

## Camagüey (Cuba)

No 1270

*Official name as proposed  
by the State Party:* Urban Historic Scenery of Camagüey

Note: The nomination dossier was originally written in Spanish and translated into English. In order to adopt the appropriate technical terminology in current usage in the heritage field, the term “Historic Urban Landscape” has been used in this report, to replace the term “Urban Historic Scenery”.

*Location:* Province of Camagüey, Cuba

*Brief description:*

Camagüey was one of the first seven villages founded in Cuba during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is located on flat lands lying between the Tinima and Hatibonico rivers - an environment which has supported its economic and cultural development. The Historic Centre of Camagüey is characterized by its irregular urban layout, atypical in Cuba and in most Spanish towns in the Americas, the ensemble of large and small squares and its colonial architecture, which includes large churches, manor houses, and civil buildings with specific architectonic and technical features. Styles of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are integrated within its homogeneous urban planning.

*Category of property:*

In terms of categories of cultural property as set out in Article I 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* (2 February 2005), Annex 3, paragraph 14, (ii), it is also an *inhabited historic town* and a *historic centre*.

### 1. BASIC DATA

*Included in the Tentative List:* 28 February 2003  
(as Historic Centre of Camagüey)

*International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund  
for preparing the Nomination:* None

*Date received by the  
World Heritage Centre:* 28 March 2006

*Background:* It is a new nomination.

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

*Literature consulted (selection):*

Angulo Iñiguez, D. et al., *Historia del Arte Hispanoamericano*, Barcelona, 1945-1956.

De Solano, Francisco (Coordinator), *Estudios sobre la ciudad iberoamericana*, Madrid, 1983.

Gómez Consuegra, L., et al., *Camagüey, ciudad y arquitectura (1514-1950)*, Camagüey, 2006.

Gutiérrez, R., *Arquitectura y Urbanismo en Iberoamérica*, Madrid, 1983.

Gutiérrez R., *The urban architectural heritage of Latin America*, ICOMOS study, 1988.

*Technical Evaluation Mission:* 10-16 September 2007

*Additional information requested and received from the State Party:* ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 10 December 2007 to ask if the State Party would agree to change the title of the nomination dossier, replacing it by “Historic Centre of Camagüey”.

On 25 February 2008, ICOMOS received additional information from the State Party, including a new version of the nomination dossier entitled “Historic Urban Centre of Camagüey” and a revised Management Plan (in Spanish).

*Date of ICOMOS approval  
of this report:* 11 March 2008

### 2. THE PROPERTY

#### *Description*

The nominated property covers an area of 54 ha, encompassing part of the historic centre of Camagüey. It is made up of 79 urban blocks, seven squares consisting principally of religious buildings and 13 smaller squares. Compact and irregular urban blocks predominate in the irregular urban layout. The ensemble is characterised by the homogeneity and urban coherence that evolved over its long historical development. The spatial framework for churches and convents is set by the squares, five of which correspond to the foundational pattern. These main squares were, historically, the cores of neighbourhoods while others were secondary open spaces. Numerous narrow streets and alleys complete the public space system, offering a rich variety of urban atmospheres. These are emphasised by the presence of churches, creating landmarks on the skyline of the historic centre.

Religious architecture reached its peak in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when churches and convents were rebuilt. Some churches adjoin convents, hospitals or cemeteries. Churches are compact, usually with symmetrical facades with scant decoration. The predominant type has a tower which is also its main access. The exception is the Carmen church, with two towers. Generally, churches have rectangular plans and are constructed with thick brick walls and tiled roofs on timber roof structures. As a group, the religious buildings are characterised by extreme simplicity, but their historical, artistic and symbolic values have contributed to the naming of Camagüey as the “City of Churches”.

The city’s civic architecture displays various stylistic influences that appeared at different stages of its evolution. Within its colonial architecture, it is possible to

find neoclassical and eclectic architectural styles together with Art Deco, Neo-colonial and, to a lesser extent, Art Nouveau and Rationalism. Civic architecture is represented by the former *Real Audiencia de Puerto Príncipe* (currently, the headquarters of the municipal and provincial Courts of Camagüey), Pia's School, banks and other private buildings devoted to commerce or administration. Neoclassical and eclectic expressions predominate in these buildings.

Domestic architecture tends to be typologically uniform. Buildings are generally one-storey high, although their stylistic variety demonstrates the evolution of expression between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The colonial house shows an Andalusian influence in its spatial layout, formal elements, materials and construction techniques. Plans are rectangular, L- or C-shaped, on frequently irregular plots caused by the organic urban layout. Patios are the key element in the spatial composition and act as distributing core of the house. Colonial houses are generally wider than taller; among their characteristic features are high eaves, truncated pilasters flanking the entrance door and windows protected by high grilles of lathed wooden balustrades. This architecture is nevertheless austere, when compared with that of cities such as Trinidad or Havana.

### *History and development*

Santa María del Puerto del Príncipe (now Camagüey) is one of the seven villages founded by the Spaniards in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Cuba. It was one of two villages settled on the north coast of the island, against the prevailing preference for the south coast. The first settlement may have been founded in 1514 or 1515. Before 1528, the village was moved twice but then was definitively settled in its current location. Even though an original plan has not been found, it is known that the village had a square shape and buildings were constructed in timber and palm tree.

