been given the obligatory authorization by INAH, the City Council has recently approved the project.

Furthermore, it is evident that there is a lack of agreement among the different levels of actors concerned. The press media have dedicated considerable space to the issue since the beginning of the year, and several institutions and key individuals have expressed their opposition to the project. During the mission it was possible to observe the action of one non-governmental organization, *Mujeres por la Democracia* (Women for Democracy), which expressed its disagreement by means of red ribbons tied to the trees of the Zócalo and cards signed by inhabitants of the city declaring their wish to adopt and protect the trees.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

As a general conclusion, it may be observed that the project seems to be intended to solve a real problem, the lack of parking spaces in the central area; however, it is not set against the framework of a major plan for the whole urban organism and it is not the result of a proposal, study, and evaluation of alternatives in order to solve the problem. As a result of the lack of agreement or even co-ordination among the different governmental and non-governmental bodies concerned, the decision to construct the parking areas is under considerable pressure and requires much wider debate to achieve a consensus.

The mission that the following recommendations should be taken into account:

- 1 Considering that the historic centre of Puebla is a World Heritage Site, every programme, plan, or project affecting it should take into account theoretical and technical recommendations included in relevant international documents, and especially the UNESCO *Recommendation concerning safeguarding and contemporary role of historic areas* (1976) and the ICOMOS *Charter for the conservation of historic towns and urban areas* (1987).
- 2 Every project or action bearing upon the historic centre should be based on agreement and consensus among the different social actors concerned, including governmental and non-governmental organizations and the community.
- 3 Any proposal for traffic and parking in the historic centre should be integrated into the framework of a general plan for the whole urban organism.
- 4 Before the decision to construct underground parking facilities is taken, studies on alternative means of dealing with motor traffic should be undertaken. These should include the possibility of restricting the access of vehicles to the historic centre, locating parking areas outside the core zone, or combining parking areas next to the historic centre with local public transportation.
- 5 Together with the study of motor traffic, there should also be a study of pedestrian circulation in the historic centre. In some cases pavements seem to be insufficiently wide for the amount of people circulating.
- 6 Greater efforts must be made to ensure that the Zócalo and the other spaces selected as potential underground parking areas will preserve its present appearance, including trees, green surfaces, and ornamentation. Major efforts should also be made to ensure that there is no damage, real or potential, to the neighbouring buildings.
- 7 The participation of the people in the community is vital in the process of dealing with the historic centre. Information should be as complete as possible, in order to provide them with the most comprehensive view of the plans and projects.
- 8 The discussion should include the participation of both governmental and non-governmental organizations. It would be desirable also to involve institutions such as the Puebla Autonomous University, the College of Architects, and ICOMOS Mexico in the debate and decisions process.

ANNEX I Programme of the Mission

<i>Day 1 (Saturday 11 May 2002)</i>	Arrival in Puebla
<i>Day 2 (Sunday 12 May 2002)</i>	Visit to the historic centre. Visit to areas surrounding the historic centre. Visit of the places where it is proposed that parking facilities would be constructed.
<i>Day 3 (Monday 13 May)</i>	Meeting with the Puebla Delegate of INAH. Visit to Puebla Fair.
<i>Day 4 (Tuesday 14 May)</i>	Meeting with representatives of Mexican Committee of ICOMOS. Meeting with representatives of local government involved with the project. Meeting with <i>Mujeres por la Democracia</i> .
<i>Day 5 (Wednesday 15 May)</i>	Leave Puebla

ANNEX II Member of the Mission

Alfredo Conti	Architect. Regional Vice-President of the Argentine Committee of ICOMOS. Researcher at the Commission for Scientific Research of the Province of Buenos Aires. Adviser at the National Commission for Museums and Historic Monuments and Sites. Professor of History and Theory of Conservation at Buenos Aires University. Representative of Argentina on the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Ibero-American Historic Towns.
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ANNEXE III
PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Reforma Avenue. Monday afternoon.
2. West 14th. Street. Monday midday.
3. Reforma Avenue, on the right hand the Zócalo.
4. The Zócalo. On the right hand the entrance to the Cathedral atrium. Sunday afternoon.
5. The Zócalo. Sunday afternoon.
6. Ribbon and card tied to a tree in the Zócalo. Campaign against the project of underground parks.
7. 5 de Mayo Street and the Santo Domingo atrium. Saturday afternoon.
8. Santo Domingo atrium.
9. Santo Domingo atrium, Capilla del Rosario facade.
10. Los Sapos square surroundings. The trees of the square can be seen at the end of the street.
11. Los Sapos square. Sunday afternoon.
12. Antiquities fair in las Sapos square.



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