

Cidade Velha (Cape Verde)

No 1310

*Official name as proposed
by the State Party:*

Cidade Velha,
historic centre of
Ribeira Grande

Location:

Ribeira Grande
municipality,
Island of Santiago,
Republic of Cape Verde

Brief description:

The town of Ribeira Grande, which was later renamed Cidade Velha, was established on the island of Santiago, on the Cape Verde peninsula, by the Portuguese, starting in the late 15th century. It was the first colonial town to be built by Europeans in the tropics, as a base for their trade with sub-Saharan Africa. It rapidly found itself at the heart of the triangular exchanges between Europe, Africa, and the New World, playing a central role in the organisation of the Atlantic slave trade of more recent times. A staging post of colonial power and an essential Atlantic port of call, it was an early centre for experimentation in the field of colonial agriculture and for the acclimatisation of plants between continents. A political and religious centre for Portuguese colonisation, Cidade Velha was also the cradle of the first Creole society and the starting point for the dissemination of its culture to the Americas.

Category of property:

In terms of categories of cultural properties, as defined in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*.

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 7 May 2004

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

*Date received by
the World Heritage Centre:* 28 January 2008

Background: The property was proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List in 1992. ICOMOS noted ‘the historical importance of Cidade Velha/Ribeira Grande, the first European city to be established under the tropics.’ However, it considered that the existing ensemble could not be inscribed on the World Heritage List for three reasons. First, the historic monuments had either been excessively restored or were in a state of advanced disrepair. Secondly, the historic monuments are in scattered locations in a modern town of mediocre architectural quality. Finally, there was no management plan for the site. The ICOMOS recommendation was that ‘the property should not be recommended for inscription on the World Heritage List.’

The Bureau of the World Heritage Committee in its 16th session (Paris, 1992) adopted the following decision:

“The Bureau considered that in spite of its indisputable historic value, the property did not meet the criteria for inscription on the World Heritage List.”

The current dossier is a new nomination different from the previous one.

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committees on Historic Towns and Villages, on the Intangible Cultural Heritage, on Shared Built Heritage, and on Fortifications and Military Heritage.

Literature consulted (selection):

Pereira D., *Marcos cronológicos da Cidade Velha*, Praia, ICVL, 1988.

Wieczorek J.-P., *Programme de sauvegarde du site de Cidade Velha*, Paris UNESCO 1990.

Pires F., *Da Cidade da Ribeira Grande à Cidade Velha em Cabo Verde*, Universidade de Cabo Verde ed., 2007.

Technical Evaluation Mission: 15–18 September 2008.

Additional information requested and received from the State Party: ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 9 December 2008 requesting it to:

1. Extend the buffer zone towards the maritime space.
2. Publish the Decree-Law for the extension of the protection to the entire property.
3. Reinforce the justification for criterion (ii) as it pertains to the agricultural history of Cape Verde.
4. Specify the organisation in charge of implementing the management plan.
5. Specify the number and competencies of the Proim-Tur agency personnel.

The State Party sent a detailed memo (20 pages) dated 27 February 2009 answering each question. The analysis of this documentation is included in the present evaluation.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 10 March 2009

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The town of Ribeira Grande, which was not renamed Cidade Velha until the end of the 18th century, is located at a point where the mouth of a sharp valley cutting into the volcanic plateau opens into the sea. It is in the south of the island of Santiago, on a part of the coast that is well sheltered from the prevailing winds. The Cape Verde islands tend to be arid, and long periods of drought are a regular feature of the climate.

The freshwater coastal river, which gave the town its original name, explains both the existence of this seaside oasis and the attraction of this port of call for European seafarers, even though the river bed is often dry.

Cidade Velha is today a modest village, about a dozen kilometres from Praia, the present-day capital of the archipelago of the Republic of Cape Verde.

The site has remains, some of which are impressive, scattered amongst the housing of people of modest income, which is often recent in origin.

The town was established starting from the low bank of a bay that is open to the ocean, between two promontories of the volcanic plateau. The town developed along the seashore and in the valley, beginning from low-lying areas and the most accessible slopes.

The original core of the town is on the left bank of the coastal river, at its mouth; it corresponds with the present-day central quarter, between the seafront and Pillory Square. In the 16th century the town spread out on both banks. In the following century it progressively occupied all the available space, reaching its maximum extent. This gave rise to the quarters of São Bras in the west, São Sebastião in the south-east, next to the cathedral, and São Pedro situated upstream on the river.

Centring on Pillory Square, the street layout and the toponymy have been retained in the present-day urban centre. The urban fabric has been constituted from regularly sized plots of around 130m².

The pillory is a marble column in the Manueline style. Set in the centre of the square of the same name, it is the oldest complete monument of the town (early 16th century), symbolising simultaneously municipal power and the punishment reserved for recalcitrant slaves.

In the 15th century the outermost defences of the bay, which constitutes a naturally sheltered port, consisted of several forts and bastions: on the Presidio beach (only vestiges remain); on the promontories projecting into the sea, São Veríssimo to the east (substantial remains), and São Bras to the west. The ensemble was completed by a wall between the town and the sea.