On 15 December 1616, the village was destroyed by fire. The town was then reconstructed but, from the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century, it became the target of pirate attack and was constantly threatened by tropical storms. Although water was supplied from the neighbouring rivers, the population developed water reservoirs and water was stored in large jars or vessels, similar to those used in Andalusia. This gave the town the name of "City of the Earthen Jars" (*Tinajones*). These containers, as well as brick and tiles, were manufactured in the village from 1620. At the same time, the Royal Road of Cuba was constructed, connecting the village with other Cuban towns, such as Havana, Sancti Spiritus, Santiago and Bayamo.

After the corsair Morgan's attack in 1668, the centre of the village was reconstructed in its final location. The Older Square was perfected into an orthogonal layout, contrasting with the irregular pattern of the rest of the village. The definitive settlement of the village relates to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. New churches were then constructed and neighbourhoods gathered around religious buildings. The construction of religious complexes and more solid civic buildings, from the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century, shows

that the town was accumulating capital, following the development of the sugar industry. The urban structure was consolidated into the image that it still portrays.

The sugar industry led to economic growth. By 1750, Puerto Príncipe had become a prosperous town with some nine churches. The domestic architecture of that time has become one of the main examples of colonial architecture. In the second half of the century, architectural codes were consolidated and prevailed over most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Eaves, truncated pilasters framing main entrance doors and lathed balustrades covering windows became typical in urban residences - featuring a town which was geographically and culturally isolated from both the capital and abroad.

By 1774, Puerto Príncipe had nearly 18,000 inhabitants, thus becoming the second town in Cuba. The position of the town determined the location of the Royal Audience, which was one of the most important institutions in Latin America. The removal of the Royal Audience from Santo Domingo to Puerto Príncipe favoured the arrival of illustrious men who contributed to the improvement and enhancement of the town's cultural life during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The prevailing function of the village during the 18<sup>th</sup> century was religious, as is apparent in the church-housing relation. The Old Square became the scene for Catholic processions and festivities, while incorporating some African elements introduced by the slaves.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the village was divided into six administrative units, with the churches at their core. In 1856, ordinances were issued to regulate the urban layout. There was concern at the previous spontaneous layout and new construction standards introduced neoclassical elements, causing a rupture with tradition. After 1881, development peaked again; modern sugar refineries were constructed and the town benefited with construction of new buildings responding to the functional and stylistic requirements of the time. Puerto Príncipe echoed Europe. During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, streets were paved in stone while fresh architectural styles were introduced downtown. In 1978, the historic centre of Camagüey was declared a National Monument.

### *The values of the historic urban landscape of Camagüey*

The main values of the historic centre of Camagüey are:

- Its historic value, since Camagüey was one of the first villages founded by the Spaniards in Cuba. Historic values also relate to the town's role as the urban centre of an inland territory dedicated to cattle breeding and sugar industry, and to its political importance after the establishment of the Royal Audience, previously settled in Santo Domingo.
- Its urban values relate to its irregular layout, exceptional in Latin American towns, especially when located on the plains. Its organic urban form has produced a wide range of open spaces, in particular a system of large and small squares, mainly related to religious

buildings. Camagüey's urban landscape is characterised by its homogeneous fabric, with religious complexes (churches and convents) acting as urban landmarks within the system of open spaces.

- Its architectural values relate to the specific use of construction materials and techniques, especially the extensive use of earthen components, deriving from Andalusia. Some specific details, such as the truncated pilasters at entrances, are features of Camagüey architecture. The use of large clay vessels as water containers is particularly typical of the town.
- The historic centre of Camagüey holds strong social and intangible cultural values. It has preserved its role as city core, place of residence and services, but also as a centre for social and cultural traditional practices.

### 3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

#### *Integrity and Authenticity*

##### *Integrity*

The nomination dossier includes a section devoted to both integrity and authenticity. According to the State Party, the conditions of integrity are guaranteed by the persistence of the irregular urban layout and the churches, and the balanced environmental values. The tortuous and narrow streets that proliferate in the irregular composition of the original urban layout continue being practically the same, as a response to geographical conditions and necessities. The pattern of blocks, alleys, squares and small squares is still the original one. Integrity also stands on the result of the evaluation of the state of conservation of main buildings: 100% of churches, parks, squares and small squares are properly conserved and without transformations, 48.4% of private buildings present a very good state of conservation and 35.3% a fairly good state of conservation.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property includes all the components and is of adequate size to express the integrity of Camagüey's historic centre.

##### *Authenticity*

According to the State Party, the authenticity of the historic centre of Camagüey is manifest in the synthesis of valuable attributes that stem from its past and continue today. The authenticity of materials and substance is justified on the grounds of the persistence of construction materials over time: brick walls, stone floors and tile roofs; the continuance of large earthen vessels for water storage is also important. Although pavement materials in public spaces have been replaced over time, partly to improve circulation, the streets' structure has not been changed. Some avenues and squares (Martí, Independencia and República) have kept the 19<sup>th</sup> century pavement materials.

