

Regensburg (Germany)

No 1155

1. BASIC DATA

<i>State Party:</i>	Federal Republic of Germany
<i>Name of property:</i>	Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof
<i>Location:</i>	Bavaria
<i>Date received by the World Heritage Centre:</i>	24 September 2004
<i>Included in the Tentative List:</i>	20 September 1999
<i>International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the nomination:</i>	No
<i>Category of property:</i>	

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a: *group of buildings*. In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (5 February 2005), annex 3, this is the historic centre of an inhabited historic town.

Brief description:

The Old City of Regensburg, located on the Danube river, is an example of a central-European medieval town. It has preserved a notable amount of historic structures spanning some two millennia, and including ancient Roman period as well as Romanesque and Gothic buildings. The buildings include the medieval Patrician towers, a large number of churches and monastic ensembles as well as the Old Bridge, which dates from the 12th century.

2. ACTIONS

Background: This is a new nomination. The State Party has provided supplementary information on comparative analysis on 8 July 2005.

Date of the Technical Evaluation Mission: 12-14 September 2005

Dates of request for additional information and of receipt from State Party: None

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Historic Towns and Villages.

Literature: There is a vast body of literature on Regensburg, its history and architecture.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 15 January 2006

3. THE PROPERTY

Description

The Old City of Regensburg is located on the southern bank of Danube, at the northernmost point of the broad

Danube river valley, where it is joined by the Regen River. The nominated core zone (182.8 ha) encompasses the city centre on the south side of the river, two long islands in the Danube, the so-called *Wöhrde* (from the old German word: *waird*, meaning island or peninsula), and the area of the former charity hospital *St. Katharina in Stadtamhof*, a district incorporated into the city of Regensburg only in 1924. A navigable canal, part of the European waterway of the Rhine-Main-Danube canal, forms the northern boundary of *Stadtamhof*. The buffer zone surrounds the core zone (775.6 ha).

The medieval city developed over the remains of the Roman fort, the *Legionary Fortress Castra Regina* (name used at the end of the Roman period, or possibly *Regino*) which measured ca 540 m x 450 m. It had been established in AD 179 and abandoned in 470. In the early Middle-Ages, the Roman walls continued being used to protect the residence of the ruler. In 917-920, Duke Arnulf of Bavaria integrated the Roman walls into an ingenious defence system that enclosed the merchants' quarter. It became the earliest post-Roman defence wall built north of the Alps. With time, craftsmen started settling outside the walls, and in 1284 the decision was taken to also enclose these areas within the walls. By the end of the 13th century, the medieval city reached its maximum extent. The city was not planned, but developed in an organic manner. In its commercial centre, at *The Market*, there are the *City Hall* and the *Cathedral*, both originating from the 13th century. The city has retained a substantial amount of secular stone architecture from the 11th to 13th centuries, which still define its character marked with tall buildings, dark, narrow lanes, and strong fortifications. Most of the old buildings have a Romanesque or Gothic core. A particular characteristic are the many towers built along the east-west axis by patrician families. Another prominent feature in the Old City is the *Stone Bridge* (built starting in 1136) in the south-north axis. In the 12th century, three Benedictine monasteries were located in the periphery of the city, influencing its cultural, economic and political life. The monasteries also generated an important school of painting. The 19th century buildings include the Theatre (1803), modelled after the Weimar, and the Residential Palace (1804) with the first neo-classical portico in Bavaria. The other significant monuments include the following:

- The Roman remains include the building stone of the *Legionary Fortress Castra Regina* with an inscription from the time of Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-180). The *Porta Praetoria*, flanked with two massive towers, formed the northern entrance to the Roman fortress, and served as an entrance to the city until the 17th century. It was restored in 1887.
- Close to the Cathedral, there are remains from the ancient *Carolingian Palace*, including the *Bell Tower of Alte Kapelle* (9th century) that formed an entrance to the palace complex, and the massive *Roman Tower* (13th century) originally serving as a treasure chamber.
- *St. Emmeram's Monastery* was built on the grave of the holy Emmeram who was revered as a martyr. Of the original building (783/790) only a crypt and part of the eastern apse remain. It belonged to one of the most powerful Benedictine monasteries in Bavaria. In the middle of the 11th century, it was enlarged. The

limestone carvings (1049) are the oldest tympanum figures in German speaking lands. The church was rebuilt after a fire in 1166.