The defensive system was considerably strengthened during the 16th century by the royal fortress of São Felipe on the eastern promontory of the cliff, at a height of 120 metres (restored). The coastal forts were strengthened and others were added: São António, São João dos Cavaleiros, and São Lourenço. The military facilities were completed by strategic observation posts at high points (vestiges) and a crenellated enceinte wall (vestiges). The military structures can still be clearly traced in the terrain.

In the 17th century the religious architecture included a dozen churches and chapels and a convent. Today, two buildings have been restored: the church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, dating from the late 15th century, in the Manueline style, which has a bell tower with a Gothic vault, and the Chapel of the Convent of São Francisco, built in the 17th century. Most of the other religious monuments are in ruins or consist only of archaeological remains. This is the case in particular of the cathedral, built starting in the mid-16th century: the walls, which are still standing, show that it was very imposing, sited on a hill that was originally a short way outside the town. Ambitious in both dimensions and architecture, this church, like many other of the town's monuments, required the importation of stone from quarries in Portugal.

The same applies to the public buildings of the town, the presence of which is still attested at the end of the 18th century, such as the hospital and the college. Some monuments, such as the bishop's palace next to the cathedral, the hospital, and the college, have totally disappeared.

The town already had 500 stone houses in the mid-16th century, and there were considerably more at the start of the 17th century; some were large and belonged to slave merchants, traders, and ship-owners. A rare handful of old houses are still to be seen. Today's village has only 200 relatively recently built houses, constructed using stones reclaimed from the old town; most of these are typical of Cape Verde – single-storeyed, rectangular in plan, and with one central entrance and two side windows. In some cases the houses are aligned, and each has an entrance patio surrounded by walls. There are good examples of homogeneous traditional architectural ensembles in Carrera and Banana Streets, close to the centre, and Direita Street in the São Sebastião quarter.

The current urban plots and the street network have many boundary walls, which in some cases are extremely thick and contain vestiges of historic structures. They include small cobbled alleyways and stone stairs, and benches in stone. This gives a mineral dimension to the urban base, and many trees provide shade and introduce a second landscape stage, dominated by vegetation.

The agricultural spaces of the coastal river valley have conserved small-scale growing of sugar cane, today used to make 'grog,' the rum of Cape Verde. There is a distillery equipped with an old cane press. More generally, practical knowhow and knowledge has been perpetuated in the relationships of the Cape Verde people with the natural environment, which is harsh and short of water. Cidade Velha bears witness to this tendency over a long time scale.

In addition to its historical significance, the intangible dimension of the property is represented by Creole culture, of which Cidade Velha is certainly the earliest fully expressed example. The Creole language was first formed from Portuguese and a mixture of African languages. Initially a means of communication between master and slave, it spread out from Cape Verde to become the language of the African slaves and people of mixed race of the Caribbean and Brazil, and more widely of the Americas, adapting to each specific situation. This culture, both syncretic and new, transmitted beliefs and legends, prayers and rites, songs and dances, such as the *batuque* of Cape Verde.

Underwater investigations have revealed a substantial heritage of wrecks a short distance from the shore.

ICOMOS considers that the agricultural area which replaced an earlier urban establishment, upstream on the coastal river, is at the present time a space the heritage value of which has not been well identified.

In its reply dated 27 February 2009 to the question of the heritage and landscapes pertaining to the agricultural history of Cape Verde, the State Party provided important details about the wealth of the rural history of Cape Verde, especially its role in the experimentation of colonial land management and acclimatisation lands for numerous plant species transiting between newly discovered lands and Europe.

History and development

The island of Santiago was discovered around 1460 and claimed for the Crown of Portugal. There was no human presence on the island. Exploration of the islands of the

archipelago led to the development of the port of call of Ribeira Grande in the years that followed. As early as 1466 it was granted a royal charter entitling its inhabitants to practise the slave trade. It became an essential port of call for Portuguese sea traffic, first towards the coasts of Africa and later on to the Cape. Construction of the first defensive structures, the town hall, and the first church began at the end of the 15th century (see Description).

Ribeira Grande was an ideal location, isolated and well placed for the organisation of the triangular transatlantic traffic, particularly trade in African slaves, of which the Portuguese theoretically had a monopoly under the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494). The ancient pillory monument provides direct evidence of the links with violence established by the system of slavery.

In the 16th century the town developed rapidly, favoured by an exceptional maritime position, its intercontinental geographical location, and the Azores current. Ribeira Grande bears witness to the first successes of European navigation on the high seas. It was a major crossroads for a Portuguese trade that rapidly became globalised. The fleets leaving for or arriving from Guinea, the Indian Ocean, India, Siam, Brazil, the Antilles, and, of course, Europe came together there, to exchange merchandise, plants, men, and information.

Ribeira Grande was granted the status of a royal town and became the first bishopric of Cape Verde and the African coasts in 1533, institutionalising its role as a place of transit, exchange, and a variety of contacts between several African peoples, as well as between African slaves and free European men. The slaves were given the rudiments of European culture and evangelised before being shipped to Europe or the Americas.