The presence of churches is considered by the State Party to be an attribute that enhances authenticity. Today, these buildings are landmarks in the Camagüey urban landscape because of their dimensions and location. The religious elements in this historic centre are only exceeded in the capital. They are recognized amongst the best kept in quality and quantity, currently maintaining their historical, architectural and environmental values. These buildings have undergone restoration processes, while keeping their interior spaces, formal composition and architectural expression. Original materials and construction components have been preserved.

As to the authenticity of its uses and functions, the State Party declares that the irregular and curvilinear streets of the Historic Centre continue the great legacy of old traditions. Public space is used for religious processions. The naming of public spaces is still the original, related to the Catholic calendar. Public spaces are also the scene for the cultural and civic life of the population, since they are used for concerts and shows.

ICOMOS considers that the historic centre of Camagüey presents a high degree of authenticity. Authenticity of form and design is granted by the persistence of the irregular urban pattern as well as the balanced relationship between urban and architectural patterns and design. The reiteration of the use of burnt clay assures the authenticity of materials and fabric. The mixture of old and new functions implies a suitable balance that, together with the persistence of traditions and intangible heritage, contributes to enhancing authenticity.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity are met.

#### *Comparative analysis*

The nomination dossier includes a comparative analysis with other Cuban, Latin American and European cities, some of them inscribed on the World Heritage List. In the framework of the first villages founded by the Spaniards in Cuba in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Camagüey is compared with Sancti Spiritus and Trinidad, both founded in 1514. Camagüey presents both similarities and differences in respect to other Cuban colonial cities. Its main features are the irregular plan, the alleys and serpentine layout streets and the system of squares and small squares of capricious forms. Width of facades in relation to height, and the typical earthen jars, are further features of the town. Sancti Spiritus, which moved to its current location in 1533, is the Cuban city most related to Camagüey; both have irregular plans and maintain their colonial structures, of which, the most stable ones belong principally to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Trinidad and the Valley de los Ingenios, Cuba, was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1988. Common features with Camagüey include the irregular urban layout, the existence of typical colonial constructions and the high environmental values. Camagüey has nevertheless an important religious repertoire associated with its squares system and the presence of a greater diversity of architectural styles. The primacy in Camagüey, contrary to Trinidad, of the typical eaves and of the truncated pilasters in the entries, as well as the

absence of the corridors observed in some buildings in Trinidad, introduces differences in house typologies and expressions.

Spanish cities like Granada, Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Cáceres present irregular urban plots similar to those of Camagüey. Old Town of Cáceres, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986, presents some similarities to Camagüey: both are inland cities whose development was strongly linked to agriculture. In Cáceres, the irregular layout reflects traces of the Arab presence in Spain, a characteristic also noticeable in Camagüey, given the influences of the first Spanish residents. There are differences in construction materials; while in Cáceres stone prevailed, brick and mud were used in Camagüey. In both towns, there is a similar repertoire of religious constructions, developed in Cáceres with greater magnificence than in Camagüey.

An irregular layout appears also in Santiago de Compostela. Planned on the basis of religious pilgrimage and celebrations, it shows an intricate urban layout that includes numerous squares of high architectural significance. Both towns exhibit the existence of beautiful representative urban and architectural groups of diverse styles, harmonious in the urban environment.

Historic Town of Guanajuato in central Mexico, was founded in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century and was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987. Contrary to other colonial cities of the New Spain, it presents a spontaneous organization with an irregular layout. Both cities represent a remarkable city-planning example where original expressions were achieved in their architectural monuments and urban spaces. They store a religious repertoire of high architectural value although differentiated by the presence of a larger number of churches in Camagüey and a greater magnificence of architectural style in Guanajuato, where Baroque developed in a more significant manner than in Camagüey.

Colonial City of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) was founded in 1496 by Bartolomé Colón and was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1990. Santo Domingo is the first city where Europeans settled in the New World. Contrary to Camagüey, it is said that Santo Domingo was a city that arose with an organized urban pattern and straight regular streets. Nevertheless, both towns have some similarities: both are colonial cities, preserving their colonial atmosphere through the centuries, though with a major conservation relevance in the case of Camagüey.

Coro and its port (Venezuela) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1993. Founded in 1527, it enjoys a long cultural tradition that is expressed in the monumentality of the public, civil and ecclesiastical buildings. It maintains cultural and administrative functions - the government house is there. In both cities, it is possible to find similar construction features such as design and materials and the presence of large interior courtyards in their main houses. Nevertheless, Camagüey is distinguished by its architecture, where different styles coexist.

The State Party considers that although the historic centre of Camagüey does not show the architectural monumentality and splendour of some of the above mentioned cities, it holds exceptional values, like the predominance of a genuine and formal architectural discretion, the balance of its urban planning and the sobriety of its historical physiognomy.

ICOMOS appreciates the efforts made by the State Party in relation to comparing Camagüey with other Latin American and Spanish cities, some of them inscribed on the World Heritage List. The comparative analysis is mainly based on two components: the urban layout and the architectural features.

