
San Antonio Missions (United States of America) No 1466

Official name as proposed by the State Party

San Antonio Missions

Location

City of San Antonio, Bexar County and
Mission Espada, Wilson County
Texas, United States of America

Brief description

San Antonio Missions is a serial nomination of five frontier mission complexes situated along a 12 kilometre stretch of the San Antonio River Basin as well as a geographically detached ranch founded by Franciscan missionaries in the 18th century. The property illustrates the Spanish Crown's efforts to colonize, evangelize and defend the northern frontier of New Spain and comprises a range of architectural and archaeological structures including farmlands (*labores*), cattle grounds (*ranchos*), residences, churches, granaries, workshops, kilns, wells, perimeter walls and water distribution systems.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of 6 *sites*.

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List

30 January 2008

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre

21 January 2014

Background

This is a new nomination.

Consultations

ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committees on Shared Built Heritage, Earthen Architectural Heritage and several independent experts.

Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 22 to 27 September 2014.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 14 November 2014 requesting the State Party to comment on information received by individuals introducing themselves as representatives of the indigenous community of Mission Valero regarding a development project at HemisFair Historical Park. The State Party responded by letter of 24 November 2014 providing detailed comments on the matter. ICOMOS sent a second letter on 22 December 2014, requesting additional information on integrity/completeness of the missions, the justification of criterion (iv) as well as the definition of boundaries and buffer zones. The State Party provided responses on all these items by letter of 6 February 2015, which are included under the relevant sections below.

The State Party had further provided additional information on development projects in and around the property on 30 May 2014. On 7 November 2014 the State Party sent another letter responding to some queries which occurred during the technical evaluation mission and well as providing further updates on the enactment of a so-called Mission Protection Overlay District, as well as updated details on two development projects.

ICOMOS also received a number of letters from individuals introducing themselves as descendants of the indigenous community of Mission Valero (the Alamo). These communications express opposition to a development project envisaged for HemisFair Historical Park and argue that the area concerned should be part of the property. The State Party's response is indicated above and integrated in the relevant sections below.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

12 March 2015

2 The property

Description

The San Antonio missions include six serial components, comprising a chain of five frontier missions established by the Spanish Crown in the 18th century – the missions Valero (the Alamo), Concepción, San José, San Juan and Espada – as well as a ranch associated to Mission Espada and located 37 kilometres south of these five complexes in Floresville, Wilson County.

The missions are located on high grounds on both banks of the San Antonio River in the territory of the city San Antonio and share an intricate system of water distribution channels utilizing the fresh water resources from two springs that here join together to form the San Antonio River. Purpose of the mission's establishment was the intention to evangelize the area's indigenous population and establish local settlements of dependants loyal to the Spanish Crown and Catholic faith.

The complexes combine an area of 300.8 hectares. The five missions share one common buffer zone of 2,068 hectares. The ranch component Rancho de las

Cabras is not surrounded by a buffer zone. The six components shall be described separately organized from north to south below.

Mission Valero (the Alamo)

The northernmost of the missions is Valero with its former church “the Alamo”. The component covers approximately 1.7 hectares in the heart of downtown San Antonio. Nowadays surrounded by dense 19th and 20th century developments, Mission Valero retains only its church, the convent barracks and remains of its water channels. In addition archaeological remains of the former perimeter walls have been identified in several locations.

The site also contains a museum, a reconstructed wall section and visitor structures which were created in the 20th century. The walls of the colonial church are retained and illustrate floral and geometric carvings. The sacristy and a room to its west known as the monk’s burial room also retain traces of plaster and decorative paintings on their interior walls. The former living barrack – so-called *convento* - is preserved as a long, arcaded, one-storey structure built of limestone rubble, in some sections restored. The site is surrounded by new perimeter walls constructed in the 20th century.

Mission Concepción

Mission Concepción is located east of the San Antonio River, close to its confluence with San Pedro Creek, and covers an area of 13.3 hectares. Its limestone church and former convent structures retain a large amount of the original fabric of its construction era and also its setting has retained the open land between the mission and the river. Apart from the church and convent, the mission still presents various workshops and support buildings to the south-east, and open plaza to the west and archaeological remains of a granary, an enclosure wall and indigenous living quarters.