Despite its limited area, Cidade Velha is an important place in the history of agronomy, forming as it did a centre of transit and acclimatisation for many plant species. In the 16th and 17th centuries in particular it was an experimental garden and a conservatory for seeds and plants from all the continents which were sent on to other countries as they were required. The dry but relatively hot climate over which the trade winds blew, in a pivotal position between temperate and tropical zones, offered favourable conditions for a very diverse vegetation, so long as fresh water was available. Among the plants concerned were sugar cane, bananas, the East African coconut, American maize, citrus fruits and figs from Europe, cotton, etc.

For a century and a half the geostrategic importance of the town was based on its role as a major port of call and on the importance of its slave market. It concentrated considerable wealth in a particularly limited space, defended by a complex system of forts and walls. It attracted the attentions of many seafarers – for example, England's Sir Francis Drake sacked the town in 1585. The defensive system was strengthened by the royal fortress of São Felipe, completed in 1593, one of the strongest of its time.

From the 17th century onwards, however, the new European maritime powers successfully challenged the oceanic commercial hegemony of Portugal and Spain. Jacques Cassard, a corsair from Nantes, attacked and laid waste to Ribeira Grande in 1712 on behalf of Louis XIV, but already by that time it was no longer the rich and powerful maritime citadel of earlier centuries. The decline of the town became more pronounced in the 18th century;

the elite classes left the town, and Praia was preferred as a commercial port of call. Political and administrative functions were transferred to Praia in the second half of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th century. The lack of building materials and the proximity of the two towns resulted in the demolition of a great number of the best constructed buildings, for the benefit of the new capital. It was then that Ribeira Grande became Cidade Velha, the 'old town.'

However, a residual settlement survived in the middle of the ruins of the Portuguese colonial town into the 19th century, and was then partially reconstructed in the second half of the 20th century. It has a certain local importance, and has developed traditional housing which is typical of Cape Verde.

An initial restoration campaign was carried out in the early 1960s, involving the royal fortress, the church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, and the Pillory Monument. In 1992 ICOMOS described the scientific level of this campaign as mediocre.

In the 1970s the State Party again looked at Cidade Velha, with a view to assessing the property and raising awareness. An initial UNESCO mission took place in 1978. This was, however, not taken further because of a lack of human and financial resources.

A second programme of consolidation of vestiges and restoration was undertaken in 1999–2003. It is continuing, with the help of international cooperation, particularly in the urban ensemble.

Values of Cidade Velha, historic centre of Ribeira Grande

Ribeira Grande was the first European town to be built in the tropics, from the end of the 15th century onwards. It was created as a port of call following the first oceanic discoveries that were made possible by technical progress in ocean navigation and the advances of the Portuguese towards the coasts of Africa, the Indian Ocean, and the New World of America.

The town then developed as a major route centre for Portuguese maritime commerce on an international scale, particularly from the end of the 15th century to the 17th century. It was the first colonial town to be created as a result of oceanic trade. Ribeira Grande was also a colonial capital and the first archbishopric of Western Africa.

The town set up a market for slaves from western Africa, a Portuguese monopoly over a long period, where slaves were prepared for their role of working under the planters of Brazil and the Antilles. Pillory Square, at the heart of the old town, reflects the harshness of human relations at the time of slavery.

The social and religious dimension of this stay in Cape Verde, together with the mingling of Africans of various origins and the development of a racially mixed population, gave rise to the first true Creole culture, with a specific oral language, traditional legends, syncretic ritual practices, songs, and dances. Starting from Ribeira Grande, this culture was disseminated by the slaves throughout the Atlantic area.

The territory of Ribeira Grande was an important place for agricultural experimentation and the organisation of colonial agriculture, as well as being a garden for the

acclimatisation and transit of many plant between all the continents.

The historic value of Ribeira Grande/Cidade Velha is undeniable, as it brings together in a single place a high density of important events in human and cultural interchange over a very great distance. However, compared with this historic wealth the monumental heritage is only partial. This is because of the organised destruction of the town in order to reuse its building materials, and because of the volcanic insular context with limited natural resources.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY, AND AUTHENTICITY

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the urban fabric is represented by the main street system which stems from the central Pillory Square. The location of the monuments can generally be easily identified. The toponymy of the place-names has also been conserved.

The integrity of the monumental ensemble has been affected by the abandonment of the town from the end of the 18th century onwards and by the demolitions carried out in order to reuse the stones for building the new capital, Praia. This is the result of history, insularity, and the volcanic nature of the ground. Monumental integrity thus has a residual dimension. Two churches and the fortress have been restored, and the street system has been partly re-established.

The current urban ensemble is therefore mixed, with the monumental remains of the old town hemmed in by the contemporary town. It is the proliferation of unregulated housing over a long period and the construction of additional storeys as a result of overpopulation, and a pauperisation that is not conducive to the maintenance and quality of the buildings, rather than the traditional stone housing, which is probably little different from ordinary people's houses in the 16th–17th centuries, which adversely affect the integrity of the urban landscape. The State Party has shown its awareness of the problem with control measures and a rehabilitation programme.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the property, which was judged to be insufficient in 1992, has not yet been completely re-established, but that 1. it is better understood and better explained in its historical and geographical context, 2. a better balance has been struck through an approach based on the heritage of the Cape Verde house, and 3. it has been inserted by the State Party into a recently developed policy of housing control and a long-term programme for the rehabilitation of the urban landscape.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the property and the expression of its value have been considerably strengthened by extending the buffer zone to include Cidade Velha Bay, which was reported by the State Party in its reply dated 27 February 2009 following a decision by the Council of Ministers on 26 February 2009.