ICOMOS agrees that the irregular urban pattern is an exceptional feature in Latin American colonial towns, especially for those located in plain uneven settings. Concerning architecture, ICOMOS also agrees that specific features, like the Andalusian influences, the extended use of burnt clay and of big water containers and other ornamental details distinguish Camagüey from other Latin American colonial towns.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis is satisfactory from an architectural point of view, but the comparison between Camagüey and European medieval towns, especially focusing on the features of urban layouts, is not completely justified, taking into account the substantial differences between the origins and development of the latter in relation to the phenomenon of European colonisation of the Americas.

Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that the irregular urban layout, which includes the definition of a set of different sizes and shapes of open spaces and urban blocks, constitutes an exceptional feature for Latin American towns located in plain sites. In this sense, the historic centre of Camagüey bear specific urban and architectural characteristics that differentiate it from other Latin American towns.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for inscription on the World Heritage List.

### *Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value*

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The Historic Centre of Camagüey forms the fundamental urban nucleus of the historical development of the ancient Village of Santa María del Puerto del Principe, moved to its current location in 1528. It is one of the seven first villages founded by the Spaniards in Cuba during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Arising from a primitive subsistence economy, the Village of Puerto Principe evolved thanks to cattle breeding and the sugar industry.
- The City of Camagüey shows in its intricate and lively historic centre with narrow streets, large and small squares, and magnificent

churches, an Urban Historic Landscape that is a testimony to traditions and customs associated with a rich intangible heritage, linked to the conservative and religious nature of its inhabitants. These relationships between urban spaces and intangible heritage show a particular personality and identity.

- The Historic Centre of Camagüey is a traditional space of strong impact with lively artistic and social practices.

*Criteria under which inscription is proposed*

The property is nominated under cultural criteria (ii), (iv) and (v).

*Criterion (ii): exhibit an important exchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that as one of the first seven villages founded by the Spaniards in Cuba, Camagüey is evidence of the transcendent encounter of cultures in the New World. The town has a rich material and immaterial heritage that results from a wide group of traditions and social practices, related to prominent personalities in the realms of art, science, history and culture. The built heritage of Camagüey is related to many events in the evolution and development of the central region of the country.

Amerindians, Spaniards and Africans combined to form in the genesis of a Creole idiosyncrasy, related to Cuban identity. Material heritage of the historic centre of Camagüey bears testimony to different cultures, visible in the conception of space and the system of formal elements of diverse architectural components.

ICOMOS considers that the exchange of human values has not been sufficiently demonstrated by the State Party, since the description of urban and architectural features stresses the prevailing Spanish influence. On the basis of the information supplied by the State Party, it is difficult to assess how other cultural influences are evidenced in the material heritage components.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

*Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the historic centre of Camagüey encompasses the oldest areas of the city, where it is possible to find a synthesis of the diverse expressions of previous cultures and of the different stages of evolution of the town. Its origins are evident in the irregular urban layout, where the serpentine streets, squares and small open spaces create a capricious layout where old constructions were erected. The urban layout of Camagüey constitutes an exceptional case among Cuban historic centres.

Evolution over time produced a group of buildings that include exponents of religious and civil architecture. The stylistic influences arriving in the city at different stages of its evolution can be identified – such as Eclecticism, Neoclassicism, Art Deco, Neo-colonialism and even specific examples of Art Nouveau and Rationalism. Architecture is what defines the urban fabric of the nominated area, where landmarks formed mainly by churches are integrated in a coherent and harmonious manner.

ICOMOS considers that the peculiar features of Camagüey's urban layout constitute an exceptional case among Latin American Spanish cities settled on the plains. It is also unusual that the urban blocks that evolved in the town during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries are divided into many very narrow and long plots. While not a major feature, the use of large clay vessels (*tinajones*) for rainwater storage may be considered an early precursor of sustainable water management.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property constitutes an outstanding example of urban settlement in the Americas as a historic centre more than a historic urban landscape, since its features are the result of the combination of environmental, historic, social and cultural conditions that impacted on the structure and morphology of the town, increasing the clarity of expression of the urban space. ICOMOS consulted the State Party, which agreed to change the category of the nomination.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

*Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment specially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that The Historic Centre of Camagüey constitutes an exceptional testimony in Cuba and the Caribbean of a model of colonial urban development with European medieval influences in the urban layout. Spanish conquerors could have perceived irregularity as a consequence of the absence of a regulatory plan or urban ordinances, typical of some of the first American foundations before the application of the Laws of Indies. The progressive expansion of the town spontaneously shaped the urban morphology. Construction techniques, design and formal expression that characterize the built repertoire of the town reflect the notorious *Mudejar* influences brought by the first *alarifes* (masons) and construction masters who arrived in the Americas.