- The *Benedictine Monastery of St Jacob's* was founded in 1090 by Irish monks. Its church, dating from the 12th century, is one of the most important High Romanesque buildings in southern Germany.
- The early churches include: the *Mendicant Church of St. Salvatore* (13th to 15th centuries), and the *Dominican Church of St. Blasius* which is part of the convent of Holy Cross, the only convent in Germany that has remained in use since its construction in 1233. *St. Ulrich's* church (1225-1240) is considered one of the oldest and most important Early Gothic buildings in Southern Germany. *Neupfarrkirche* (16th century) was built on the site of the former Jewish synagogue after the community was expelled in 1519. The first Protestant service in Regensburg took place in this church in 1542. It was rebuilt in the 19th century. The Trinity Church (*Dreieinigkeitskirche*, 1627-31) became the second Protestant church.
- The ca 40 secular *Patrician Towers* have no comparable examples north of the Alps. Similar in form to north-Italian towers, they were built more for the purpose of representation rather than protection. The *Goldene Turm* (12th century) is nearly 50m high. The seven-storey *Baumburgerturm* was built in 1270, the Early Gothic *Goldenes Kreuz* (13th to 16th centuries) was used as an elegant residence hotel for princes and kings till the 19th century.

History

The history of Regensburg is complex ranging from the Roman Empire to the modern times. The following are the main periods:

- *Antiquity*: from AD 179, the site became a strong military base (*Castra Regina*), built in stone. It developed into a considerable trading post with workshops and also had a large temple. The fort had to resist continuous attacks from 230 until the fall of the Roman period in 476, when it finally passed to the hands of the Teutonic tribes.
- *Early Middle Ages*: the Roman buildings were not demolished, but continued being used and gradually adapted to evolving needs. It became the main centre for the Bavarians. From the 6th century, it was governed by the Agilolfinger dukes, whose palace was in the north-east corner of the Roman fort (*Alter Kornmarkt*). In 739, Regensburg was made the permanent seat of one of the four old Bavarian bishoprics. The last Carolingian king, Louis the Child, held the last Imperial Diet in the city in 901.
- *Later Middle Ages*: There followed a period of power struggle, but the importance of Regensburg continued growing. From the 10th to the 13th century, it often hosted royal sojourns, including the christening of Duke Miesko I of Poland, in 966, thus marking the beginning of Polish history. In the 11th century, Bavaria remained royal property, and from 1096 it was again ruled by dukes; the Welf dynasty. In 1139, Duke Leopold IV

took over the Bavarian duchy, but he failed to get the support of the Regensburg citizens, who were increasingly involved in decision making.

- *Imperial Free City*: throughout the 12th century Regensburg was administered by outside rulers, marked also by the struggle between the Bishop and the Duke. With the help of King Philip of Swabia (1198-1208), the citizens of Regensburg finally established a stronger position as an urban commune. In 1245, Emperor Frederick II laid the legal foundation for the establishment of the municipal rule, the election of the Council, Mayor, and the municipal officers. At the crossroads of important trade routes, Regensburg played a leading role in trading with eastern Central Europe and the Balkans. It then developed its contacts especially to Northern Italy and especially Venice. In the 15th century, Regensburg fell behind in comparison to growing cities such as Nuremberg, Augsburg and Ulm.
- *15th century*: After long negotiations, a royal governor was appointed by the Emperor to rule Regensburg, in 1499. The first governor prepared the Imperial Government Regulations to guide all important administrative issues. In 1514, in keeping with the city's constitution, an inner and an outer council were established. With some modifications, the constitution remained legally binding until 1802.
- *16th to 18th centuries*: Protestantism began officially in Regensburg, with a sermon in the Dominican church, 14-15 October 1542. Rapidly the citizens took over the new faith even though the city council was trying to counteract the trend. During the Thirty Year War, Regensburg was made into a garrison city. There was a bitter conflict between Regensburg and Bavaria, and the city suffered of plundering. In 1633, it was under the siege by the Swedes, but was saved from the worst. However, its economy suffered seriously. After the war, in 1663, Regensburg hosted the Imperial Diet, with some interruptions, until the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, in 1806.
- *19th century*: during the Napoleonic wars, Regensburg suffered some bombardment. After the peace treaty between France and Austria, in 1809, Bavaria was able to push its claim to Regensburg, which was handed over to Bavaria in 1810 becoming a provincial city. The destroyed buildings were now rebuilt. After the inauguration of Walhalla in 1842, it was decided to convert the Cathedral, which had baroque interiors, back into its Gothic form, and complete its western towers with Gothic spires. The city started expanding and, by 1878, most of its medieval walls had been demolished.
- *20th century*: in the 1930s, some industry was introduced to the city, but outside the medieval city. During the Second World War the town was also subject to bombing, but the Old City remained the only intact historic city in Germany. The population had grown from 29,000 in 1871 to 53,000 in 1914. After the Second World War, due to a flood of immigration, the population grew to 147,000. In the 1950s, the city was subject to restoration and improvement works. The protection of the historic area was integrated into city planning legislation in 1973-75.