Authenticity

There is no doubt about the authenticity of the monumental ruins and archaeological remains of Ribeira Grande.

In the context of the deterioration of monumental integrity, restoration/reconstruction works have been carried out in two separate phases. The first, which took place in the early 1960s for the church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, Pillory Square, and São Felipe fort, was carried out with a degree of respect for authenticity which has been judged to be mediocre, but it must be admitted that this did save the monuments from definitive ruin. The second phase, which began in 1999, mainly concerned the chapel of the São Francisco monastery and once again the fortress, and the conditions were far better in terms of authenticity. Many wall elements of the ruins of the other monuments were consolidated.

The authenticity of the traditional housing is threatened by the inappropriate use of new materials, such as concrete or sheet metal, and by the appearance of unattractive upper floors.

The natural hilly environment has not been changed by man. The presence of substantial vegetation at the mouth of the river, on a dried up mountainous slope, permits an understanding of the reasons for the location of the town.

The authenticity of the housing has been adversely affected by new constructions and by the transformation of houses that have occurred over the last few years. An awareness of this situation, its control, and the measures now being introduced are moves in the right direction. This is a crucial challenge for the conservation of the property and the expression of its value.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the property has improved as regards the monumental ensemble, particularly as a result of recent works, and that authenticity is beneficial for the urban, maritime, and rural landscapes.

However, ICOMOS considers that the situation regarding the integrity and authenticity of the property is fragile and constitutes a key challenge for its conservation and the expression of its value.

ICOMOS considers that the situation with regard to authenticity–integrity is acceptable overall, whilst highlighting its fragility and the need for a continuous rehabilitation policy.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis considers towns and colonial trading centres with a history similar to that of Ribeira Grande, particularly as regards the history of slavery and colonial and commercial functions. Fourteen port sites have been considered, most of which are already on the World Heritage List: six are in Western Africa – the Island of Gorée (Senegal), Elmina Fort on James Island and the associated sites (Gambia), and the royal palaces of Abomey (Benin); four are in Latin America – the port, the fortresses, and the monumental ensemble of Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), the colonial town of San Domingo (Dominican Republic), the historic centre of Salvador de Bahia (Brazil), and the historic town of Ouro Preto (Brazil); and four are in West Africa – the ruins of Kilwa

Kisiwani and Songo Mnara (United Republic of Tanzania), the Stone Town of Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania), and the island of Mozambique (Mozambique).

The comparison is based on foundation and history, administrative and colonial role, economic and geopolitical impact, architecture and urban planning, cultural history, and intangible heritage.

The comparison shows that the site of Ribeira Grande was developed earlier than any other on the Atlantic; the situation on the shores of the Indian Ocean is more complex, because of an earlier Arab presence and a long-established practice of slave trading. The continuity of the Portuguese presence is also a key aspect of the property, as are the diversity of its commercial and economic roles, its transcontinental role in the field of agronomy, and the importance of its role in the Portuguese colonial administration.

While the monumental heritage in general, and particularly with regard to slavery, is less well conserved than in other sites, such as Gorée, the slave trade dates back earlier and lasted longer, from the 15th century to the middle of the 19th century, and its scale was greater.

The importance of the secure port of call of Ribeira Grande, on routes to both Africa and the Americas, is unique, and is illustrated in particular by its role in agronomic experiments and as a plant conservatory.

The intermingling of the various African cultures under European domination, through slavery, gave birth to the first Creole culture.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for 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 foundation of Ribeira Grande marks a decisive step in European expansion, at the end of the 15th century, towards Africa and the Atlantic area.
- The port of Ribeira Grande, with its isolated situation, which remained secure over a long period, became an essential platform over a long period for the more recent Atlantic slave trade. The slaves came from various regions of western Africa, and it was there that they were prepared for their existence as slaves on colonial plantations.
- In the 16th and 17th centuries Ribeira Grande was a key port of call for Portuguese colonisation and its administration.
- It was also an exceptional route centre for international maritime trade, between the routes of Africa and the Cape, Brazil, and the Caribbean. Ribeira Grande provides an early image of transcontinental geopolitical visions.
- A place of concentration of slaves that was favourable to inhuman practices, Ribeira Grande was also exceptional in terms of the encounter between Europeans and Africans, from which stemmed the first Creole society and the first fully fledged Creole

culture. From there, it spread to Brazil and the Caribbean.

- The valley of Ribeira Grande experimented with new forms of colonial agriculture, on the boundary between the temperate and tropical climates. It became a platform for the acclimatisation and dissemination of plant species across the world.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iii), (iv), and (vi).

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange 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 Ribeira Grande was the first European town to be built south of the Sahara. It bears witness to a deliberately planned trading centre on the Atlantic route expressly for the slave trade. Its intercontinental maritime and commercial role was considerable from the late 14th century to the 16th century, and then declined, but continued nonetheless until the mid-19th century. In a restricted area Ribeira Grande offers at the same time an urban and commercial organisation, a port, military and religious architecture, and an area for agricultural experimentation and the acclimatisation of plants from the various continents, playing an active part in their dissemination across the world.