Regarding this criterion, ICOMOS has similar considerations to that of criterion (iv). Camagüey has specific features that allow it to be considered an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, but these features exceed the concept of a historic urban landscape and clearly fit in the category of a historic centre. ICOMOS has consulted the State Party, which agreed to change the category of the nomination.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iv) and (v) and that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

#### 4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

##### *Development pressures*

The State Party recognises that diverse factors affect the proper development and operation of the property, among them the growing number of inappropriate building alterations within the nominated area, that reduce the typological integrity and coherence of the ensemble, as well as insertions that affect the area qualitatively, especially in private houses. The adjustment of the Historic Centre to the demands of contemporary life has been carried out with some detriment to its values, when developing new functions. Hydro-sanitary facilities were not designed for the present demand; this causes obstructions that together with stacking cause decrease of the quality of life and habitat conditions.

##### *Visitors / tourism pressures*

Although Camagüey has become a tourism attraction because of its heritage values, the nominated area is not under visitor pressure for it has the capacity to assimilate city and traffic tourists now. The annual average of tourists is 70,000 approximately.

##### *Environmental pressures*

Several environmental factors are identified by the State Party. Taking into account the narrow and tortuous configuration of the streets, there is an impact of motor traffic with amplification of noise levels and atmospheric pollution. There is also air contamination from industrial facilities and services. The morphological conditions of the Historic Centre, a flat area with prevailing low-rise buildings and asphalted streets, creates a micro-climate that changes the regime of the wind, the temperature, evaporation and other climatic factors, with unconformity due to heat.

The collection of solid waste is mainly carried out with animal traction. Besides not being an appropriate procedure, this appears incompatible with the area's public image. Due to the prevalent colonial typology and interior yards, the collection of wreckages and pruning is in much demand, but there is not a regular mechanism for this service.

Water supply is more critical in the nominated area than in the rest of the city. The contamination of sources means that the quality of the water in many wells does not meet the hygienic standards for consumption. The breeding of pigs causes serious problems, such as the proliferation of bad odours. Part of the system of pluvial drainage is not in good condition. The dumping of residual untreated liquids (industrial and sewerage) into the river Hatibonico contaminates it. On the other hand, the narrowing of the river bed through the accumulation of silts and the absence of protective forest at its margins are, among other reasons, the main causes of flood.

##### *Natural disasters*

Because of its location in the Caribbean, Cuba is exposed to tropical storms and hurricanes. In previous periods, during the cyclonal seasons, buildings in the historic centre have been affected by floods that have caused their physical damage in areas next to Hatibonico River. The institutions in charge, such as the Civil Defence and the local bodies of the People's Power maintain a systematically up-to-date Plan of measures, to avoid damages caused by floods, intense rains or hurricanes during cyclonal season.

##### *Impact of climate change*

The nomination dossier makes no specific mention on the impact of climatic change. Nevertheless, as Cuba is located in the Caribbean region, tropical storms and hurricanes will tend to be more frequent and stronger, due to global climate change.

ICOMOS considers that these factors should be especially taken into account by the State Party in order to ensure proper conservation of the nominated property.

##### *Risk preparedness*

The nomination dossier includes information on risk preparedness in relation to natural disasters, especially cyclones and hurricanes, but does not give details about the plans' features.

ICOMOS considers that the nomination dossier includes a complete and frank identification of factors that could jeopardize not only the preservation of the material heritage but also the quality of life of the local population and visitors.

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party provides information on the risk preparedness plan, especially concerning natural disasters and environmental pressures.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are related to natural disasters, which are significant when taking into account global climate change and environmental pressures.

#### 5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

##### *Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone*

The boundaries of the nominated area correspond approximately to the early development stages of the first two centuries after the final settlement of the village in 1528. Extending over 54 ha, it corresponds to 18% of the total area identified as the historic centre of the town, encompassing 79 urban blocks with 2,561 plots, 1,770 of which incorporate buildings with diverse degrees of cultural value.

The nominated area is buffered by an area of 276 ha that corresponds to the rest of the historic centre. The buffer zone testifies to later stages of historic urban development, containing few examples of colonial

architecture and many eclectic examples belonging to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the core and buffer zone of the nominated property are adequate.

### **Ownership**

In the nominated area several types of ownership coexist. There are institutions and buildings owned by the Cuban State, private houses and private buildings and institutions like churches and religious temples. The number of buildings in the nominated area is 2,532.

### **Protection**

#### *Legal Protection*

Legal protection of the nominated property is based upon three national Laws:

- Law N° 1, Law of Protection of the Cultural Heritage, 4 August 1977. This Law aims at identifying, registering and protecting material and immaterial cultural heritage. Article 7 establishes that if Cultural Heritage of the Nation is declared of public utility and social interest, no intervention can be undertaken without authorisation of the Ministry of Culture.

- Law N° 2, Law on National and Local Monuments, 4 August 1977, focuses on those cases that have been declared monuments of national or local interest and that can be individual examples in historic towns or archaeological sites. Urban historic centres are defined as the groups formed by buildings and public and private spaces, geographical or topographical characteristics that have a clearly unified character which expresses a social, individualised and organised community. Laws 1 and 2 have complementary regulations that define more accurately protection measures to be observed.

- Law N° 81 on the Environment, 11 June 1997. This Law includes a chapter that considers cultural heritage associated with the natural environment.

The above mentioned Laws are complemented by a set of Decrees and Resolutions that contribute to the protection of the historic centre of Camagüey. The most significant are:

- Resolution 003, October 1978. Declaration of National Monument of the Historic Centre of the City of Camagüey.

