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# Humberstone and Santa Laura Saltpeter Works (Chile) No 1178

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## 1 Basic data

### State Party

Chile

### Name of property

Humberstone and Santa Laura Saltpeter Works

### Location

Tarapaca Region, Iquique Province

### Inscription

2005

### Brief description

Humberstone and Santa Laura works contain over 200 former saltpeter works where workers from Chile, Peru and Bolivia lived in company towns and forged a distinctive communal Pampinos culture. That culture is manifest in their rich language, creativity, and solidarity, and, above all, in their pioneering struggle for social justice, which had a profound impact on social history. Situated in the remote Pampas, one of the driest deserts on Earth, thousands of Pampinos lived and worked in this hostile environment for over 60 years, from 1880, to process the largest deposit of saltpeter in the world, producing the fertilizer sodium nitrate that was to transform agricultural lands in North and South America, and in Europe, and produced great wealth for Chile. Because of the vulnerability of the structures and the impact of a recent earthquake, the site was also placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger to help mobilize resources for its conservation.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

10 March 2011

## 2. Issues raised

### Background

Lying in the Tamarugal (Pampa) area and containing multiple former saltpeter works, the boundary of the inscribed property encloses an area of 647.28ha (nominated area), with a surrounding buffer zone of 12,055ha.

At the time of inscription, the boundary of the property intentionally coincided with that of the National Monument that bears the same name and encompasses the same site. Now, as very particular situation, the two abandoned main saltpeter works (Humberstone and

Santa Laura) have long been physically separated by existing Route A-16 (a high traffic national road that links the regional capital of Iquique with the country's main Panamerican highway).

This situation is detrimental to the property as it creates a divorce between the two works, and generates interpretation, presentation, and safety problems.

Among other issues, in its decision 30 COM 7A.31 (Vilnius, 2006), the World Heritage Committee noted with great concern that the Route A-16 phenomena was unaddressed by the State Party and, thus, urged the latter to look for an alternate deviation proposal.

The World Heritage Committee requested, among other issues, in decision 33 COM 7A.28 (Seville, 2009) that: "the State Party submit the required documentation for boundary modifications, including appropriate cartography, for approval by the World Heritage Committee" (this being related to the Route A-16 issue).

The World Heritage Committee reiterated its request in decision 34 COM 7A.29 (Brasilia, 2010), to submit the required documentation for boundary modifications.

### Modification

As a result of the World Heritage Committee's recommendations, and after analyzing at least two possible alternatives, the State Party, through its Ministry of Public Works, proposed to solve the problem by deviating Route A-16 through the southern portion of the property, a proposal known as the "South Layout Option".

The southern proposal is also supported by the National Monuments Council (NMC - national authority with legal jurisdiction over heritage sites) and by the Saltpeter Museum Corporation (SMC - local entity in charge of the management and administration the property). Furthermore, the boundaries of the National Monument have already been modified, and locally approved by the NMC and the SMC, in order to adjust themselves to the proposed revision.

In light of all the above, the State Party submitted in January 2011 a request for a minor modification to the boundaries of the property to allow the re-routed A-16 Road to be excluded from the boundary. Since the Route A-16 will now run down and parallel to the south boundary, it is logical to move this boundary slightly upwards, so as to leave the Route A-16 outside the property, thus forming a single compact polygon.

Therefore, the nominated area will be slightly reduced from 647.28ha, down to 573.48ha (a small reduction of 73.80ha, or 11.40%).

ICOMOS considers a map needs to be provided showing the proposed slightly revised boundary and the slightly amended buffer zone.

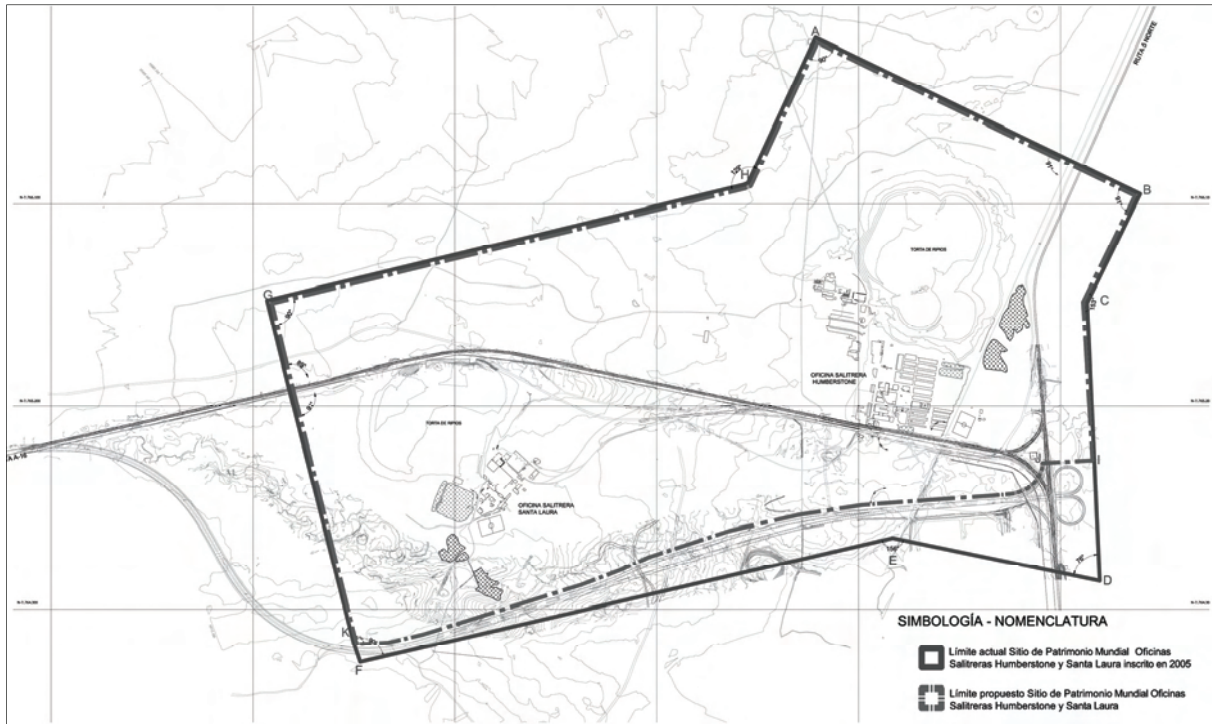
### 3. ICOMOS Recommendations

ICOMOS considers that the proposed minor boundary modification of the property is a direct and logical consequence of the Route A-16 deviation proposal and is appropriate. Its approval however depends on the agreement of the World Heritage Committee on the new line of Route A-16 that should be dealt with in the document WHC.11/35.COM/7A on the State of conservation.

#### **Recommendation with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that, if the World Heritage Committee agrees on the new line of Route A-16 under item 7A, the proposed minor modification to the boundary of Humberstone and Santa Laura Saltpeter Works, Chile, be **approved**.

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party provide a map showing the revised boundary and buffer zone. This could be done in a series of 2 maps, using different scales.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property