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# Elvas and its Fortifications (Portugal) No 1367bis

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## 1 Basic data

### State Party

Portugal

### Name of property

The Garrison Border Town of Elvas and its Fortifications

### Location

District of Portalegre - Alentejo

### Inscription

2012

### Brief description

The site, extensively fortified from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, represents the largest bulwarked dry-ditch system in the world. Within its walls, the town contains barracks and other military buildings as well as churches and monasteries. While Elvas contains remains dating back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century ad, its fortification began when Portugal regained independence in 1640. The fortifications designed by Dutch Jesuit padre Cosmader represent the best surviving example of the Dutch school of fortifications anywhere. The site also contains the Amoreira aqueduct, built to enable the stronghold to withstand lengthy sieges.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

6 March 2013

## 2 Issues raised

### Background

As the remains of an enormous war fortress, Elvas is exceptional as a military landscape with visual and functional relationships between its fortifications, representing developments in military architecture and technology drawn from Dutch, Italian, French and English military theory and practice. The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the Garrison Border Town of Elvas and its Fortifications that was adopted as part of the World Heritage Committee's inscription Decision 36COM 8B.34 (St. Petersburg, 2012) noted under Integrity that "*Views of the fortifications from a distance and between each other are vulnerable to new development and the visual integrity of the property needs to be protected by a slightly enlarged buffer zone with adequate controls*". Under Protection and management requirements it is stated that "*There is a need to slightly enlarge the buffer zone to protect the*

*views between the Fortlet of São Domingo and the Fort of Graça*".

### Modification

The proposed modification to the buffer zone extends it to the west as shown on the map provided by the State Party, increasing the area of the buffer zone from 608 ha to 690 ha. It can be seen from this map that the extension will protect the views between the Fortlet of São Domingo and the Fort of Graça in accordance with the Planning Charter of the Municipal Master Plan. No textual description of the extension has been provided by the State Party, nor has a statement regarding the protection it will provide. However a second map provided by the State Party (Fig. 1.e.4A – Fortifications of Elvas: Nominated zone, buffer zone boundary and existing protection zone) shows that the proposed extension complies with the area hatched in blue dots and shown in the legend to be part of the "Protected spaces within the urban perimeter, Planning Charter of the Municipal Master Plan" which also covers the initial buffer zone.

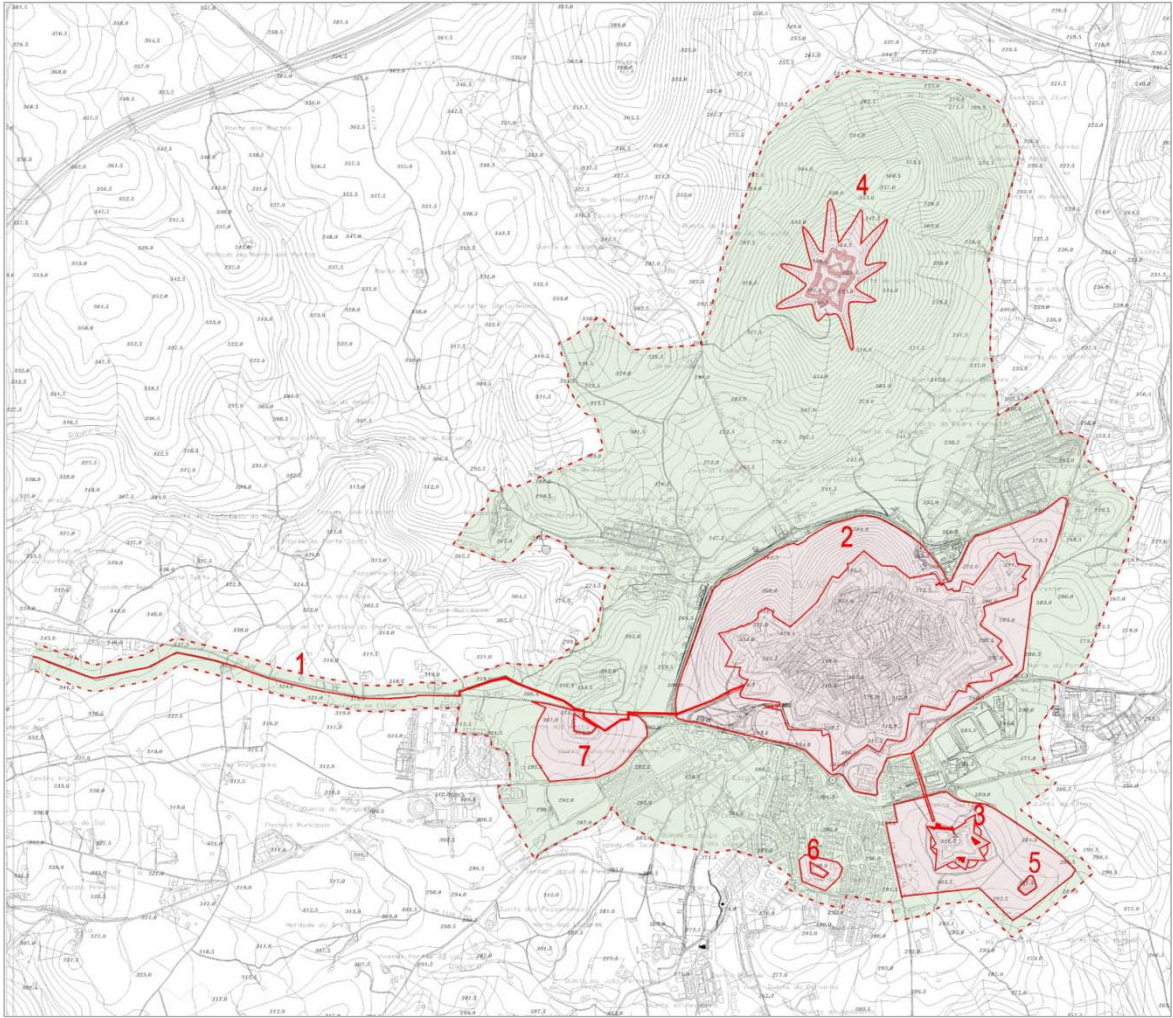
ICOMOS considers that it can therefore be concluded that the proposed extension will receive the same protection as the initial buffer zone and that the proposal complies with the requirement stated under Protection and Management in Decision 36COM 8B.34.

## 3 ICOMOS Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for The Garrison Border Town of Elvas and its Fortifications, Portugal, be **approved**.

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Map showing the revised boundaries of the buffer zone