- Decree N° 213 of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, 24 January 1997. Attributions and functions of the Office of the Historian of the City of Camagüey. The Decree establishes that the restoration and conservation of the Historic Centre will increase its attractiveness and will harmoniously link cultural purposes with economic interests for domestic development, as well as social work that contributes to ensure the national and patriotic feelings of the inhabitants.

ICOMOS considers that the legal structure is adequate for the protection of the nominated property. The proposed buffer zone is also adequately protected as part of the historic centre of Camagüey.

#### *Effectiveness of protection measures*

The implemented measures have proved to be effective for the adequate protection of the nominated property since it exhibits an adequate state of conservation. Considering that the nominated area is a part of the historic centre, which, as a whole, is a target of protection, the legal structure in place is also adequate for the proper protection of the buffer zone.

ICOMOS considers that the protective measures for the property are adequate.

### **Conservation**

#### *Inventories, recording, research*

The nomination dossier refers to the most recent documents related to inventorying the cultural heritage of Camagüey. Among them, the Inventory of the Historic Centre (2000), Architectural Guides for the Province of Camagüey (2004), Inventory of Commemorative Constructions in the Historic Centre (2004). Research works have been undertaken over the last decades. According to the State Party, between 2000 and 2005 research works and publications were presented at provincial, national and international levels.

In relation to the total number of buildings existing in the nominated area, 35% exhibit some kind of historic and/or artistic values; the remaining 65% are considered to have contextual value; this means that without exhibiting relevant architectural values, if considered individually, these buildings contribute to the quality of the urban landscape as a whole.

ICOMOS considers that inventorying works have been properly undertaken and that the fiches employed are quite complete in relation to the information included.

#### *Present state of conservation*

According to the State Party, the evaluation of the state of conservation of the property is a target of continuous analysis, taking into account both internal and external factors affecting this field. The results of the analysis (concentrated on architectural components) is defined generally as “regular”, with a noticeable incidence in the state of domestic heritage (48.4% in good state and 35.3% in fairly good state). Religious buildings exhibit a very good state, since consolidation, restoration and rehabilitation works have been undertaken. The public spaces, including streets, squares and small open spaces also exhibit a very good state of conservation.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of public spaces, gardens and religious architecture is quite acceptable. With regard to domestic architecture, some important residences have been adequately restored.

### *Active Conservation measures*

According to the State Party, active conservation measures are being undertaken, among them restoration and conservation of historic domestic buildings. ICOMOS notes that some buildings have been properly restored. In other cases, especially with single-family houses, the main purpose of alterations has been to improve the image of the public space by work on the facades. These actions have an immediate effect on the urban landscape but postpone the integral rehabilitation of the entire buildings. Houses inhabited by low-income families still await rehabilitation efforts.

ICOMOS considers that, even if few buildings or open spaces have been rehabilitated, those functioning for public purposes give an overall positive image of the historic centre, which is gradually recovering its cultural values.

ICOMOS considers that the general state of conservation of public buildings and urban spaces is acceptable. ICOMOS recommends that efforts should be directed to the integral conservation of heritage buildings instead of limiting interventions to the facades. It would also recommend that all kinds of heritage domestic buildings be considered for conservation.

### ***Management***

#### *Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes*

The main management structures are the Office of Monuments and Historic Sites, the Office of the Historian of the City and the Company of Restoration of the Office of the Historian. The Office of Monuments and Historical Places, assigned to the Provincial Centre of Heritage, is in charge of defining policies and strategies for interventions. It elaborates objectives and plans, short and medium term, for the conservation and restoration of the provincial capital city and other municipalities; it also executes the agreements of the Provincial Commission referred to as conservation and rehabilitation of monuments.

The Office of the Historian of the City of Camagüey plays an important role in relation to the historic centre. The “Santa María” Enterprise of marketing, belonging to this Office, is in charge of the commercialization through stores, boutiques, restaurants, and cafeterias; 42 % of the revenues are reinvested in the heritage of the historic centre.

#### *Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation*

The principal Plans are the Territorial and Urban Plan, the Plan of Strategic Development of the Urban Historic Centre of Camagüey, the Plan of Tourism of the City and the Partial Plans for the Historic Centre. The nomination dossier does not include detailed information on these plans.

The Management Plan in place is annexed to the nomination dossier. The Plan is structured on the basis of

the following sections: Characterisation, Current Infrastructure of Services and Administration, Programme of Interventions, Study on Urban Image, Technical Office, Construction Forces, Training and Economical Feasibility.

With regard to visitor management, most services (lodging, restaurants, commerce, culture, entertainment) are located within the historic centre. The nomination dossier includes no specific information on the property’s presentation.

ICOMOS notes that the revised Management Plan (received in February 2008) includes a good analysis of the historic evolution of the site, a convincing diagnosis of the current situation, proposed strategies and their respective programmes, a timeframe for specific actions (2007-2014) and for investments. ICOMOS recommends that the State Party implement measures for the adequate presentation of the nominated property.