The south-east of the mission at its road access, the component includes a limestone quarry, principle source of construction material for the complex. The mission also included a well, the location of which is today marked by a modern stone well. The most significant structure in the complex is certainly the church, with its twin bell towers and cruciform ground plan. It is a fine example of the late baroque style of New Spain. A significant part of the west elevation still retains remains of plaster, stucco and painted decoration.

Mission San José

Mission San José is the largest of the five mission complexes, comprising church, convent barracks, granary of the colonial era, as well as indigenous living quarters along the perimeter walls and a grist mill from the early 20th century. The mission is located in a low-density residential area on the west bank of the San Antonio River and covers an area of 20.6 hectares. The structures are arranged around an open plaza surrounded to all sides by stone walls and several buildings.

The church, a single aisle structure dominating the mission complex, is marked by its single bell tower and elaborately carved two-storey portal. The grist mill, partly reconstructed in the 1930s, remains operational and provides testimony to the 18th century mission technology. The original granary retains interior plasters and wall decorations and original kilns remain visible next to the grist mill structure. The mission complex contains several late 20th century structures including the visitor centre, the Harris House / Discovery Centre and the early 20th century priest’s residence.

Mission San Juan

Mission San Juan covers 130.5 hectares in a rural area on the east bank of San Antonio River and combines the former mission complex and its agricultural lands – so-called *labores* – as well as an extensive water distribution system. The complex also retains the church, *convento* and support structures, as well as remnants of indigenous quarters and the perimeter wall. The mission also retains its gate house through which the component is entered and remains of a second unfinished colonial church.

The extensive farmland and water distribution system, which extends 10.8 kilometres and begins at a dam 4 kilometres north of the mission complex, makes this the largest among the serial components. The farm fields cover 33 hectares in size and retain the colonial era distribution of plots, indicating the amount of land that could be farmed by one family. These are long strips of land, designed to allow each farmer direct access to the water distribution channels.

Mission Espada

Mission Espada is the most rural of the five complexes and covers 94.7 hectares on the west bank of San Antonio River, 12.4 kilometres south of Mission Valero (the Alamo). The mission is composed of church and *convento*, ruins of support structures and perimeter walls as well as 44 hectares of farmland with a water distribution system continuously operating for 265 years.

The architectural structures of Mission Espada represent several subsequent building phases. It contains two churches, an earlier modest structure and a late-colonial church as well as a *convento*, granary, garden and indigenous living quarters. The walls of the indigenous living quarters are retained at different heights illustrating structures that continued to be in use up to the 1950s.

The extensive farm lands are watered by distribution channels of 9 kilometres length originating at a dam to the north of the component. This system also integrates an aqueduct with two Roman arches spanning a distance of 3.65 metres.

Rancho de las Cabras

The Rancho de las Cabras is a 40 hectares ranch associated with Mission Espada located 37 kilometres south at Floresville in Wilson County. Prior to 1985 the

architectural remains of a chapel and rooms were visible but have since been buried in sand for preservation purposes. Archaeological excavations have further confirmed the existence of a perimeter wall, two bastions and a compacted clay floor plaza.

History and development

In 1709 veteran missionary Antonio Olivares led an expedition to the San Antonio area in search of new locations for missionary activity. The combination of clean fresh water, fertile lands and a considerable number of species for hunting contributed to the decision to establish missions along the San Antonio River. Olivares himself founded the Mission Valero in 1718 on the east side of the river which was moved to the west side two years later by Francisco Hidalgo who took over its leadership.