ICOMOS considers that, despite the incomplete urban and architectural heritage, the monuments, the remains that survive, and the maritime and agri-urban landscapes of Ribeira Grande bear witness to its considerable role in the development of European colonial domination in Africa and America, the development of the black slave trade, the genesis and organisation of the first intercontinental maritime interchanges, and the acclimatisation and dissemination of many plant species between the various continents via maritime trade.

ICOMOS also considers that in its reply dated 27 February 2009 the State Party has provided an extension to the buffer zone and historical additions that strengthen the integrity and the outstanding value of the property in the light of criterion (ii).

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the urban and maritime site and the landscape of Ribeira Grande bear remarkable witness to the history of slavery and its relationship of domination. Through its role as an early experiment in the exploitation of a colonial territory, through the encounter between African and European cultures, and through the encounter between different human groups of western Africa, Ribeira Grande was the cradle of the first mixed-race society and of an accomplished Creole culture, through its many religious and artistic forms of expression. Creole culture then spread across the Atlantic, adapting to the different colonial contexts of the Caribbean and America.

ICOMOS considers that Ribeira Grande provides an important testimony to the history of slavery during the modern era, notably in its maritime organisation and the experiments with slave management for agricultural development. The intermingling of human races and the meeting between African and European cultures gave rise to the first developed Creole society.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has 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 monuments and urban ensemble of Ribeira Grande are an outstanding illustration of a decisive stage in the history of transatlantic navigation and the colonisation of new lands. Its remarkable military, civil, and religious monuments in particular illustrate the fact that the town became a decentralised platform for Portuguese colonial domination, a major port stronghold, and the main centre of its slave trade from the end of the 15th century until the 17th century.

ICOMOS considers that the points raised concerning urban planning and the town's monuments are more closely related to the previous criteria than to criterion (iv). Furthermore, although the urban planning and the monuments of Ribeira Grande are at an early stage of the timeline of European colonisation, and although they have some notable architectural aspects, they are not sufficiently unique or in an appropriate state of conservation and authenticity/integrity to justify outstanding universal architectural and urban value.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Ribeira Grande was at the origin of European slavery practices and took part in its systematic commercial organisation for several centuries. It is therefore directly associated with the symbols and history of this inhuman exploitation of African peoples and its considerable cultural and economic consequences.

The expressions of Creole culture at Ribeira Grande and in Cape Verde were born as a result of the gathering together of the slaves by the merchants and the first mixed-race society which resulted. Its forms are related in particular to art, social and religious customs, beliefs, the pharmacopoeia, and the art of cooking.

Ribeira Grande is an important initial link in an intangible heritage which is shared by Africa, the Americas, and Europe.

ICOMOS considers that, in association with criteria (ii) and (iii), this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii), (iii), and (vi) and that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Development pressures

Population growth has created urban development pressure and over recent years there has been private building which has been carried out in an unregulated manner. Ruins and archaeological levels have been built over, and in several quarters there has been an adverse impact on the urban landscape (see Integrity).

A property development trend is beginning to be perceptible which could ultimately have a considerable impact. Wealthy residents from the nearby capital city Praia could be tempted to buy houses from the poorest inhabitants of Cidade Velha and convert them into second homes. This could adversely affect the historic urban site and its significance, and encourage the departure of the existing population.

Tourism pressures

For the moment there is no real pressure linked to frequentation by tourists. However, the municipality is sometimes subjected to pressure from the developers of tourism facilities who have little respect for the heritage. The most unsuitable projects have been rejected up to now (e.g. a hotel complex in the historic centre, changes to the beach).

Environmental pressures, natural disasters and climate change

The property is subjected to endemic drought, which has become more intense over the last few years because of the climate change that has been affecting the Sahel countries as a whole. Because of the drought, the river is usually dry, and this is compounded by drinking water intakes at the river's source.

The dry soil is fragile, and is easily destroyed by erosion, and the monsoon rain can cause mudslides and flooding. The balance of local agriculture seems to be under threat and close to a breaking point which would have serious social consequences and impact on food production. As water is in short supply, its management is a political priority for the municipality.

Ultimately, the rising sea level could have an impact on the lower part of the town.

ICOMOS considers that there are two main threats to the property: 1. the effects of drought and lack of water for agriculture, and 2. insufficiently controlled development of private urban construction.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION, AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The nominated property has a land surface area of 209.1ha. It is occupied by about 1300 people.

The proposed buffer zone has a land surface area of 1795.6ha. It is occupied by around 9500 people.

ICOMOS considers that the maritime space immediately offshore of the property is an important element in its value, as it was once a port around which were organised not only commercial activity and urban development but also the defensive system. Furthermore, the underwater archaeological finds already made and those that could be made over the coming years play an important role in the value of the property and in its authenticity.

In its reply dated 27 February 2009, the State Party extended the buffer zone towards the maritime space.

ICOMOS considers that to complete this decision a definitive map of the property and the buffer zone should be supplied and its maritime surface area to be defined.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated zone are adequate and that the extension of the buffer zone of the property to the maritime space from the old port and the site's coastal facade is also appropriate.

