
Episcopal City of Albi (France)

No 1337

Official name as proposed by the State Party:

The Episcopal City of Albi

Location:

Midi-Pyrénées Region
Tarn Department
France

Brief description:

The old city of Albi reflects the culmination of a medieval architectural and urban ensemble, on the banks of the lower reaches of the Tarn River. Today the Old Bridge, the Saint-Salvi quarter, and its church are testimony to its initial development (10th-11th centuries). Following the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathar heretics (13th century) it became a powerful episcopal city. The lofty fortified Cathedral (late 13th century) dominates the city, demonstrating the power regained by the Roman Catholic clergy. Built in a unique southern French Gothic style from brick in characteristic red and orange colours, its interior is richly decorated (15th-16th centuries). Alongside the Cathedral is the vast bishop's Palais de la Berbie, overlooking the river, and it is surrounded by residential quarters that date back to the Middle Ages.

Category of property:

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*.

In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (January 2008), Annex 3, this is also a *historic town* in the category of *inhabited historic towns*.

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 20 September 1996

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

Date received by the World Heritage Centre:
27 January 2009

Background: This is a new nomination.

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

independent experts.

Literature consulted (selection):

Abraham, B., *et al.*, *Le bâti brique*, Collection techniques d'amélioration d'habitat existant, EDF, Paris, 1993.

Nélidoff, Ph., *et al.*, *Les cités épiscopales du Midi*, Actes du colloque, Presses Universitaires Champollion, Albi, 2006.

Poisson, O., *et al.*, Les peintures murales de la cathédrale Sainte-Cécile d'Albi, in *Monumental. Revue scientifique et technique des monuments historiques*, 2, Éditions du Patrimoine, 2007, pp. 20-29.

Sire, M.-A., *La cathédrale Sainte-Cécile d'Albi*, Monum, Éditions du Patrimoine, 2002.

Sundt, R., "La cathédrale d'Albi et les églises gothiques à chapelles hautes", Actes du 3^e colloque d'histoire de l'art méridional au Moyen Âge, Narbonne, 1995, pp. 121-28.

Technical Evaluation Mission: 14-18 September 2009

Additional information requested and received from the State Party:

ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 6 January 2010 requesting it to:

- Expand the thematic study;
- Confirm the actual operation of the 'Property Committee' and describe its practical working methods;
- Set out in detail the monitoring and intervention means available in respect of any potential development projects outside the buffer zone;
- Describe the provisions for controlling road traffic in the town centre, notably with regard to the potential conveyance of hazardous materials.

The State Party replied on 26 February 2010 by sending eight additional documents. The analysis of this documentation is included in the present evaluation.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 17 March 2010

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

Lying on the south-west edge of the Massif Central, the historic town of Albi developed on the left bank of the Tarn River from an ancient *oppidum* that commanded the passage along the valley floor. Located between the river to the north and a ravine to the south-west, it forms a relatively flat and easily defensible promontory. The site was occupied throughout the Middle Ages, forming an important regional seat of power and trade (see History). Several surviving structures bear witness to this medieval city.

The *Old Bridge (Pont-Vieux)* was built over the Tarn in the first half of the 11th century, at the crossroads of the Massif Central route to the Garonne Valley and the east-west road along the Massif Central foothills. It is a remarkably early example of a Romanesque engineering structure. Its arches were rebuilt in the 13th century. It initially had a fortified gate tower and a drawbridge and a toll was collected. It was modified in the 15th century with the addition of houses. Its superstructure was altered and widened in the 19th century. It has seven arches mounted on thick pillars with triangular upstream cutwaters. Today it constitutes a clear avenue measuring 3.80m wide and over 150m long that is open to road traffic.

Saint-Salvi Collegiate Church, which is mentioned as early as the 10th century, is located in the heart of the district of the same name. It forms a counterpoint to the Cathedral within the urban landscape and reinforces the medieval tone of the old town when viewed from the right bank of the Tarn. Until the French Revolution it housed the tomb of Saint Salvi and had long been the town's most venerable spiritual place. Its architecture is complex, reflecting a long continuum of building campaigns from the 10th to the 15th centuries, followed by restorations in the 18th and 19th centuries. Measuring 67m long by 22.50m wide, with a cloister to the south, it is today the largest Romanesque building in the region. The frequent use of horseshoe arches and cruciform pillars resting on circular drums are noteworthy.

From the end of the Albigensian Crusade, a term that covers an historic episode that affected a vast part of today's south-western France, in the first half of 13th century (see History), the town developed as an episcopal centre, the seat of regional religious and political power.

Sainte-Cécile Cathedral is the architectural and monumental centre of the programme of the restoration of Roman Catholicism. It was to become a dominant symbol of the city, visible from a considerable distance. Vast in its proportions, the main body of the building was erected between 1282 and 1390. It is a fortified church with tall vertical walls, the original openings of which are high and narrow. They are framed by semi-circular buttresses, forming regular vertical ribs that rise up the entire height of the facades. Visually, this structure reinforces the building's verticality, giving it a sense of austerity and lofty power. The upper edges of the facades have a horizontal capping reminiscent of fortifications, which masks the roof; its current form is recent, the result of the restoration by César Daly at the end of the 19th century. Two corner buttresses, one level with the choir, and a further two symmetrical side buttresses are crowned with finials, which also date from the César Daly restoration.

On the western side the main entrance is flanked by a high bell-tower rising 78m high. It is buttressed by four circular corner towers, in the same architectural spirit as the main buttresses. Completed later than the main

building, this tower dates from the end of the 15th century.

To the north the Cathedral includes an orthogonal rectangular ensemble which forms the sacristy. To the south, a baldachin shelters the side entrance to the nave. Dating from the 16th century, it is late Gothic in style and highly ornate, and presents a significant contrast in style compared with the rest of the building.

Albi Cathedral is symbolic of a Gothic style that is peculiar to southern France. One of its most outstanding features is that it is built entirely of *briques foraines*, that is, local fired brick easily produced to specific dimensions. Brick contributes to the desire for restraint and simplicity in response to criticism by heretics of the luxury of Roman Catholic churches. Given its external mass, the Cathedral might be mistaken for a fortress of faith, in which both the form and the material evoke the spirit of the religious project.

The internal structure is unique in that it does not have any aisles or transept, resulting in a vast single nave 97m long, soaring up 30m to the keystone, and an internal span of 19.2m; the choir is a direct continuation eastwards of the nave, both architecturally and stylistically. The load-bearing structure of the vaulting is comprised of narrow walls built up against the buttresses, which define the high side-chapels that are characteristic of this building. In the 15th century, however, they were divided by the insertion of an intermediate gallery level with the external openings.