When the war between Spain and France began in Europe its repercussions spread to Texas and in 1719 Spanish missionaries fled the East Texas missions in fear of French attacks. Father Margil, former head of the three Zacatecan missions in East Texas sought refuge in the San Antonio River Basin and established Mission San José in 1720. However in 1720 also the East Texan missions were re-established under the supervision of the Apostolic College of Santa Cruz de Querétaro. In 1730 a decision to withdraw military presence from the area left the missions extremely vulnerable and the Querétaran friars relocated their missions to the San Antonio River Basin, establishing in 1731 missions Concepción, San Juan and Espada to relocate their existing missionary communities. They were also joined by groups of indigenous populations such as the Pajalac and Benados, who relocated with the missions to San Antonio. In the same year a caravan of settlers from the Canary Islands arrived and established a municipal government.

The indigenous communities addressed by the mission were predominantly Coahuiltecan but encompassed as many as 200 groups who spoke different languages and dialects. Only few became mission settlers by coercion while most joined voluntarily for security of livelihood as well as food and water resources. Over the years with the assistance of indigenous workers water distribution systems and the architectural structures were built after initially relying on temporary structures for up to two decades. Often the church buildings were the first stone structures constructed, with foundations started in Mission Valero and San José in 1744, San Juan, Concepción and Espada in 1745.

In the late 18th century a process of secularization of the missions started. Spanish secularization laws dictated that the indigenous inhabitants were entitled to their lands and other material goods, and that their spiritual leadership would pass from the missionaries to the secular clergy and archbishops. Although the laws required secularization to be completed within ten years, the missionaries in San Antonio Basin only handed over to the local municipalities and dioceses when they were forced to do so. Formal secularization occurred in Mission Valero in 1793, Mission San José, San Juan,

Espada and Concepción in the year 1794. Following secularization several ownership changes occurred in the 19th and early 20th century. The mission structures gradually fell into disuse and became prone to decay.

In the second half of the 20th century, the missions remained in the care of the Archbishops diocese with assistance of the National Park Service for conservation and research, the State of Texas with administration by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (Mission Valero) or were under the full responsibility of the National Park service (Mission Espada in 1983).

3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis is based on the assumption that the Spanish Crown's colonization and missionary activities are relevant themes for the World Heritage List and are already presented in six inscribed properties. These are the Franciscan Missions in the Sierra Gorda of Querétaro, Mexico (2003, (ii) and (iii)), the Jesuit Missions of the Chiquitos, Bolivia (1990, (iv) and (v)), the Churches of Chiloé, Chile (2000, (ii) and (iii)), the Baroque Churches of the Philippines (1993, (ii) and (iv)), the Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis: San Ignacio Mini, Santa Ana, Nuestra Señora de Loreto and Santa Maria Mayor (Argentina), Ruins of Sao Miguel das Missoes (Brazil) (1983, 1984, (iv)), and the Jesuit Block and Estancias of Córdoba, Argentina (2000, (ii) and (iv)).

These other properties are said to differ on a thematic basis in that three are archaeological sites while the remaining almost exclusively focus on churches as an architectural element and do not include all features and aspects of missionary settlements and life.

An in-depth comparison is further carried out in relation to six missions in south-central California, seven missions in southern California and the four Salinas Missions in New Mexico (United States of America), seven missions in Baja California and the Three Gateway Missions (Mexico), as well as the Three Pimería Alta Missions in Arizona and Sonora (United States of America and Mexico). The analysis considers the condition of physical attributes, the evidence of testimony for colonization, evangelization and defence and the question whether the missions remain in religious use as well as whether communities with historic relations to the missions continue to live in the nearby settlements.

Following the comparison of mission groups, 117 individual mission complexes were compared to illustrate that the variety of aspects illustrated by the San Antonio missions cannot be communicated by any single mission complex as well as that the state of conservation of the San Antonio missions is exceptional even if compared on an individual basis. It is concluded that the San Antonio Missions are unique in providing detailed

evidence on the interaction between colonizers, missionaries and the indigenous communities.

ICOMOS notes that the comparative analysis does not compare the features of the individual serial properties nor does it provide comparison on ranches to justify the inclusion of Rancho de las Cabras. The assumption is that the missions can only be considered as a group and that the nomination would be incomplete if a smaller number were selected. With reference to this group, the Rancho de las Cabras provides an additional element illustrating the cattle farming associated to the mission complexes. None of the other four missions retains a similar ranch that could have contributed this aspect.