Protection and Management

Legal provision:

The Old Town of Regensburg with Stadthof is legally protected since 1975 in accordance with the Bavarian law for the preservation of historic buildings. The nominated property is also ruled by the *Satzung über örtliche Bauvorschriften zum Schutze der Altstadt von Regensburg, "Altstadtschutzsatzung"* (Statutes concerning Local Building Ordinances for the Protection of the Old Town of Regensburg, "Old Town Protection Statutes"), of 1982. The Federal Building Code (1986/1997) constitutes the legal basis for building construction and development planning in respect of all building projects both inside and outside the nominated area.

Resources:

Financial instruments available for the protection, restoration and maintenance are based on support programmes from the Federal Republic of Germany, the Free State of Bavaria and the region of the Upper Palatinate, donations from Foundations and private means. Tax relief is used to support investments in the restoration of historic buildings.

Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value by the State Party (summary)

The city of Regensburg is nominated as a historical (medieval) city. Since 1945, Regensburg is the only intact larger sized medieval city in Germany which, from the Middle Ages till this day, has been able to function as an urban mechanism without interruption. Regensburg's Old Town has been able to preserve - as can be clearly seen from today's ground plan - its original basic outline since the 14th century.

Criterion.i: (...) Largest coherent collection of Romanesque and Gothic architecture north of the Alps. Regensburg enjoys a unique concentration of original Romanesque and Gothic architecture, thanks to the fact that the Old Town has been nearly completely exempted from the destructions of World War II. The Old Town of Regensburg is the only intact larger sized medieval city of Germany. (...)

Criterion ii: Centre for early and late medieval architecture in southern Germany. As an ambitious and thriving trade centre during the early Middle Ages, Regensburg had a lasting influence on urban development north of the Alps. Both the sacred as well as the secular buildings of the Middle Ages are masterpieces of this epoch. (...)

Criterion iii: Political and Confessional Representation in Monuments.

a) Political Representation in Monuments: As an exposed Roman legionaries' camp, as an early mediaeval centre of the eastern Franconian Empire, as a much-frequented meeting place for Meetings of the Empire up to modern times, and especially, as the seat of the Perpetual Assembly from 1663 up to the end of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 – Regensburg has been one of the most important scenes of European history. (...)

b) Confessional Representation in Germany: As the most southerly Protestant Imperial City, Regensburg became an

outpost in the 16th century for the expansion of the Lutheran teachings along the Danube towards the south-east. (...)

4. EVALUATION

Conservation

Conservation history:

During the Second World War, the city of Regensburg was bombarded from 1943-1945. The first raids aimed mainly at the airplane factory, and caused little damage to historic fabric. However, in 1945, a number of historic buildings were destroyed, though the historic centre was largely saved thanks to their surrender to the Allied Forces without fight. In fact, Regensburg survived better than most German cities. In the 1960s, the general traffic plan aimed to make the city more accessible causing the demolition of part of the medieval fabric. New apartment buildings were also built from the 1960s to 1990, as well as a large shopping centre, the polytechnic, the university and the clinic. The restoration policies in the 1950s and 1960s emphasised the adaptive reuse of the buildings, which resulted in losses of the interiors, while keeping the external façades. Due to rising criticism, these policies started to change in the 1970s, and the law for the protection of historic monuments (1973) gave the basis for a more conservative approach not only regarding the individual listed buildings, but also the historic centre as a whole. From 1986 onward, specific areas have been identified with the aim of more systematic restoration and correction of previous errors, a work which is ongoing.