The interior of the Cathedral presents a striking contrast with the building's external appearance by virtue of its rich ornamentation, mainly added in the 16th century by Louis I and Louis II of Amboise - rood-screen, choir rails, statuary, vast programme of painted decoration, etc. It is one of the rare Gothic cathedrals in which the walls and vaulting are almost entirely covered in murals, forming vast iconographic ensembles and covering some 18,500m². It depicts the Last Judgment at the western entrance, in the vaulting of the nave, the side chapels, etc.

The *Palais de la Berbie* draws its name from a modification of the Occitan word *bisbia* (bishopric). It was designed and built as an episcopal fortress by Bishop Durand de Beaucaire, in the final phase of the Crusade. It housed the seat of the Inquisition and its prison for the Albi region.

It was erected in several phases, from the 13th to the 15th centuries, around the main courtyard. The effective protection that it afforded the Bishop discouraged any attack during the Hundred Years' War, which decimated the region. It forms an architectural and religious companion to Sainte-Cécile Cathedral since it, too, is a brick-built fortress. This material, unusual on such a scale, makes the blind, oppressive surfaces in red and orange appear overwhelming.

The Palais underwent extensive alterations from the 15th to the 18th centuries, giving some of the completely or partially reconstructed sections a Renaissance style that clashes strongly with the original fortress.

Today it is a somewhat composite ensemble, with large sections that conform with the original architectural design, especially the Bernard de Castanet facade and the Saint-Michel towers. To the north it has a large terrace with a late 17th century pleasure garden overlooking the Tarn River.

Today the Palais houses the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum and its interior has undergone extensive restoration and redevelopment.

Four old quarters immediately surround the Cathedral and the Palais de la Berbie, to form together the historic city of Albi properly speaking. They are today a homogeneous urban ensemble made up of numerous medieval and 15th and 16th century houses which reflect a new period of wealth and growth for the city. They blend brick, timber framing, stone, and rendering together harmoniously. They include Gothic and Renaissance decorative elements and the colours range from pinkish-beige to deep red through many tones between these two extremes.

Work in the 19th and early 20th centuries led to the significant restructuring of the network of thoroughfares following the demolition of most of the fortifications, clearing the area immediately around the Cathedral, the creation of new streets and squares, and the reconstruction of various single dwellings. On the one hand the old alignments were respected, whilst on the other the new facades, almost always in brick, integrate well into the former urban environment and act as a counterpoint to the episcopal buildings. This private architectural and urban sensibility can be seen as a consequence of the restoration of the Cathedral in the 19th century and early public awareness of the heritage values of the property. This type of restoration and adaptation of the built environment, respecting the fundamental architectural harmony that underlay the value of the old city, continued throughout the second half of the 20th century and into the current urban renewal projects.

To the west, the *Castelviel Quarter* is built on the extreme western end of the historic promontory. It corresponds to the old Celtic *oppidum* and the first *castra*, and then the fortified house of the Counts of Toulouse who created the medieval city. Castelviel was for a long time an agglomeration apart from the episcopal city, outside its ramparts. It is arranged around a main axial thoroughfare running from the Sainte-Cécile bell-tower towards the old castle (now demolished).

To the east, the *Combes Quarter* drops down to the banks of the Tarn and the entrance of the Old Bridge. It corresponds with the city's old commercial and river activities, as well as the arrival of major roads. Several

well conserved bourgeois houses dating from the Romanesque period are evidence of this.

To the south-east, the *Saint-Salvi Quarter* is a small circular agglomeration, built around its collegial church, which has long been autonomous. It developed in the 10th century along small alleys and the Pile and Cloister squares, with the role of a commercial and craft centre. It has a significant heritage of corbelled medieval houses with jettied galleries.

To the south, the *Castelnau Quarter* developed at the same time as the Cathedral, in the 13th and 14th centuries. It is the result of a joint programme by the political and religious powers for developing the city. It was built around wide straight streets from the start. Designed as a residential quarter, it was home to the medieval Albi elite, and several fine patrician dwellings survive.

The nominated property also includes:

- The banks of the Tarn River below the Palais de la Berbie and the Cathedral, which reveal the residual presence of the old ramparts; today, this area is a landscaped park.
- On the right bank of the Tarn, the property includes the river banks and the lower section of the old Madeleine Quarter by the end of the Old Bridge. It is an exceptional point for observing the urban landscape of the ensemble of the Episcopal City.

History and development

The promontory between the Tarn River to the north and the Bondidou Ravine to the south-west was the site of an ancient *oppidum*; traces of occupation of this site date back to the Bronze Age. It corresponds with the present-day Castelviel Quarter (see Description). The site was first occupied by the Celts, and then housed a small Gallo-Roman settlement. It was sufficiently important to be the seat of a bishopric as early as the 5th century. It was fortified during the early medieval period and buildings appeared along the banks of the river, which was navigable. In 418 the Visigoths invaded and took control of the region, followed by the Franks in 507. All the remains from these periods are archaeological.

The Saint-Salvi Quarter (10th century) and the Old Bridge (11th century) are testimony to early medieval economic and urban development. The Madeleine Quarter was built on the right bank around the end of the Old Bridge. By virtue of its geographical location, Albi benefits from contact with both the moist and cool heights of the Ségala and the Rouergue regions and the warmer and drier Garonne Basin lowlands. Albi was deforested very early and became an agricultural region producing a variety of crops, the town becoming a market town for farmers where a variety of products were traded,

depending on the season: grain, wine, cattle, and hemp, and later pastels, etc. The Tarn River is naturally navigable from Albi to the Garonne. The city became a centre for a regional wholesale trade in wool and fabrics manufactured in the surrounding countryside.

The feudal period in Albi was marked by the presence of the Counts of Toulouse, and then by the overlordship of the powerful Trencavel viscounts in the 12th and 13th centuries. Land ownership was also shared among other right-holders in addition to the feudal lords, namely the bishop and canons of Saint-Salvi. The urban development in clearly distinct districts and quarters reflects this sharing of the space (see Description).

Urban development in the 12th and 13th centuries was accompanied by religious dissent at the regional level, with the inhabitants of Albi forming one of its centres, alongside Toulouse, Carcassonne, Foix, etc. The Catholic ecclesiastical establishment appeared to be cut off from the social realities of both the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie of the period. In the 12th century the dissenters became organised; they were known as the Albigenses or Cathars. They were evolving towards a dualist interpretation of the world and the human condition, as well as towards religious practices that were rapidly judged to be heretical by the Roman Catholic authorities. The preachings of Saint Bernard (1145) and the Cistercians, and then of Saint Dominic (1206-07), alternated with declarations of heresy and excommunication, notably the Fourth Lateran Council, which instigated the inquisition of the Albigenses (1179). Two successive crusades were then decreed by the Church against the dissenters: the first (feudal) from 1208 to 1209 and the second (royal) from 1224 to 1229. Despite the name, the Albigensian Crusade, the city of Albi was in material terms relatively unaffected by the military events, which rapidly turned into the conquest of the feudal lords in the north and then a royal annexation. The restoration of the Catholic faith by force was accompanied by the definitive anchoring of Languedoc within the French sphere.