ICOMOS considers that the comparison with other groups of Spanish mission complexes demonstrates that the San Antonio missions form a unique complex of frontier missions in the northernmost territories of New Spain. Likewise, the individual comparisons show that single San Antonio missions represent a remarkable example of Spanish colonization and evangelization. While not every of the five missions stands out in this individual comparison, especially the southern mission complexes do and ICOMOS reminds that according to par 137 of the *Operational Guidelines* it is the series as a whole – and not necessarily the individual parts of it – which have to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS does however regret, that no comparative analysis is offered on a local level comparing why certain elements, such as fields and distribution channels have been included while others were not. Questions occur in particular in locations where water distribution channels continue outside the included agricultural area with no apparent purpose. ICOMOS assumes based on the rationale implied in the nomination that all elements which belong to the five missions and the protection of which can be guaranteed in the long term have been included in the proposal. Based on this assumption, ICOMOS is able to accept the current selection despite the missing comparative approach.

ICOMOS considers that despite a lack of comparison of individual elements included in the property boundaries, the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this serial 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:

- The San Antonio Missions are collectively the most complete extant example among the hundreds of missions that once underpinned the Crown's efforts to colonize, evangelize, and defend its empire;
- The mission complexes are a persistent and vibrant testimony to an interweaving of cultures from the European and North American continents based on

dramatic value changes of all groups involved but most strikingly the missions' indigenous inhabitants;

- The five missions are a unique example of mission complexes lying in exceptional proximity, yet succeeded to each establish dependent communities which were prepared for eventual secularization;
- The substantial remains of water distribution systems whose *acequias* (water channels) carry the San Antonio River's waters to the farm fields testify the exchange of technical knowledge adapted from Arab irrigation traditions, imported and sophisticated by the Spanish settlers and implemented and maintained by the indigenous population.

The serial approach is justified by the State Party in considering the San Antonio Missions as a group of missions with close historic and functional relations, which as a group provide evidence to the missionary life, colonization practices, evangelization strategies and processes of secularization in the San Antonio River Basin. Each mission adds additional features, such as well preserved churches, residence barracks, granaries, mills, indigenous quarters, farm fields, water channels or perimeter walls. The Rancho de las Cabras is included as an associated element to Mission Espada. Although it does not geographically form part of the group in the river basin, it adds an additional feature which each mission used to have but which as a type remains rarely preserved today.

ICOMOS considers that the justification provided is indeed largely appropriate. The San Antonio Missions are an exceptionally complete example of the Spanish Crown's efforts to colonize, evangelize, and defend its empire. The missions are also testimony to an interweaving of cultures from the European and North American continents.

The five missions likewise are a unique example of mission complexes lying in proximity and sharing a common approach to defence. In this density of evangelization activity, it is even more remarkable, that each mission established dependent communities which were prepared for secularization.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The five missions were selected based on their geographical and functional relationship in the San Antonio River Basin. Although founded independently the missions are located at a distance of less than five kilometres from each other and shared a common approach to defence against attacks. The missions as a group, and not individually, combine all functional elements needed to understand the purpose and role in colonization, evangelization and eventual secularization. At the request of ICOMOS' the State Party elaborated that a sixth mission, Mission San Francisco Xavier de Najera had been established in 1722, it had never constructed any permanent architectural structures but

was abandoned by 1726 and was merged with Mission Valero.

The functional elements include farmlands (*labores*), best presented in mission San Juan and Espada; cattle grounds (*ranchos*), only retained in Rancho de las Cabras which is associated to Mission Espada; residences, well preserved in Mission Valero; churches, especially the two tower church in Mission Concepción; granaries, as in Mission San José; workshops, which can be seen in Mission Concepción; a mill as in Mission San José; indigenous living quarters as in Mission Espada, perimeter walls shown in Mission Concepción; water distribution systems, most exceptionally preserved in Mission San Juan and Mission Espada, which also contributes an aqueduct and dam; and the missions' relation to the San Antonio River, well documented in Mission Concepción.