State of conservation:

The current approach to the conservation of the historic town is based on five basic rules yielding from the idea to present the historic structures as integral components of a living city, which is a challenge particularly in regard to shopping. The conservation programme has succeeded in restoring about 50% of the historic buildings in the nominated area following "integrated conservation" plans. While the nomination documents offer a general picture on the state of conservation, there is a lack of detailed understanding of the variety of situations in the town especially following the developments in the post-war years. The ICOMOS expert visiting the site considered that the focus in the conservation has been more on the streets, and rather less attention has been given to the detailed study and management of the medieval fabric itself. In more general terms, the recent management efforts have succeeded in removing much of the vehicle traffic that used to crowd the streets.

Protection and Management:

The delimitation of the core zone (182,8 ha) corresponds to the extension of the urban area in the second half of the 19th century. The *Stadthof* in the northern part of the area correspond to the original plans for its reconstruction at the beginning of the 19th century. The boundaries also correspond to the legally defined area in 1975. The buffer zone is composed from several types of spaces, enclosing the areas around the conservation areas, as well as protecting visually the context of the Old Town. In this sense, the buffer zone certainly is a valuable planning control instrument. Regarding the core zone, its extent

requires verification in relation to the outstanding universal value that it represents and especially its historical integrity, taking into account the alterations in the urban fabric during and after the Second World War.

The nominated core zone and its buffer zone are protected under the Bavarian Laws on Monuments (revised in 2003) and on Nature and Landscape Protection (revised in 2002). Protection is also guaranteed by a number of local by-laws. This complex system of protection provides a suitable basis for safeguarding, also taking into account the visual context and townscape of the historic town.

Even though the legal protection certainly provides a good support to the conservation and management of the historic town, the great variety of ownerships and the number of stakeholders make the process complex and sometimes difficult. The management plan has been prepared specifically for the World Heritage nomination, and it is based on the Regensburg urban plan of 2000, clarifying the objectives and strategies of action. The aim of the management plan is to guarantee the conservation of the existing historic fabric and, at the same time, also correct the mistakes that have been taken place in the past. The aim is to strike a balance between conservation and development. ICOMOS acknowledges the serious efforts made by the local authority for the management of the old city, but also wishes to draw attention to the delicacy of this task in the living and developing town.

Risk analysis:

- Development

In the management plan there are seven specific projects. One of these aims at the reorganisation and redesign of public spaces, which can be highly problematic for the authenticity and integrity of the historic fabric if not carefully monitored. Secondly, there is a plan to develop a link between the old town and the main railway station, where the emphasis is more on development rather than conservation. The other projects include: the improvement of contact with the river, the restoration of the Old Stone Bridge, which is damaged, improving the illumination of the city, declaring a competition for the improvement of repainting historic building elevations. While the legal framework certainly does give support to control the implementation of such projects, ICOMOS considers that especially the first two projects can present a high risk on the authenticity and integrity of the historic urban fabric, and calls for caution.

ICOMOS has also been informed of other projects that have not been mentioned in the nomination, but will affect the Old City, such as the Culture and Congress Centre with parking garage and hotel, the construction of the 'Stadthalle' in the park near the Palace St Emmeram within the nominated zone, and the construction of a new bridge for bus transport so as to reduce traffic on the Old Bridge. There has been a long public debate about these projects, which however is not described in the nomination dossier. ICOMOS also draws attention to the current practice of replacing old windows and doors with industrial products using materials that are not always in line with the historical character of the buildings.

- Tourism

Regensburg has some two million tourists per year. There are several programmes mentioned in the management plan, and also implemented in reality. Such programmes are run by business companies and/or the City. They include education of tourist guides and providing services to visitors. The programmes also include various thematic tours, such as presenting archaeological excavations. It is expected that the possible inscription on the World Heritage List may increase the number of foreign visitors, and may help to better use the currently underused hotel accommodation capacity (less than 45%). ICOMOS considers that the city is well prepared for tourism.

- Floods

The northern part of the Old Town, particularly the side of Stadthof, has often been subject to floods of the Danube river. Since 2003, there have been efforts to provide protection against these risks. The ICOMOS expert verified that these measures are now in place, and persons involved are regularly trained.

Authenticity and integrity

Authenticity:

The individual listed buildings have maintained their historical authenticity, such as the Old Stone Bridge, the medieval monasteries, many churches, the city hall, as well as the tower houses. Considering that the city was built in stone, rather than timber, it has been preserved from fires. The restoration of the listed buildings is carefully monitored and correctly carried out.

ICOMOS however draws attention to private houses that are being renovated, and where windows and doors may have been replaced in materials that tend to detract from the overall environment. Attention is required on these issues. Furthermore, there is need to clarify the policies concerning the alterations of the interiors, and that the strategies of their possible improvement should be in line with the historical typology.