The Roman Catholic church's firm recovery of control over the population also resulted in the elimination of the local elite, who were favourable to Catharism, and in the establishment of a powerful clerical grip on spiritual and material life. Albi is typical of these developments in the 13th century, becoming an episcopal city under the overlordship of the builder-bishops. Bernard de Combret started building the fortified castle and the Palais de la Berbie during the final phase of the Crusade; his successor, Bernard de Castanet, began construction of the imposing Sainte-Cécile Cathedral, a veritable incarnation of a fortress of the Roman Catholic faith (see Description). At the end of the 13th century and the start of the 14th, considerable urban growth paralleled the erection of the episcopal ensemble, including new quarters and religious institutions outside the walls.

In addition to its symbolic populist dimension, the choice of brick in the 13th century as the building material for the

large buildings can be explained by the poor quality of the region's limestone quarries and the natural abundance of clay in the Tarn and Garonne basins. It has given a common language to the Languedoc cities in this region, notably in Montauban, Toulouse, and Albi. Furthermore, the new episcopal city benefited from the input of very diverse artistic and architectural influences from the northern regions of France as well as from Flanders and Catalonia.

The major European crisis in the mid-14th century, with the beginning of the Hundred Years' War, famine, and plague, had a lasting effect on Albi and its region. The city contracted and vegetated, closed within its walls, which were strengthened at the start of these events. Its craftsmen and its trade suffered long-term consequences, and the urban population collapsed.

The Renaissance, beginning in the mid-15th century in the Albi region, brought economic recovery based on the extraction of pastel, a plant-dye in fashion at the time. A new local elite developed, bringing in its wake the construction of fine residences in a Renaissance style and the renovation of the old quarters in the historic centre. The seigneurial bishops Louis I and Louis II of Amboise undertook the completion of the Cathedral, building the external entrance baldachin and the choir, with its rood-screen and internal stone rails; they then launched an imposing programme of internal murals and statuary, assisted by both regional artists and others from France, Flanders, and Italy (see Description). They reflect a Late Gothic style, characterised by extremely rich decoration, at times overly ornate, coupled with highly expressive characters.

In the 16th and 17th centuries the episcopal Palais de la Berbie underwent a series of important architectural transformations. Its military aspects were softened and partly replaced by buildings of Renaissance inspiration and gardens, to form a more light and open palatial ensemble that was more pleasant to live in. The Palais de la Berbie gradually took on its contemporary appearance. The successive bishops of Albi, raised to the rank of archbishop in the 17th century, were still the lords of the city and its dependencies; they presided over the Estates of Albi, exercising a dual spiritual and temporal power right up to the French Revolution. At the end of the 17th century the historical city, still encircled by ramparts and clustered around its fortress-cathedral, retained the appearance of a medieval citadel. It is sometimes referred to as the Red City because of the colour of its brick.

The city's appearance changed in the 18th century, when demolition of the ramparts began to facilitate the urban development required as a result of population growth. The number of building projects grew in the second part of the century, resulting in the creation of new quarters and a rational extension of the road network, notably to the east of the city. Nonetheless, this period was also marked by a decline in trading activities, which started to shift to the new transport axis formed further south by

the Canal du Midi and the Garonne River.

After the Revolution, the clergy's properties were sold, to become administrative centres or warehouses. The Cathedral was briefly converted into a Temple of Reason. Although the rood-screen and the choir escaped relatively unscathed from damage during the disorder under the Terror, the statuary and the reliquary did not.

In the 19th century urban renewal projects were again taken up and expanded, especially in the second half of the century; the Old Bridge was widened and navigation along the Tarn was improved. The end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries were marked by an economic revival due to the growth of the glass-making and hat-making industries, along with the extraction of coal near Carmaux.

Major restoration work was undertaken on the Cathedral at the end of the 19th century, in the spirit of Viollet-le-Duc and under the supervision of the architect César Daly. Its immediate surroundings were cleared in order to enhance its appearance, along with a significant reordering of the old city's streets so as to facilitate urban traffic. A number of peripheral quarters appeared, extensive infrastructural work was carried out around the city, and modern buildings, generally built of brick, appeared in the old quarters. Having become unsuitable for episcopal functions that had become reduced to their simple ecclesiastical dimension, the Palais de la Berbie was gradually abandoned. In the early 20th century it became the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum to house the collections left by the painter's family to the city where he was born.

At the end of World War II the historic urban centre was first abandoned, losing many of its inhabitants, who moved to the new buildings in the city's outskirts. However, it escaped a project that would have seen it demolished and replaced with a modernist reconstruction. It was then recognised as an urban ensemble with considerable heritage value and declared a Conservation Area by the Municipality in 1968, which led to the implementation of a conservation plan in 1974. The pace of work was stepped up at the end of the 20th and the start of the 21st centuries, resulting in a high level of conservation for this urban ensemble within the perimeter of the former episcopal city.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Comparative analysis

The State Party begins with a diverse series of comparisons with large monuments in fired brick from around the world and different historical periods. However, most of these buildings are built in brick with an added surface finish in enamelled brick, not in large *briques foraines* with a perfectly smooth and unadorned

finish as is the case in Albi. These monuments are generally isolated or set in urban ensembles of limited consistency so far as architectural style is concerned, or in a ruinous state within ensembles with limited integrity. The most similar, in monumental terms, to the large monuments in Albi are without doubt the Minaret of Jam, Afghanistan (2002, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv)) and Roskilde Cathedral, Denmark (1995, criteria (ii), (iv)), which are contemporary with Albi but very different.

The comparison then continues with religious monuments of the same period and scale, notably the large Gothic cathedrals. The latter are generally built of stone and their architectonics and floor plans differ markedly from the highly specific characteristics of Albi Cathedral: vertical and narrow rounded buttresses extended by internal load-bearing walls, large single naves without columns, no transept, numerous high side-chapels, high and restricted lighting, specific external symbolism, etc.

The internal decoration can also be compared with that of many cathedrals, the outstanding universal value of which has already been recognised. While adopting numerous structural and decorative elements specific to this period of religious architecture in Europe (bays, Gothic arches, choirs closed with rood-screens, etc.), Albi demonstrates significant particularities that are often rare or unique, such as a very extensive programme of well preserved murals, ceilings that are completely decorated, a well preserved rood-screen and closed choir, numerous decorated side-chapels, etc.