Ownership

The historic monuments, the street network, and the maritime area (80m from the shoreline), together with the state public service buildings (health, schools), are the public property of the state.

The other land and real estate parts of the property are municipal property, church property, and private property.

Protection

Legal protection

Cidade Velha is the only architectural ensemble listed as National Heritage of Cape Verde (Decree-law 121/III/1990). The initial protection of the historic centre is currently (2008) being extended to the whole of the valley, with a perimeter identical with that of the nominated property.

A peripheral zone for the protection of the environment of the property is associated with the decree currently being promulgated; it corresponds with the buffer zone of the nominated property.

In its reply dated 27 February 2009, the State Party announced two decrees issued by the Council of Ministers:

- The extension of the protective provisions for the historic centre to the entire land buffer zone.
- The individual listing of the main monuments and remains in Cidade Velha as 'National Cultural Heritage' – ten religious, nine military, and two civil monuments or sites.

The State Party also announced that the 1990 Law will be revised in 2009.

ICOMOS wishes to be informed of the publication of these decrees and the progress made on the new national heritage protection law.

Housing development control began in 2005. It includes a procedure for the authorisation of works on existing housing, and two *non aedificandi* zones inside the buffer zone, on either side of the urban site, to protect its visual integrity.

The IIPC (Cape Verde Cultural Heritage Investigation Institute), with Spanish cooperation, is considering a redefinition of the underwater heritage space and its legal protection for all the island's coastal areas.

The application of rules relating to national heritage listing are the responsibility of the employees of the state institute IIPC and the technical services of the municipality.

ICOMOS considers it necessary to recognise a maritime zone which is specific to the property or to its buffer zone and to its archaeological heritage, because of its own geo-historic value, while wishing that its protection should be organised in close conjunction with the current project of the IIPC for underwater protection.

In its replay dated 27 February 2009, the State Party indicates that the appraisal of specific measures for the protection of the buffer zone is under way, within the wider context of a project for underwater protection of the island's coast.

Traditional protection

The relations between the inhabitants with both their housing and gardens and with their immediate urban environment are essential elements of protection.

Effectiveness of protection measures

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the property, understood as an urban ensemble and a landscape site, is relatively recent. This is an important process that needs to be carried through.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the property is being put in place and that it needs to be carried through.

Conservation

Inventories, recording, research

Substantial archives exist relating to the history of Ribeira Grande.

The Rehabilitation and Architectural Transformation Plan (2001–2008), drawn up in cooperation with Portugal, has made it possible to carry out detailed mapping and create a database of the buildings of Cidade Velha. The database is now being managed and developed by the IIPC.

Archaeological research has been carried out in certain locations inside the property, particularly in the cathedral, in cooperation with the United Kingdom.

A study aimed at assessing the situation concerning sustainable and equitable tourism development has been carried out in cooperation with Spain (2007).

A plan for the underwater archaeological studies and the protection of the underwater heritage is currently being prepared, in cooperation with Spain.

Present state of conservation, active conservation measures

At the outset the general state of conservation was one of substantial degradation of the monuments and their urban environment. Very considerable efforts have been made, particularly with the help of international cooperation, to carry out a series of monument restorations and the rehabilitation/restructuring of public spaces in the urban

fabric. These efforts, which have been under way since 1999, have been based on a prior study of the elements of the historic town.

The conservation effort is also being redirected towards traditional stone housing, both for some historic houses and more generally for the typical Cape Verdean house.

The preliminary studies, the town plan, and the planning regulations constitute the scientific and regulatory basis for the conservation measures. They form an essential part of the management plan.

Maintenance

The routine maintenance of the monuments indicated in its contract is carried out by the Proim-Tur agency (see Management).

The other monuments and the street system are maintained by the municipal services.

Effectiveness of conservation measures

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures taken over the last ten years have been effective. They mark a clear improvement in the quality of the works, particularly thanks to the preliminary studies. These measures are now being continued with considerable dynamism and are backed up by international cooperation. They should result in the satisfactory functioning of the institutional bodies and in the establishment of a set of best practices in conjunction with the inhabitants, which must be carefully monitored by the State Party.

ICOMOS considers that substantial progress has been made in the conservation situation of the property over the last ten years or so, and that it is now in the process of reaching a satisfactory level.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The state institute in charge of the heritage (IIPC) monitors public monument restoration work and supervises the programme for the rehabilitation of the urban fabric. Over a long period it has been alone in exercising the functions of heritage property monitoring and management.

The recent creation of a fully constituted municipality at Ribeira Grande/Cidade Velha provides essential support for the management process, making possible a broader-based approach to questions affecting the historic town as a living heritage.

In order to coordinate actions between the municipality and the IIPC, a Joint Cabinet has been created, in charge of granting building permits and works permits and more generally of the urban management plan.

In order to involve the population in the management of the property and encourage ordinary people's awareness of its value, a participative management committee is to be brought into the decision-making process.

International cooperation provides an important partnership in terms of skills and material aid for the implementation of the various plans and programmes.

Proim-Tur is the private agency that has won the contract for the management of the main monuments and the promotion of tourism. This covers the management of four major monuments and of the integrated tourism circuit. It is also a service provider (hotels, catering). It is required to carry out the obligations set out in a convention.