However, ICOMOS considers that the justification for the serial approach is predominately based on the linkages between the missions along the San Antonio River. It is therefore surprising that the river itself, the connecting part between the five missions, is not included in the property. Upon ICOMOS' inquiry, the State Party argued that the San Antonio River bed had been channelized in the 1950s for flood control, changing its historic location and appearance and the State Party did not consider it would meet the condition of integrity. ICOMOS considers that this response seems satisfactory and the connecting characteristics of the river are preserved through its inclusion in the buffer zone.

Several serial components are affected by development pressures and past changes to their setting have had negative impacts on integrity. Especially in Mission Valero (the Alamo) massive urban development happened decades ago and has destroyed the visual connection to the River setting. However, it appears that development threats are reduced by urban planning restrictions and the property can be considered free of immediate threats.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series has been justified.

Authenticity

The missions have evolved over time and not all remains which characterize the missions today date back to the time before secularization. Especially in the 19th century structures were added to the complexes and these were even extended or modernized in the 20th century as the priest's residence in Mission Espada. However, ICOMOS considers that the stratigraphy of the different consecutive additions is well legible in most sites and early physical remains can be easily identified.

Most churches retain authenticity of material, design and workmanship in relation to their original construction. An exception is Mission San José, for which roof and part of the walls of the church have been reconstructed during the 1930s. Four of the serial components have retained partial authenticity in use and function as their church

complexes are still under the responsibility of the archdiocese and used for church services. Only Mission Valero (the Alamo) has become a touristic site with didactic intention.

The authenticity in setting is unfortunately lost in some places, in particular Mission Valero. On the other hand the missions Espada, San Juan and the Rancho de las Cabras illustrate a very high degree of authenticity in setting. ICOMOS considers that Mission Valero is the only serial component in which authenticity is limited in a number of aspects for which its inclusion in the series could be debated. However, ICOMOS also notes that Mission Valero contributes an important element to the series as it was the foundation of the San Antonio Missions, the first one to be created by the Franciscan Order, and the first enclave that acted as a pole of attraction to the rest of them. As the integrity of the series would be reduced with the exclusion of Mission Valero, ICOMOS considers that its shortcomings with regard to authenticity can be accepted in the overall series.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole series has been justified; and that the authenticity of the individual sites that comprise the series has, despite concerns regarding reduced authenticity of Mission Valero, been demonstrated.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have been justified.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

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

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 water distribution systems constructed to irrigate the farmlands illustrate an interchange between indigenous peoples, missionaries, and colonizers. It is argued that these irrigation systems initiated a fundamental change in the life of the Coahuiltecas, who within one generation turned from hunter-gatherers to agriculturalists. The interchange is documented through a system that was initially developed by the Moors, sophisticated by the Spanish and then constructed with the assistance of the indigenous population and modified to the local topography. The State Party further points out that the maintenance of the irrigation system brought the missionaries and indigenous population together under a common cause.

ICOMOS considers that the justification presented is exclusively limited to the acequias or irrigation systems, an element not present in all property components and

hence cannot justify Outstanding Universal Value for the series.

However, justifications provided by the State Party under other criteria have the potential to be recognized under criterion (ii). This applies in particular for the San Antonio Missions as an example of the interweaving of Spanish and Coahuiltecan culture, illustrated in the integration of the indigenous settlements towards the central plaza, the decorative elements of the churches which combine Catholic symbols with indigenous natural designs and the post-secularization evidence which remains in several of the missions and illustrates the loyalty to the shared values beyond missionary rule.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

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 San Antonio missions provide a unique testimony to the interweaving of cultural traditions from Europe and North America. This is said to be illustrated in the layout of the missions in which the indigenous quarters are oriented towards the inner plaza and not outside the perimeter wall, the fact that many indigenous settlers learned European crafts and actively contributed to their production as well as the fact that the missions symbolize a special identity which is neither wholly Spanish nor wholly indigenous.