From the urban point of view, Albi is then compared with other cities, especially European ones, where fired brick is extensively used and which are already inscribed on the World Heritage List: Split, Croatia (1979, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv)), Florence, Italy (1982, criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi)), Siena, Italy (1995, criteria (i), (ii), (iv)), and Salamanca, Spain (1988, criteria (i), (ii), (iv)). Unlike Albi, however, these cities are not entirely built of brick; this is the case only for certain imposing monuments or residential quarters. They are not typical and complete ensembles that illustrate the urban and monumental use of this building material as Albi, which reflects the full spectrum of applications for this material. Its interplay of colours and reflections in the green waters of the Tarn offer unusual colour nuances and a rare aesthetic quality.

The comparison continues with similar cities in southern France - Arles (1981, criteria (ii), (iv)) - and those with episcopal ensembles - Avignon and the Papal Palace (1995, criteria (i), (ii), (iv)) and Narbonne and its Cathedral ensemble. Albi differs in that its episcopal ensemble is still complete, it has high structural unity, combining religious monuments with palaces and residential quarters, and demonstrates homogeneity in terms of the construction material used and the originality of its Cathedral.

The study concludes with a comparative overview of the large medieval churches in southern France. It highlights the grandiose character of Sainte-Cécile, which through its dimensions and its volumes reflects the Gothic traditions of northern Europe, but with the particularities already mentioned making it a mixed and unique work, the characteristic elements of which may be found here and there in other buildings across the region of southern France.

ICOMOS considers the approach for the comparison adopted by the State Party to be interesting, and the value of the episcopal group of buildings including Sainte-Cécile Cathedral and the Palais de la Berbie appears to have been established. They are, however, treated superficially or only partially, notably at the regional level (the actual region of the property) and at the European level (Mediterranean Europe and Northern Europe). Finally, the conclusions regarding the uniqueness or the rarity of the characteristics of the nominated property seem to be emphatic. A more detailed comparative study encompassing more broadly the concepts of episcopal cities in Europe, medieval urban centres, and the originality of the role played by brick in Albi should be carried out to fully justify the property's values in these areas, which have been asserted rather than demonstrated so far.

In its 6 January 2010 letter ICOMOS requested the State Party to expand on this point. The State Party replied with a detailed document that examines one by one the points suggested; they provide a final overview of the specific features of the nominated property. The notion of a cathedral ensemble is first re-examined and then by extension that of the episcopal city, at the level of a detailed analysis for Mediterranean Europe and northern Europe. The second part discusses at length the use of brick in the Middle Ages, for both secular and religious structures in Europe and in the Toulouse region. The final section deals with medieval urbanization. The study confirms that the nominated property's urban and architectural values fall within widely represented categories. The specific features of the property are mainly reflected in the very homogeneous dimension of the episcopal city, where the power of the cathedral ensemble completely dictates the urban layout. An original and perfected use of brick is confirmed, within a clearly asserted regional context and style.

ICOMOS considers that the additional comparative study provides satisfactory responses regarding the overall value of the property.

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

Justification of 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:

- It is an outstanding example of a human settlement over a long period of history, the medieval episcopal city having evolved into an urban centre.
- It has specific military and religious architecture the material expression of which provides rare, if not unique, examples, such as the Cathedral, both in terms of its external architecture and its internal decorative programme.
- It is a remarkable confluence of artistic exchange from various regions of France and Europe.
- It is a remarkable example of architecture in the southern French Gothic style, built exclusively in brick. Its main uniform surfaces imbue it with an austerity consonant with the religious project of the 13th century that followed the Albigensian Crusade.
- The property as a group stands out for the consistent and constant use of an uncommon material, local fired brick, or *brique foraine*, throughout the various periods of its history and up to the present day.
- The ensemble of monuments and residential quarters is coherent and homogeneous; there is no truly anachronistic construction. This ensemble has not undergone any major changes thanks to the continued existence of its main monuments, Sainte-Cécile Cathedral, Saint-Salvi Collegiate Church, the episcopal Palais de la Berbie, and the Old Bridge.

ICOMOS considers that this justification is appropriate overall.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The urban ensemble nominated is a historic centre that has remained unchanged throughout the centuries from what it was at its height. The urban morphology is still clearly legible, the monuments are all present, without any major alterations, and the overall landscape formed by the city is well preserved.

It is acknowledged that buildings and dwellings have been added to the urban fabric, but they have always been in harmony with the context, using brick as the sole building material. A sufficiently significant number of old private dwellings have been preserved, in good architectural condition, to be able to express the integrity of the urban fabric.

All the old architectural elements are located within the historic zone nominated for inscription, and this exactly corresponds with the city boundaries as they were in the Renaissance.

Earlier and recent administrative arrangements coupled with significant involvement of the local population

contribute to preserving the integrity of the episcopal city's heritage.

However, ICOMOS notes that significant historical alterations have been made to the immediate environment around the Cathedral, and more broadly to the network of streets in the old town, notably in the 19th and 20th centuries. The same applies to certain components restored in the 19th century at the Cathedral or changes made to the residential quarters as a result of recent constructions, albeit in brick but in a style and height that conform poorly with the old built urban context. Formed by a succession of layers in completely different styles and architecture, the integrity of the Palais de la Berbie is fully present in terms of its footprint. These alterations to the conditions of integrity have not, however, compromised the value of the nominated property or its significance; it is therefore possible to qualify them as secondary.

Authenticity

Throughout the centuries the site has been spared the ravages of war and urban change. The technical and architectural quality of the restorations carried out in the 19th and 20th centuries enabled this ensemble to endure over time and retain an excellent level of authenticity, both for its major symbolic monuments and for its private dwellings. The recent restoration campaigns have all been implemented in accordance with international standards, under the supervision of the Head Architect of Historical Monuments (*Architecte en chef des monuments historiques*). The urban morphology is still clearly legible, the toponymy is intact, the monuments are in a good state of conservation, and the natural environment has not been spoilt by anarchical housing development. The State Party considers the state of authenticity of the property and the dynamic for its long-term conservation to be good.

ICOMOS considers that the property has been relatively well spared from the ravages of time, war, and even overly aggressive modern development. The conditions of authenticity for its urban structure, a significant number of buildings dating from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and most of its monuments are satisfactory as a result of appropriate conservation. There is broad visual consistency attributable to the chromatic nuances of the local fired brick used throughout the property's history right up to the present day.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

Criteria under which the inscription is proposed

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

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 the Palais de la Berbie and Sainte-Cécile Cathedral are testimony to a considerable exchange of architectural influences between Albi, northern France, Flanders, Italy, and Catalonia. It has resulted in a form of architecture specific to southern France. The site was the platform for an exchange of artistic influences between various regions in the north and the southern countries between the 13th and 16th centuries, as illustrated by the perfectly preserved sculptures in the Cathedral choir and the largest mural in any European cathedral.