In its reply dated 27 February 2009, the State Party announced the creation of a Management Committee for the Cidade Velha Site in accordance with a decree issued by the Council of Ministers on 26 February 2009. It includes the IIPC Research Institute (automatic chair), the Municipality of Ribeira Grande, the Site Commission, and three expert panel members to be appointed. The Committee is responsible for monitoring the conservation and management of the site, compiling regular reports, and issuing opinions and recommendations on the application of the management plan for the site. The Committee relies for its work on a Consultative Commission which includes broad representation of all the stakeholders, services, and administrations concerned by the site's management.

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

The Management Plan is recent, and is just being introduced. The plan is in effect a tool for studying the urban fabric and its components, an instrument for managing housing development, and a provider of assistance to private citizens (which will be done by means of a projected set of illustrated urban planning regulations). This will define volumes, materials, and the treatment of the facades, floors, roofs, etc. Some of the rules will be applicable to the built structure in the buffer zone, particularly for volumes and materials.

The Town Plan and the Planning Regulations will play a central role in the management and conservation of the property and in the gradual restoration of urban authenticity. These documents extend and complete the Architectural Rehabilitation and Architectural Transformation Plan (2001–2008), which began with an urban planning study and was then followed by the setting up of several projects to regenerate the urban fabric.

These actions are now being combined with the municipal plans currently being introduced: the Strategic Sustainable Development Plan, the Municipal Master Plan, and the Municipal Environmental Plan.

Tourism development is being guided by a recent international study (2007), which may be assimilated to a Plan for Sustainable and Equitable Plan. It is now being implemented, through the Proim-Tur contract in particular.

The management plan for the future of the property has moved forward during the preparation of the nomination dossier and the setting up of its bodies. It sets out medium-term objectives (2008–2012), the achievement of which conforms with the various earlier plans and programmes, under the responsibility of the different institutional players in charge of management. Its priorities are:

- the conservation of architectural values,
- the strengthening of the management and enhancement of the site,
- the improvement of the living conditions of the inhabitants,
- raising awareness of the intangible heritage.

Risk preparedness

This point is not explicitly dealt with in the nomination dossier.

Involvement of the local communities

This is provided for through the Participative Management Committee.

Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and formation

The Ministry of Culture has given a commitment that it will provide permanent annual financing for the conservation of the property.

The nominated property has received substantial international aid grants which have allowed the carrying out of the preliminary studies and the financing of the first major restoration/conservation works. This has made it possible to involve various forms of university-level expertise (architects, archaeologists, sustainable development, etc.); training worksites have also been established. The town now has builders who are well trained in restoring traditional housing whilst complying with current best practices in the field of conservation.

The municipality provides the financing for the general maintenance (seventeen people), as does the Proim-Tur agency for the monuments under its responsibility.

The IIPC has one full-time architect for monitoring the property. The Ministry of Culture can make some of its personnel available on a temporary basis.

In its reply dated 28 February 2009, the State Party presented the current arrangements for visitors to the site.

ICOMOS considers that it is necessary to improve the competencies of the personnel in charge of visitor arrangements and tours by the presence of guides who are well trained in the history of the property and the presentation of its values to a diverse range of audiences (schoolchildren, Cape Verdeans, foreign tourists, etc), to complete the signage, and to continue to develop the production of appropriate documents.

ICOMOS considers it necessary that the municipal personnel in charge of maintenance should be given continuous training in the technical conservation of the property and be instructed in its regulatory protection.

Effectiveness of current management

ICOMOS considers that the elements presented under the heading 'Management Plan' constitute the general guidelines and targets for the future management of the property, and a general indicative timetable of when they will be completed. Associated with the various sector plans (conservation, management, tourism, archaeology, etc.) and the regulations (building permits, planning regulations), they form a credible management plan for the property.

The organisation of management and the exercise of the authority needed for its application are the responsibility for the moment of the IIPC and the new municipal structure. The functioning of several of the bodies is still in the set-up and start-up phases. The cooperation organisations created for this purpose, such as the Joint Cabinet and the participative management committee, are moving in the right direction.

ICOMOS considers that the recent creation of the Management Committee for the Cidade Velha Site is a positive move towards the coordinated management of the property. Its articulation with the other structures already announced must, however, be specified, as must the practical methods for its operation.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate. Furthermore, ICOMOS recommends that particular attention be paid to the competencies and training of the personnel directly in charge of the property and to the implementation of the management bodies announced.

6. MONITORING

The monitoring of the property is included in the Urbanism Monitoring Plan and its database. It seems that the monumental ensemble will now remain virtually unchanged over the coming years, and no major work will be required, following the recent restorations.

The monitoring is carried out by the personnel in charge of the maintenance, as is the monitoring of the street system.

The main monitoring indicator for the coming years is the percentage of houses requiring an architectural intervention for restoration or for restoring authenticity. This percentage is 55%, but in most cases the interventions are considered to be minor.

ICOMOS considers that the various urban and architectural monitoring indicators should be defined, in accordance with international standards, including levels of importance and degrees of urgency for the works to be carried out.