Integrity:

The old town of Regensburg has survived exceptionally well through the Second World War, compared with many other historic towns in central Europe. As a result, a large number of old buildings have been preserved, which contributes to the historical integrity of the town even seen in its visual context.

Yet, the town did suffer from some damage during the Second World War, and the lack of conservation-oriented policies in the post-war decades caused further losses, which have not been properly documented in the nomination. While ICOMOS recognizes that the current strategies include efforts to repair some of these problems, particular attention is still required. In fact, ICOMOS recommends that more information and examples be provided on these strategies and the results obtained so far.

Comparative evaluation

The State Party has prepared a comparative study, where Regensburg is seen in the context of relevant World

Heritage cities in Germany (Lübeck, Bamberg, Quedlinburg, Stralsund and Wismar), Austria (Salzburg, Graz, Vienna), Czech Republic and Slovakia (Prague, Český Krumlov, Telč, Kutná Hora, Bardejov), Switzerland (Bern), France (Strasbourg, Paris, Avignon, Carcassonne, Lyon, Provins). A selection of the most important buildings is also compared with equivalent architecture elsewhere in Germany. Nevertheless, the comparison places major emphasis on the numbers of historic buildings and their ages rather than the thematic issues and values that have justified the inscription of the historic towns in each case. While many qualities seem to emerge through this comparison, ICOMOS still considers that the comparison should have been made more appropriately on the specific thematic issues that could be considered as a basis for the assessment of its outstanding universal value.

Outstanding universal value

General statement:

The city of Regensburg has been presented by the State Party as “the only intact larger sized medieval city in Germany which, from the Middle Ages till this day, has been able to function as an urban mechanism without interruption”. Rather than seeing Regensburg as an historic town, however, it is presented as a “collection of Romanesque and Gothic architecture”. It is true that Regensburg has a large number of medieval buildings, but the number of buildings or even their age would not automatically suffice to justify its outstanding universal value. The State Party also refers to Regensburg as an early medieval trade centre, and stresses the political and confessional value of its monuments. These are certainly valid themes, which could be further developed. However, even here, the emphasis is laid on architectural values of individual buildings rather than the significance of the historic town as a market town or as a political centre.

ICOMOS recognizes that Regensburg does have a potential of outstanding universal value. Nevertheless, it would be necessary to re-assess the historic town of Regensburg in relation to the relevant themes. The State Party has proposed the property referring to criteria i, ii and iii.

Evaluation of criteria:

Criterion i: While it is recognized that Regensburg has a number of interesting and valuable medieval buildings, the case has not been for these to represent masterpieces of human creative genius. The comparative study has shown the particular interest of some of these buildings, but ICOMOS considers their interest to be more as part of a medieval fabric of the city rather than individual masterpieces. ICOMOS considers that the property does not meet this criterion.

Criterion ii: is referred to the architecture of Regensburg so far as this represents the city’s role as a medieval trade centre and its influence in the region north of the Alps. However, the criterion is principally justified on architectural merits of individual buildings rather than demonstrating the significance of the historic town. ICOMOS considers that, with the available information, this criterion cannot be properly assessed at this stage.

Criterion iii: is referred by the State Party to political and confessional representation in monuments. In fact, as the seat of the Perpetual Assembly from the 1663 to 1806, Regensburg has contributed to European history. Nevertheless, it is not demonstrated that this alone would be of outstanding universal value. The question of Regensburg being the southernmost Protestant Imperial City is not considered by ICOMOS sufficient to demonstrate the outstanding universal value of Regensburg. ICOMOS considers that, with the available information, this criterion cannot be properly assessed at this stage.

Criterion iv: has not been proposed by the State Party, even though the city of Regensburg has sometimes been described as “an almost perfect example of a central-European medieval trade town”. This criterion would certainly merit being taken into consideration in the assessment. ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

As a conclusion, ICOMOS considers that Regensburg has many merits and qualities. However, these have not been sufficiently brought forward in the nomination. Considering the relatively large core zone, and the problems in its present-day integrity and management, ICOMOS considers that the nomination be revised in reference to clearly defined themes of outstanding universal value, and that the nominated area be defined accordingly.