ICOMOS considers that the arrival of artists and craftsmen from various regions of Europe to work for the great princes on building churches and palaces was relatively commonplace in the periods under consideration. Albi bears witness to its having been a regional stage, certainly an important one, but without, however, being a centre with any perceptible influence on other arts of France or Europe. The specific qualities of the building programme in Albi would tend rather to be indicative of other criteria, notably that of being an original and outstanding example of the adaptation of a type of construction to a specific geographical, cultural, and historical situation (criterion (iv)).

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 nominated property provides an outstanding example of a type of construction using what are known as *briques foraines*, a form of brick characteristic of the city's urban physiognomy since the Middle Ages. It illustrates a particular use of this universal material in the various monuments or buildings throughout the ages.

In addition to the comment above about Sainte-Cécile Cathedral being the original and outstanding adaptation of a form of construction to a specific situation, ICOMOS considers that the justifications provided regarding the architectural and urban role of brick are acceptable. Brick has been used continuously from the 13th century up to the present day. The monuments are well maintained; they have not undergone any major transformations or destruction; they are therefore perfectly legible within the urban landscape. The site, comprising major and minor monuments, along with more common buildings, retains a high degree of urban, stylistic, and visual consistency. Moreover, the local Albi fired brick is unique in terms of its specific form, which is

not found anywhere else and goes beyond the classic formats in use since the Roman period.

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 especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the site is an outstanding example of a human settlement that has gradually been structured in such a way as to form an original episcopal city and an urban centre of regional importance. It developed on a promontory overlooking the Tarn Valley, around a monumental urban core formed by Sainte-Cécile Cathedral, the episcopal Palais de la Berbie, and the visual counterpoint of Saint-Salvi Collegiate Church. The site's identity is remarkable for its natural setting, the building material that at the same time is unique and presents many nuances of colour, its artistic and decorative wealth, and its unique history and the resulting symbolic values of the property, notably with in respect of Sainte-Cécile Cathedral. The unity and urban homogeneity of the nominated ensemble allow it to fully express its values as a traditional human settlement and its territorial use.

ICOMOS considers that the justifications provided are acceptable. It is an outstanding example that represents the integrity and authenticity of the development of an episcopal city from the Middle Ages through to the start of the modern era. The nominated property also illustrates, through the ambitious and symbolic construction programme of Sainte-Cécile Cathedral, a commitment to personifying the spiritual and temporal power of the Roman Catholic Church following the suppression of the Cathar heresy by the two Albigensian Crusades.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

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

Description of the attributes

- The urban and monumental ensemble of the episcopal city of Albi provides a complete and well preserved example of this type of urban settlement in 13th-19th century Europe. However, the city is much older, as evidenced by the Old Bridge, Saint-Salvi Church, and the Castelvieu quarter.
- It presents a high level of visual homogeneity through the general use of *brique foraine*, with its

local characteristics, while also providing considerable diversity of colour and building applications ranging from humble dwellings to the largest monument.

- Sainte-Cécile Cathedral and the episcopal Palais de la Berbie are testimony to an ambitious building programme aimed at incarnating the spiritual and temporal power of the Roman Catholic Church, following the suppression of the Cathar heresy by the Albigensian Crusade. The external appearance of the Sainte-Cécile fortress church and the feudal sections of the Palais de la Berbie, emphasised by the use of smooth vertical brick walls, fully illustrate this programme.
- The internal structure of Sainte-Cécile is an original and unique adaptation of the Gothic cathedral of northern Europe to a specific context in southern France. It is characterised by its lofty nave without a transept, its many buttresses extended by internal load-bearing walls, and its high side-chapels. A number of late Gothic constructions were added to the Cathedral, along with a series of murals and sculptures, in the 15th and 16th centuries.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Development pressures

Albi, the seat of the Prefecture of the Tarn Department, plays an important administrative role and has mainly developed tertiary sector activities. These have very little impact on the property's value.

ICOMOS considers that the economic and urban development pressure is in general well assessed and controlled within the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone. The State Party is, however, urged to ensure better control of certain parameters, such as road traffic in the town centre, especially that of hazardous materials. The State Party also needs to make sure that the legibility of the historic urban landscape is not altered by disproportionate construction in the peripheral areas which up to the present do not come under any special protection measures, notably south and north-east of the buffer zone.

ICOMOS included these two points in its 6 January 2010 letter. The State Party replied to the first point indicating that traffic in the town centre is regulated by municipal decisions, notably a 7.5-tonne limit on all vehicles in the town centre (1999), and a very recent decision banning all hazardous material traffic (February 2010). Further, all the roads in the nominated property are either reserved exclusively for pedestrians, or subject to strict speed restrictions (20 or 30 km/hr).

The long-term protection of the urban landscape is provided by the current operation of building permit mechanisms under the local town-planning provisions. In the longer term this concern is being taken into account

in the consideration being given by the municipal authorities under the various procedures being developed for the greater Albi urban area, well beyond the current buffer zone, in the form of a ZPPAUP (urban and rural architectural heritage protection zone) and a SCOT (territorial cohesion plan).

Tourism pressures

Each year the city receives nearly 650,000 visitors. This traffic is perfectly well managed by reason of the city's easy access to its suburbs. Most of the pedestrian and retail streets lead to the peripheral parking areas (buffer zone). As a result, visitors are dispersed and can circulate without difficulty throughout the entire historic centre.

ICOMOS considers that the tourism pressures are well understood and suitably managed. Tourism route signs should, however, be installed.

Environmental pressures

The episcopal city is not subject to any specific environmental pressures. The public services regularly monitor air and water quality. Major works have been carried out on wastewater collection and treatment within the boundary of the nominated property, in the buffer zone, and across the entire territory of the commune. As a result, the overall quality of the water flowing in the Tarn has been markedly improved by comparison with the situation in the 1980s.

ICOMOS considers that there are no major environmental pressures. The landscape dimensions of the property must, however, be a concern for the management authority (see Development pressures).

Natural disasters

To date, natural disasters have never constituted a threat to the episcopal city. The river is certainly subject to flooding, but the built-up areas are located on higher ground. Only the banks themselves may be affected and there is a risk of their collapsing at certain points. Only the Old Bridge might be directly affected by exceptional flooding.

ICOMOS considers that there is in theory no major threat of any natural disaster.

Impact of climate change

In periods of extreme drought the clay soil contracts, resulting in differential settling which could affect the foundations of some buildings.

ICOMOS considers that there is no major direct threat to the property. Nonetheless, the landscape protection measures announced beyond the current buffer zone need to be confirmed.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries of the nominated property correspond to the episcopal city as it was in the Renaissance, along with the adjacent Tarn River and its banks and the Old Bridge. The property has a surface area of 19.47 ha.