#### *Involvement of the local communities*

The State Party states that there is a high level of awareness by local population of the values of the property; involvement of local communities is fostered by the official bodies in charge of conservation and management of the historic centre. The *Oficina del Historiador de Camagüey* (Office of the Historian of Camagüey, OHC) keeps a close relation with most citizens’ organizations interested in the preservation of the historic centre. The local population is well informed about preservation activities not only through the local press but also a radio station of the OHC that daily broadcasts traditional music, programmes and interviews relating to the history and conservation of the property. The local population is aware of and supports preservation actions and improvement of the historic centre.

#### *Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and training*

According to the State Party, expertise and training are guaranteed by the National and Provincial Commission of Monuments, the Cuban National Committee of ICOMOS, the National Center of Conservation, Restoration and Museology (CENCREM), the Center of Conservation of Historic Centers of the University of Camagüey (CECONS) and the Office of the Historian of the City. The nomination dossier does not include detailed information about their purposes and specific programmes.

Staff dedicated to the conservation and management of the historic centre includes qualified professionals. The provincial Office on Monuments and Historic Places has 8 professional members, 2 main technicians and 2 restorers. The Office of the Historian of the City of Camagüey has 74 professionals and 65 half technicians, and a structure consisting of Technical Departments, Company of Restoration and Conservation and a Commercial Company. The Company of Restoration is responsible for executing the projects of restoration and conservation on buildings and public spaces in the historic centre; it is formed by a technical team of specialized professionals and an executing crew.



Financial resources come from national, provincial and local governments. The nomination dossier also mentions projects carried out with local and foreign entities and donations made by foreigners. ICOMOS notices that apart from the national, provincial and local budget provisions, there are two types of special taxes, kept locally, that increase the working capital of the Office of the Historian of Camagüey.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate.

## 6. MONITORING

The State Party states that monitoring the historic centre constitutes one of the strategic objectives of the local government. The nomination dossier includes a set of key indicators to assess the state of conservation of the property, establishing their priority, periodicity of measures and location of register and files.

ICOMOS appreciates the efforts made by the State Party to define and implement a monitoring system. Some complementary key indicators could be considered to improve the monitoring; among them, accessibility, control of visual pollution and noise, preservation of natural resources.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system is adequate. ICOMOS recommends that indicators related to accessibility, control of visual pollution, noise and preservation of natural resources be considered to complete the set of monitoring indicators.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

ICOMOS considers that the definition of the nomination as “Historic Urban Landscape” poses some difficulties since it seems to refer mainly to visual aspects and does not reflect all the complexity of the urban phenomenon. In accordance with the established categories and subcategories set out in Annex 3 of the *Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2 February 2005), Camagüey is clearly an inhabited historic town and, more precisely, the nominated property constitutes a historic centre.

The information supplied by the State Party confirms that there are values related to both material and intangible heritage components that make Camagüey an interesting case of Latin American urban settlement, with particular features that are not represented on the World Heritage List. Some urban, architectural and intangible features could easily be considered of outstanding universal value, exceeding the visual appreciation of the urban reality. The dossier itself refers to the property as “historic centre”, but this is not reflected in the title of the nomination. On 10 December 2007, ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party asking if it would agree to change the title of the nomination dossier to “Historic Centre of Camagüey”. The State Party agreed to change the title of the nomination, and a new dossier was received by ICOMOS on 25 February 2008.

ICOMOS also notes that, in spite of the effort made by the State Party in the elaboration of the nomination dossier, it was originally written in Spanish and translated into one of the working languages of the World Heritage Committee. The translation is noticeably deficient, something that makes the proper understanding of the information difficult. ICOMOS considers that this does not constitute a minor aspect, since nomination dossiers become references for new nominations, for comparative analysis and for other types of research or dissemination activities. A proper understanding of the contents of nomination dossiers is also a requirement to be fulfilled by the States Parties. The State Party is thus invited to consider the possibility of proceeding to a proper translation of the original text.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation efforts are satisfactory, that the property is adequately protected and the management and financial resources are adequate, even taking into account possibilities of improving the current plans. The current situation regarding preserved buildings and public spaces meets standards comparable to other successful examples. The balance between commerce and services functions and housing appears to be satisfactory in the nominated property. The information, awareness and participation of local communities ensure the social support to conservation measures adopted by the competent authorities.

### *Recommendations with respect to inscription*

ICOMOS recommends that the Historic Centre of Camagüey, Cuba, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria (iv) and (v)*.

### *Recommended statement of Outstanding Universal Value:*

One of the first seven villages founded by the Spaniards in Cuba, Camagüey played a prominent role as the urban centre of an inland territory dedicated to cattle breeding and the sugar industry. Once settled in its current location in 1528, the town developed on the basis on an irregular urban pattern that contains a system of squares, minor squares, serpentine streets, alleys and irregular urban blocks, highly exceptional for Latin American colonial towns located in plain territories. Religious buildings, associated with the main squares, constitute a system of landmarks in the urban fabric, characterised by its homogeneity. Architectural values are associated with typical domestic architectural typologies and the use of consistent construction materials and techniques, especially the extended use of earthen components, which reveal influences from Andalusia. The use of truncated pilasters at the entrance gates and of clay vessels for water storage are features that identify Camagüey’s domestic architecture. The historic centre continues to act as the city core and the place for social and cultural activities, which reflect a rich intangible heritage.