7. CONCLUSIONS

ICOMOS recognises the outstanding universal value of Ribeira Grande and congratulates the State Party for the efforts made to restore the authenticity and the conservation of the property made over the past twenty years, as well as the understanding of the group values of Cidade Velha. Nonetheless, the protection of the property and the implementation of the authorities in charge of its management form an ongoing process that needs to be carried through.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

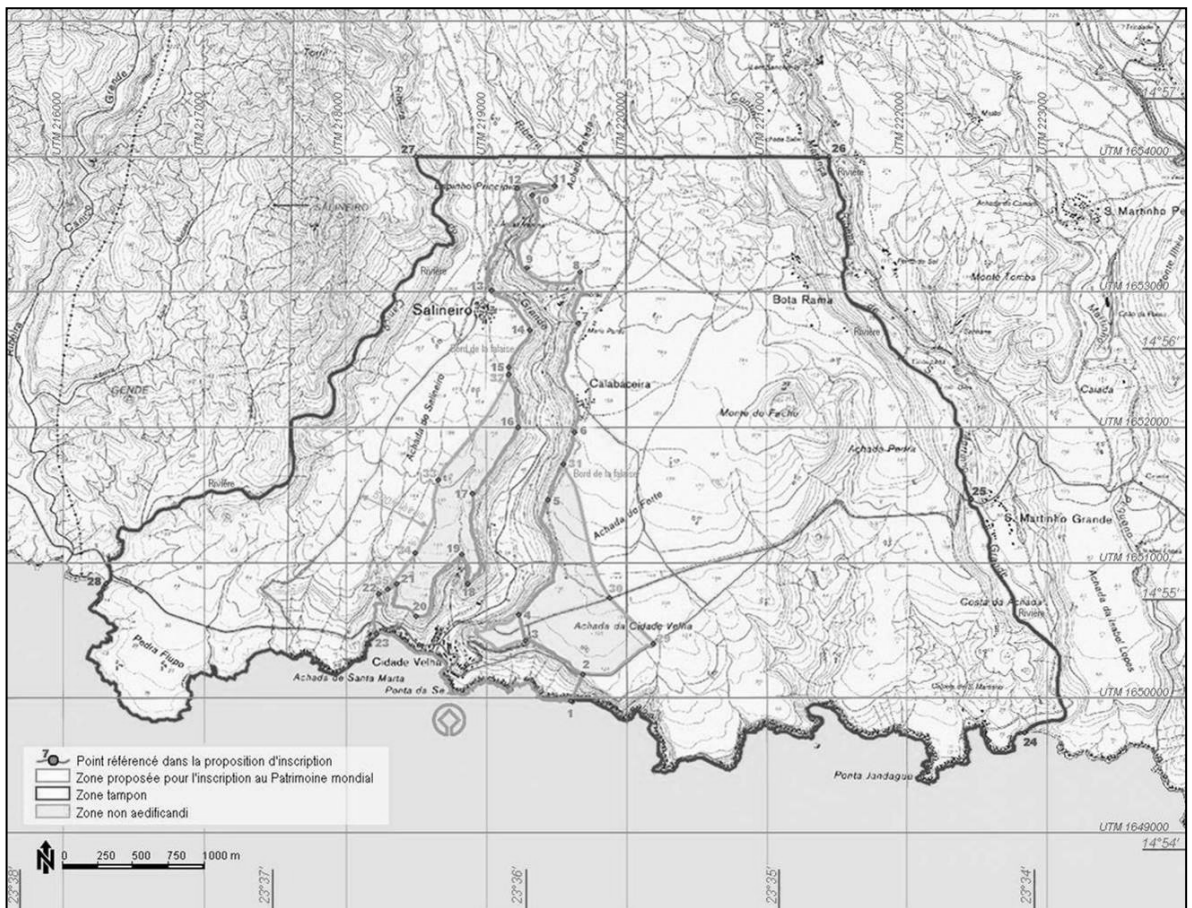
ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of Cidade Velha, historic centre of Ribeira Grande, Cape Verde, be **referred back** to the State Party to allow it to:

- Publish the Decree-Laws recently drawn up by the Council of Ministers for the extension of the existing protection to the whole of the land property nominated for inscription, for the creation of the Management Committee for the Cidade Velha Site, and for the individual national heritage listing of the 21 monuments and archaeological sites within the property;
- Confirm the progress made on the methods to protect the maritime buffer zone and provide the definitive map of the property and its buffer zone; and specify the surface area of the maritime extension;

- Specify the articulation between the Management Committee for the Cidade Velha Site and the other structures already announced and the practical methods for its operation;
- Pay particular attention to controlling urban development and private construction, in particular by specifying and strengthening the powers of the Joint Cabinet in charge of building permits;
- Define the various indicators for urban and architectural monitoring in accordance with international standards, with levels of importance and urgency for the work to be performed.

ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- Pay particular attention to the competencies and training of the personnel directly in charge of the property, both for visitors and for conservation and maintenance;
- Increase the signage within the property so as to improve the presentation of its outstanding universal value and continue efforts to produce quality documentation;
- Preserve in the future management of the property the relationship between the city and the rural and natural space of the valley, in order to conserve the spirit and, if possible, the evidence of the rich agricultural history of Cidade Velha.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



View of the mouth of the valley from the sea



View of the bay of Cidade Velha from the cliff top



Pillory Square



Fortress of São Felipe