A continuous buffer zone completely encircles the property. Particular attention has been paid to protecting the banks of the Tarn upstream and downstream from the property. The entire buffer zone falls under the protection of the 1962 Law on Conservation Areas. It has a surface area of 64 ha.

The nominated property has a population of 950, and there are a little over 3,500 inhabitants in the buffer zone (2008 figures).

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

Ownership

The monuments and public spaces belong to the State Party through the Ministry of Culture (Cathedral) and the Ministry of the Environment (banks of the Tarn), or to local authorities through the Municipality of Albi (Saint-Salvi Church, Old Bridge, the road network in the episcopal city) and the Tarn General Council (Palais de la Berbie and its gardens).

Most of the dwellings located within the property belong to private individuals. A social housing collective is owned by the semi-public organization Tarn-Habitat.

Protection

Legal protection

The main monuments of the episcopal city have been protected by French legislation on historic monuments since the mid-19th century. They therefore benefit from long-standing legal protection:

- Saint-Salvi Church has been designated in this way since 1846.
- Sainte-Cécile Cathedral and the episcopal Palais de la Berbie were designated in 1862.

The outline laws currently in force applying to all or part of the property are:

The *Law of 1913 on Designated Historic Monuments* identifies monuments of national importance; their environment is automatically protected within a radius of

500m. The following were added to the monuments listed above:

- The Old Bridge (1921);
- Saint-Salvi cloister (1922).

The facades and roofs of dwellings within the property boundaries have also been listed:

- Four in Rue Saint-Julien and one in Rue d'Engueysse (1924);
- Two in Rue de la Grand'Côte (1940);
- One in Rue de la Grand'Côte and one simultaneously in Rue Sainte-Cécile and Rue Mariès (1971).

The *Law of 1930 on Sites* applies to Boulevard Général-Sibille.

The 1913 and 1930 laws were extended with the possibility of *inscribing* other monuments or historic spaces. This constitutes a second inventory list for cultural properties of lesser importance. Inscription results in a specific obligation on the owner, in consultation with the public conservation services, to obtain authorization for all work. For the episcopal city of Albi this regulatory possibility has been applied relatively broadly to various public elements, but above all to many house facades and roofs.

The so-called 'Malraux' law of 1962 on *conservation areas* led to an early municipal project in the 1960s, approved by ministerial decree in 1968. A protection and enhancement plan followed and was approved in 1974. This plan and its regulations establish conservation and enhancement rules for each plot of land, following evaluation by the *Architectes des bâtiments de France* (a body of official professionals reporting to the Ministry of Culture). This regulation covers filing an application and supervising and inspecting both public and private work; it guarantees the quality of work in accordance with national standards. In Albi this legal provision applies to the entire property and the entire buffer zone.

The Municipality has also developed an Urban Quality Charter to promote respect for heritage and its enhancement which was submitted to the private commercial sector and their technical services. After a lengthy public consultation process, it was finally adopted in August 2009. It is a common development tool intended to ensure shared quality. It defines best practices, what is allowed and what is not, for facades so far not listed, for shop fronts, signage and lighting, occupation of public space (street furniture, café terraces, billboards, etc.).

Effectiveness of conservation measures

There is a broad range of complementary legal protection, some of which is very long-standing; the nominated property and the entire buffer zone are subject to restrictive regulatory or contractual provisions. The overall

effectiveness of their application by the national, regional, and municipal services, with their qualified staffs, is enhanced in Albi through the now long-standing support by the Municipality and the inhabitants of the town for protecting their heritage at the collective and personal levels.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate and effective.

Conservation

Inventories, recording, research

All the main buildings in the episcopal city and the buffer zone have been listed in an inventory. The archives are curated by the city's administrative services and by the decentralised national services located in the region. However, a new and more complete inventory is currently being compiled with the object of providing conservation programmes with an efficient updated tool.

The national, regional, and municipal archives house extensive documentation about the history of the city of Albi in general and the episcopal ensemble in particular. The ecclesiastical archives provide additional resources relating to the period of the Albigenian Crusade alongside the standard public archives.

Following chromatic research on the materials (bricks, timber, and rendering) and the facade structures, measures were introduced to improve the property's conservation. They are included in the provisions for the Conservation Area and the Urban Quality Charter (see Protection).

Present state of conservation

The monuments are in a good state of conservation, right down to an excellent level of detail, thanks to the long-standing policies that are being implemented and their quality and regularity. The summary in the nomination dossier of the ten programmes of works carried out since 2001, for a total budget of nearly 45 million euros, gives a clear indication of this result.

Active conservation measures

The historic monuments are covered by annual maintenance and restoration programmes. These are drawn up, supervised, and approved by the State Party's various specialist services represented locally by the Regional Department of Cultural Affairs (DRAC) in Toulouse and the Departmental Architecture and Heritage Bureau (SDAP) in Albi. These programmes are financially consolidated by the State, the other public stakeholders (region, department, and municipality), and project private partners, if any. Specific financial packages are put together for each project, depending on the type of legal protection, the owner, and any local or regional stakeholders concerned.

The work is generally performed within the allotted timeframes and under good scientific and professional conditions, as only approved contractors are allowed to work on the projects. Monitoring the work and the state of conservation is provided, over the long term, by the State Party's Department of Historic Monuments, notably its *Architectes des bâtiments de France* unit. The other notable public or private buildings are restored or renovated under various financial aid programmes provided by the State and the local and regional authorities.

Management of the Conservation Area, alongside the protection of listed monuments and sites, is under the responsibility of the Municipality. All its programmes are submitted for approval and monitoring by the *Architectes des bâtiments de France*.

Maintenance

The maintenance of the property's historic monuments is the responsibility of the public owners (State, Region, and Municipality). It is integrated in the annual maintenance and restoration programme for each of the buildings. It is monitored and implemented by each of the owner's relevant services. The Municipality maintains the public spaces and streets. Owners maintain their private dwellings under the 'Shared Charter of Best Conduct.'

Effectiveness of conservation measures

Tracking eventual and inevitable deterioration over time is well managed; it allows for an effective process for programming works that need to be carried out. The conservation programme is in place for 2009-2014; financial consolidation is yet to be finalised.

The effectiveness of the conservation of private buildings combined with an approach to the site taken as a whole for almost forty years has led to the urban landscape of the episcopal city of Albi being of excellent quality.

Whilst the scientific and professional level of conservation is in general very high, for some private buildings of minor interest some 'fake-old' architectural elements have been added during restoration work.

ICOMOS considers that the rapid finalization of the financial consolidation for the planned work and greater rigour for the minor buildings and sites should be encouraged.