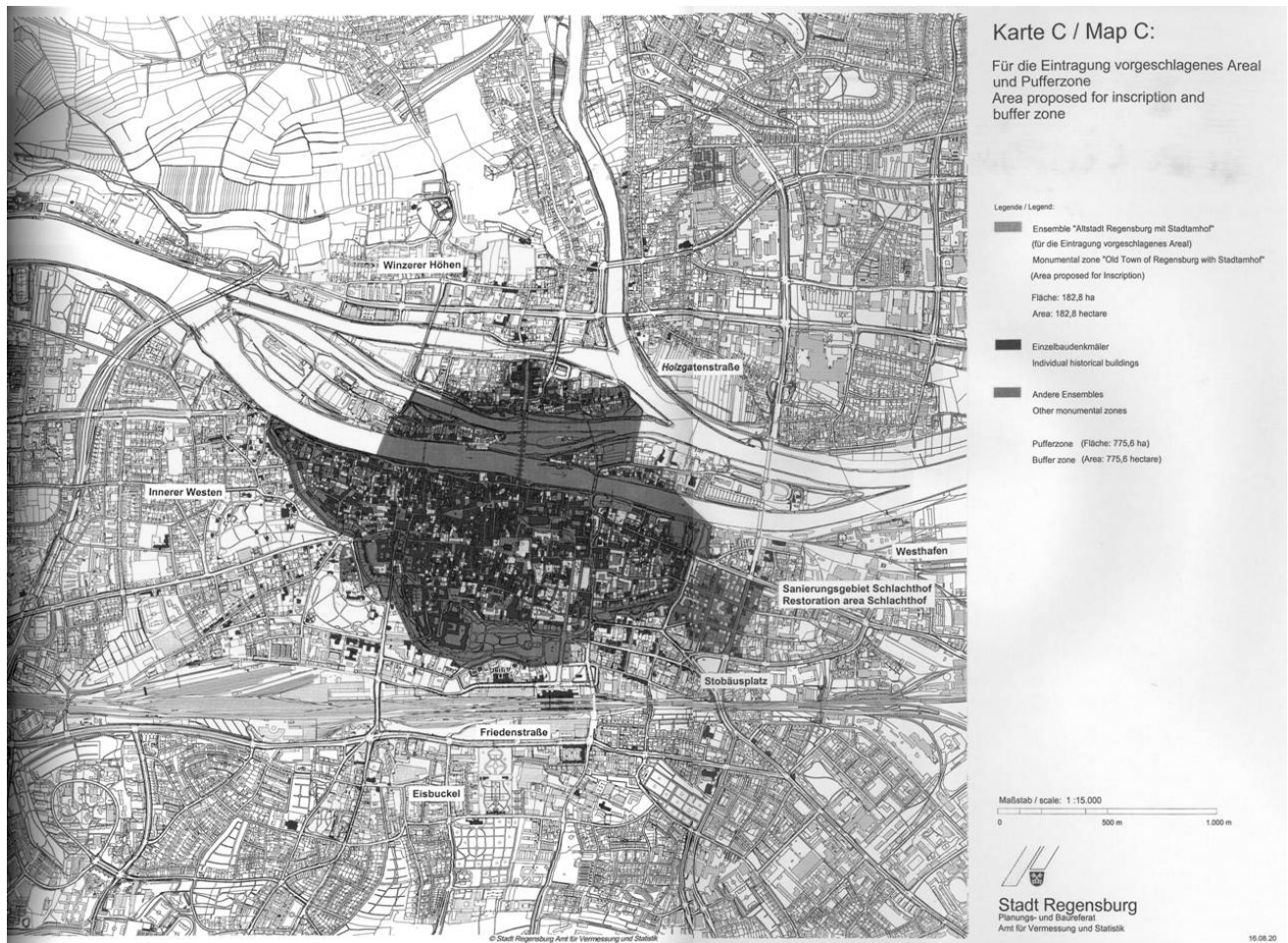
5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the Old Town of Regensburg with Stadtamhof, Federal Republic of Germany, to the World Heritage List be *deferred* to allow the State Party to:

- Revise the justification of the outstanding universal value, taking into account the historic town as an urban entity;
- Present a detailed study of the losses during the Second World War and the post-war changes in the urban fabric that have effected the integrity of the Old Town;
- Provide a comprehensive report on the new development projects that would have an impact on the Old Town, i.e. within the proposed core zone and buffer zone;
- Verify and eventually redefine the core zone (and buffer zone) in view of the values and the integrity resulting from the above studies.

ICOMOS, April 2006



Map showing the boundaries of the property



View of the city from the northwest



Monastery of St Emmeram



Baumburg Tower