**Criterion (iv):** The Historic Centre of Camagüey constitutes an outstanding urban architectural type in Latin America, featured by its irregular urban layout that produced an unusual system of squares, minor squares, serpentine streets, alleys, urban blocks and plots system. Monumental and domestic architecture form a

homogeneous urban fabric where it is possible to find architectural expressions corresponding to different periods of the evolution of the town.

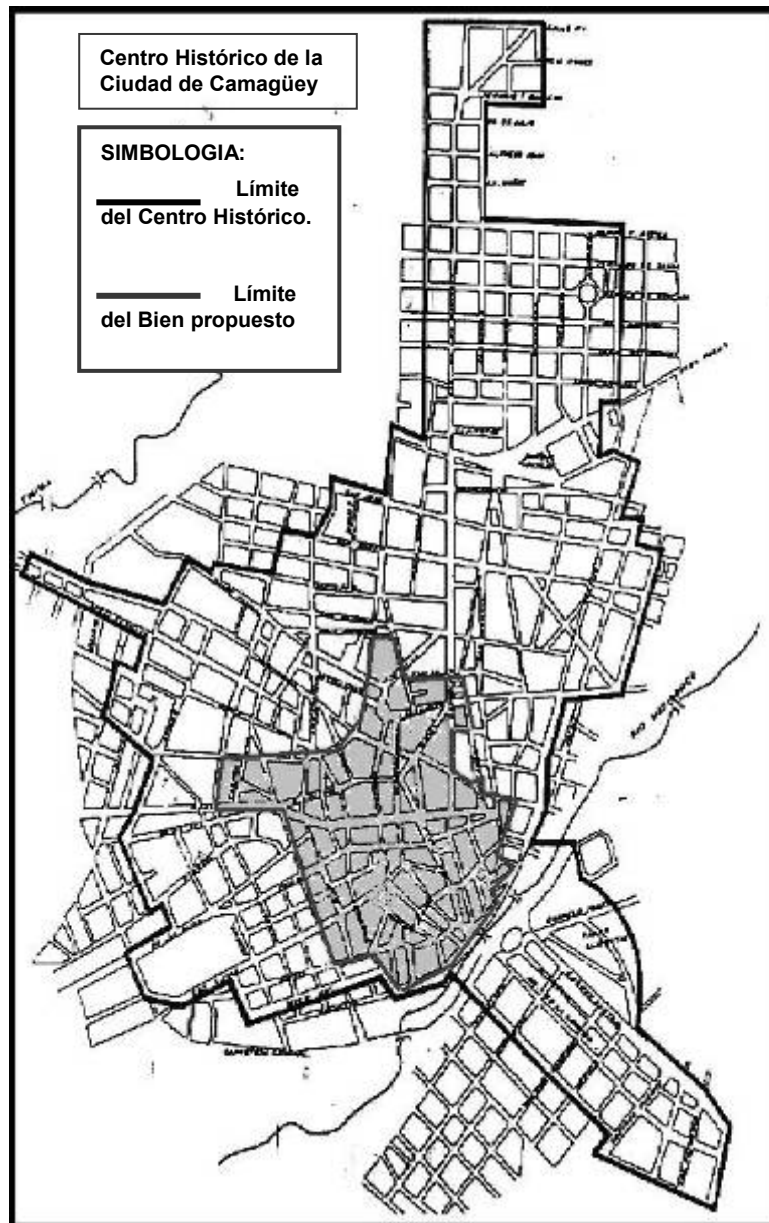
**Criterion (v):** The Historic Centre of Camagüey constitutes an exceptional example of a traditional urban settlement relatively isolated from main trade routes, where the Spanish colonizers were subject to European medieval urban influences in the urban layout and to traditional construction techniques brought to the Americas by the first masons and construction masters.

The nominated property is of adequate size and contains all the necessary material components to guarantee the integrity of the historic centre. The persistence of the original urban layout, of the architectural types and materials, of the traditional craftsmanship and of uses and spirit allows the historic centre to meet the required conditions of authenticity.

The legal protection and the management system and instruments have proved to be adequate for ensuring the proper conservation of the nominated area and its buffer zone.

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party:

- Proceed to a new translation of the revised nomination dossier written in Spanish to be kept in the archives as a reference for new nominations or comparative studies.
- Provide information on the existing risk preparedness plan, especially on issues concerning natural disasters. Environmental pressures, such as water contamination or atmospheric pollution, should also be considered in the plan.
- Consider the integral conservation of heritage buildings, especially those corresponding to domestic architecture instead of intervening only in main façades.
- The State Party design and implement the policy and instruments for the adequate presentation of the property.
- Consider the addition of complementary indicators to the monitoring system. ICOMOS recommends taking into account indicators related to accessibility, visual pollution, noise and preservation of natural resources.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



**General view of Camagüey**



**San Francisco Square**



**City Council**



**Church of « Carmen »**