ICOMOS considers that the protection, maintenance, and conservation measures implemented are adequate and effective.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The administrative aspect of the management lies in the procedure for work permits and their monitoring when the *Architecte des bâtiments de France*, the Departmental Architecture and Heritage Bureau (SDAP) and specialist municipal services (building and works permits) are involved.

Conservation management is part of a more general process for managing and enhancing the property, which is shared between numerous public institutions and municipal services, with clearly defined roles with respect to the property. These include day-to-day management and maintenance of the public roads and traffic management, public spaces and gardens, management of the river and its banks, waste collection and urban cleaning services, etc. Numerous specialist semi-public and private stakeholders are also involved in the management of the property: the Museum, the Catholic Diocese of Albi, local associations, retailers' association, cultural associations, private owners of residences, the Tarn-Habitat social housing association, the Tarn River Association, the Tourist Bureau, fire and safety services, etc. Each exercises its own responsibility over the property, in accordance with their respective practices, but generally within the constraints of public plans.

Coordination between these very diverse stakeholders was initially provided by the Steering and Coordination Committee for the inscription nomination, under the aegis of the Municipality, in continuity of its existing public service and conservation of the urban heritage responsibilities.

Its successor, a Property Committee, was established and officially installed in office in June 2009. It makes possible the exchange of information and arbitration between the various stakeholders in the episcopal city, along with the decision-making needed for the sustainable management of the property.

In its letter of 6 January 2010 ICOMOS requested the State Party to confirm the operation being practised by the Property Committee and to describe its working methods. In its reply of February 2010 the State Party provided a detailed account of the Property Committee's implementation in 2009, its composition in three sections, and its remit. It has taken over from the Steering Committee and is mainly in charge of monitoring the property's conservation and protection, organizing cooperation between the various stakeholders, and relations with the inhabitants. It meets at least twice a year and has a permanent secretariat.

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

The existing series of plans and regulations provide the framework and the current management directives for the nominated property. These are grouped together in a Management Plan, the supervision of which will gradually be handed over to the Property Committee. They are in particular:

- A master plan for the development of the city of Albi;
- A local town plan and updated plan for the enhancement of the conservation area, 2003;
- A plan relating to the quality of lighting in general and more particularly that of the old centre, since 1996;
- A tourism development plan, 2008.

It is intended that the Management Plan should go further by harmonizing the existing procedures and preparing future policies under a single contractual document committing all stakeholders for the years ahead:

- The first section concerns the planned and grouped organization of the contractual ownership of the historic municipal monuments, heritage promotion, continuous research, and inventories.
- The second section concerns the everyday management of public spaces and urban life through the application and development of the Charter.
- The third section concerns environmental quality through preservation of the natural elements (water, air, and soil).

The Tourist Bureau plays an important role in advising and informing visitors. Guided tours of the main monuments and the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum installed in the Palais de la Berbie provide a good understanding of the property. Tourism signage for pedestrians is provided throughout the property and in the buffer zone; it contributes to a good distribution of the flow of visitors. Additionally, a pedestrian master plan was drawn up in 2006.

Risk preparedness

Those areas of the banks of the Tarn more exposed to risk in the event of flooding are included in the boundaries of the risk-prevention plan in the event of the banks collapsing. The nominated site is, however, in an area of natural silting which tends to reinforce the banks by the build-up of sediment.

In terms of fire, the risk is limited, and it is monitored by the following measures: recent replacement of the electrical installations in the main monuments, installation of fire alarms and safety lighting, and regular

checks of the heating systems.

Involvement of the local communities

The Municipality of Albi is heavily involved in the management and conservation of the property.

The Property Committee is a forum for discussion and consultation with private stakeholders and associations. There is a 'town centre district advisory body' that transmits the inhabitants' opinions and suggestions to the city; it meets twice a year under the chairmanship of the deputy mayor who is responsible for heritage issues.

Resources, including staffing levels, expertise, and training

In terms of the technical management of conservation, the State services in the Midi-Pyrénées Region, the Region itself, and the specialist services of the Tarn Department provide a very diverse group of conservation professionals - architects, town planners, historians, archaeologists, engineers, etc. In addition to the Regional Conservator of Historic Monuments and the Head Architect of Historic Monuments, responsible for monitoring the property, the Departmental Architecture and Heritage Bureau (SDAP) has a *Bâtiments de France* architect and nine employees.

The selection process for contractors and tradesmen approved to carry out restoration work, and the follow-up supervision of their expertise, provides a high level of safety with respect to the compliance of the conservation work carried out. A wide range of contractors can be called on locally, regionally, and even from other regions of France, depending on the specific requirements. The high level of local specialization in the use of brick should be noted.

The city of Albi currently has 280 employees across all its various technical and administrative services.

The semi-public organizations directly in charge of presenting the property to the public include 25 people at the Museum and Palais de la Berbie and 12 permanent employees at the Tourist Bureau. The Sainte-Cécile and Saint-Salvi religious buildings have around ten employees to assist visitors. Additionally, a number of temporary guides are employed during the peak tourist season.

Effectiveness of the current management

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the episcopal city, as established with all the stakeholders, is an effective one.

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

6. MONITORING

Up until now monitoring has been made possible by the combined actions of the *Architectes des bâtiments de France*, the Head Architect of Historic Monuments, and the municipal services. The understanding of the development of the urban fabric is attributable to the various urban policies that have been implemented (Conservation Area, city challenge contract, and the office for assisted housing) and by studies executed within their respective frameworks.

The general state of conservation of the Episcopal City has been known for many years and is recorded for each protected monument in its inventory and individual monitoring file. However, it is not yet based on any quantified indicators specific to the overall property that could be used to precisely measure the overall state of conservation. The actions announced in the Management Plan will be assessed by a large number of such indicators, currently being developed. These new measurement tools will contribute to identifying and strengthening the conservation diagnostics and will provide scientific and technical specialists with common monitoring tools. In order to ensure the efficacy of this shared monitoring, the Committee will have general management guidelines and a standard dossier will be used for each major monument.

The city is currently developing monitoring indicators for tourism management, a recent and innovative operation in France. Albi has been chosen as an experimental site for the study of tourism development.

ICOMOS considers that the individual monitoring of the components of the property has always been provided through the various management structures, but recommends that heritage and tourism monitoring indicators should be defined and implemented at the level of the entire property.

7. CONCLUSIONS

ICOMOS recognises the Outstanding Universal Value of the episcopal city of Albi, and stresses the quality of its protection and its remarkable general state of conservation.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Episcopal City of Albi, France, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iv) and (v)**.

Recommended statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The episcopal city of Albi presents a complete built

ensemble representative of this type of urban development in Europe from the Middle Ages to the present day. Its monumental and urban elements are complementary and well preserved, in subtle harmonies of tones and appearance thanks to the use of local fired brick. It is testimony to a programme which was simultaneously both defensive and spiritual that was implemented by the Roman Catholic bishops following the suppression of the Albigenses or Cathar heresy in the 13th century. Saint-Cécile Cathedral is the most remarkable monumental symbol, in a Gothic architectural style unique to southern France, to which systematic internal painted decoration, a choir, and late Gothic statuary were added in the 15th and 16th centuries. Finally, the outstanding value of the city is expressed by a medieval urban landscape that is both well preserved and extremely authentic.

Criterion (iv): The historic city of Albi presents an outstanding medieval architectural and urban ensemble. It is homogeneous and is expressed through a high-quality urban landscape that possesses high visual coherence because of the generalised and enduring use of local fired brick. Sainte-Cécile Cathedral is an exceptional architectural and decorative example of the adaptation of the Gothic style to the context of southern France.

Criterion (v): The Albi urban site developed gradually over the centuries, and notably from the Middle Ages. The events of the Albigensian Crusade transformed it into a symbolic episcopal city structured around its Cathedral and its episcopal fortress-palace. This is one of the rare examples of ensembles of this kind that are to such a high degree complete and well preserved. It expresses in a very comprehensive way a type of urban settlement that was characteristic of medieval and Renaissance Europe.

Integrity and authenticity

All the old architectural elements are included in the nominated historic zone, which corresponds exactly with the boundaries of the city as it was in the Renaissance. Any exceptions from this level of integrity are mainly attributable to redevelopment of the urban districts in the 19th and early 20th centuries. These were limited in scope and do not affect the coherent appearance of the city overall.

The conditions of authenticity of the urban structure of the property, of a number of buildings from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and of most of the monuments are satisfactory thanks to appropriate conservation. The city enjoys considerable visual coherence attributable to the chromatic nuances of the local fired brick, which was in use over a lengthy historical period up to the present day.

The integrity and the authenticity of the urban landscape of the ensemble should be emphasised; they should be a priority objective for long-term preservation.

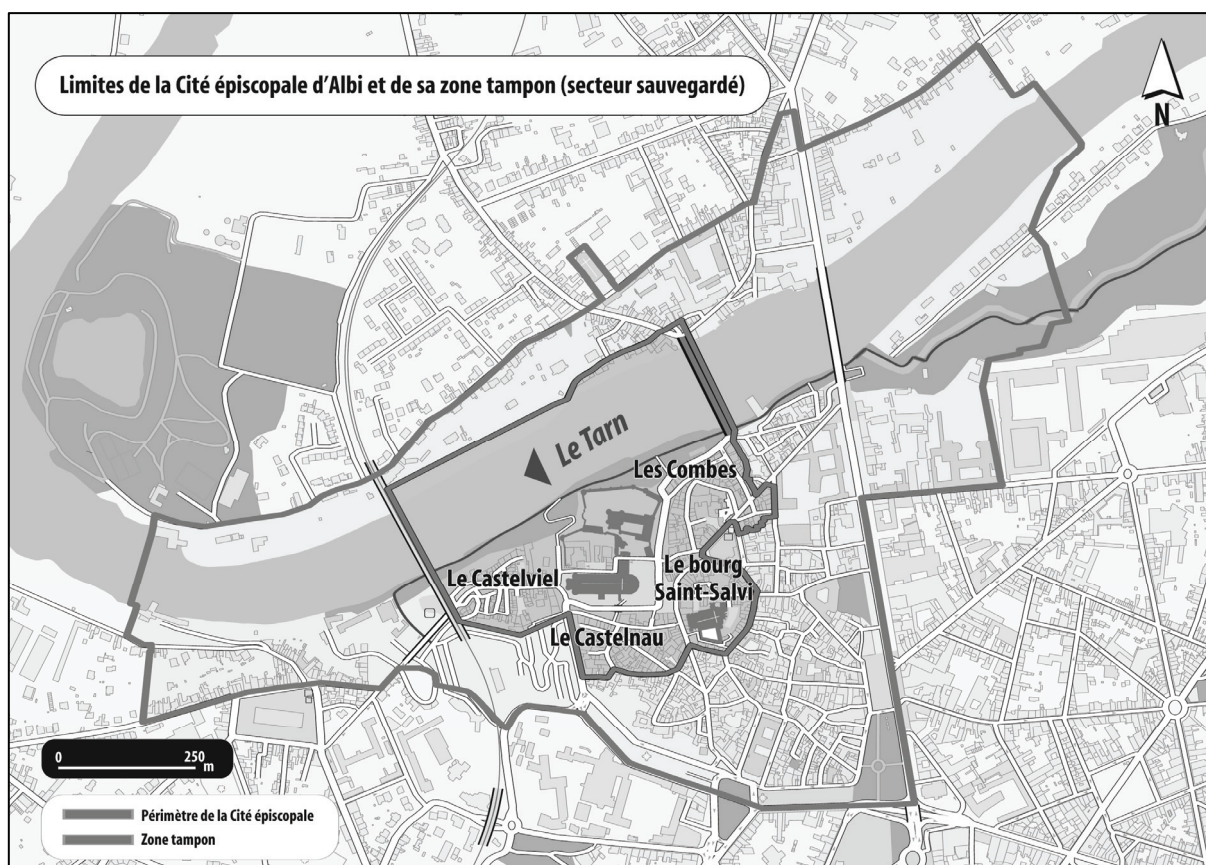
Management and protection requirements

The episcopal city's main monuments are all under the protection of the French law of 1913. The so-called 'Malraux Law' of 1962 on conservation areas led to an early municipal project, which was approved in 1968. A protection and enhancement plan followed and was approved in 1974. The protection arrangements are adequate and operate satisfactorily. An extension of the protection of the urban landscape has been announced for the area outside the buffer zone (broad protection procedure, known as ZPPAUP).

The management system for the property is long-standing, and involves numerous stakeholders with well defined specialist functions, which they exercise with recognised expertise. The Municipality is seen as the current coordinator of this system, notably through its consultative management with the inhabitants in the Conservation Area, which includes both the property and its buffer zone. A *Property Committee* has been established and is responsible in particular for monitoring conservation and protection, coordinating the various stakeholders, and relations with the inhabitants.

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

- Ensuring that the legibility of the overall historic urban landscape is not altered by disproportionate constructions in the peripheral districts, especially to the south and north-east of the buffer zone. The State Party is invited to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of the regulatory developments currently under review: ZPPAUP (urban and rural architectural heritage protection zone) and SCOT (territorial cohesion plan);
- Despite the good overall management of the property and the regular monitoring of its conservation provided up until now, it would be desirable for the heritage and tourism monitoring indicators that have been announced to be defined and implemented as soon as possible.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



General view of Albi and its episcopal city



The Palais de la Berbie



Sainte-Cécile Cathedral



The Old Bridge (Pont-Vieux)