ICOMOS considers that while the claims made in the justification of this criterion are correct, criterion (iii) is used to recognize the testimony of a civilization or a cultural tradition and not the interchange of several. ICOMOS considers that the arguments presented are better recognized under criterion (ii) which is focused on cultural interchanges, as to limit the testimony of the San Antonio missions to exclusively the Spanish missionaries would not adequately recognize the indigenous contribution.

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 ensemble of the five 18th century mission complexes is the most complete example of the Spanish efforts to evangelize, colonize and defend the empire. It reflects Spain's ultimate goal of creating secular and self-supporting communities of Spanish subjects. The State Party also highlights that due to the geopolitical context of the northern frontier of the Spanish Empire, the missions had to defend themselves

and were constructed with defensive perimeter walls. The density of five missions within 12 kilometres of the San Antonio River Basin in addition strengthened their overall defensive capacities.

At the request of ICOMOS the State Party added further explanatory information, in particular that the missions represent a specific typology of Spanish colonial mission complexes, which demonstrate the specific adaptation of mission complexes to a society which was not fully agrarian and located at the edge of the empire. ICOMOS considers that structural integration of the indigenous, non-agrarian communities in colonial mission complexes, including specific architectural adaptation for this purpose, is another expression of the intensity of encounter and cultural exchange of the missions. However, it does not support the claim for a specific typology of mission structures. It is rather an additional architectural element which underlines the interchange of human values recognized under criterion (ii). While the defensive walls add a specific type of protective structure to the complexes and such walls are preserved in few colonial mission complexes, the walls alone do not seem sufficient to speak of a unique type of mission which is an outstanding example of edge-of-the-empire typology at this stage in history. ICOMOS considers that some of the claims in this criterion are better recognized under criterion (ii).

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified and that the selection of sites is appropriate.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (ii) and the conditions of authenticity and integrity.

4 Factors affecting the property

Development pressures could occur in some sections of the buffer zone, mainly near Mission Valero. There are effective control mechanisms such as city ordinances that cover the buffer zone and approval procedures for any development include review by the professional staff of the City Office for Historic Preservation and the Historic and Design Review Commission. Nevertheless, the accelerated growth of the city of San Antonio requires a periodic control of the potential menace of development, which is already foreseen by the State Party as a monthly monitoring procedure.

The State Party has indicated by letter of 30 May 2014 a number of development projects which are currently underway. The developments within the serial property are an expansion of the boardwalk trail at Mission San Juan, stabilization of church and convent at Mission Espada, and the redevelopment of St John's seminary north of Mission Concepción into mixed residential

housing, commercial space and an arts venue. Further projects have been identified in the buffer zone including redevelopment of the trailer park south of Mission Concepción to family apartments, redevelopment of a property north of Mission San José towards an YMCA facility and residential apartments, the expansion of the San Antonio Convention Centre south of Mission Valero and the HemisFair redevelopment project south of the Convention Centre, converting the 1968 World Fair grounds into a mixed used residential and retail development.

ICOMOS received several correspondences regarding the HemisFair redevelopment project, which seems opposed by members of the indigenous community. It is claimed that the property includes water distribution channels which formerly belonged to Mission Valero as well as indigenous burials of former mission inhabitants. In its response to ICOMOS' request for comment the State Party assured that the water channels will be preserved and integrated into a plaza of the development. However, in view of the State Party the remains are too fragmented to qualify for inclusion in the property.

One additional development pressure identified by the State Party concerns the fact that further development surrounding the boundary has increased the amount of impermeable surfaces, which in turn increases water run-off into the water distribution channels of the mission complexes. The National Historic Park collaborates closely with any new developments to prevent erosion of the channels.

Tourism pressures at present are only visible in Mission Valero which attracts around one million visitors per year. Although large visitor number likely change the perception of the missions, much larger increases would be necessary to create risks of physical damages to the historic structures.

Natural disasters are a minimal concern for the property, which was not affected by past floods of the San Antonio River and suffered from rare wildfires. There are no major environmental pressures in the property but it can be assumed that with population and traffic growth air pollution is likely to increase.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are urban and infrastructure developments.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries of the property are largely appropriate. The river, which had both connecting and defensive function and provides the proximity and connection of the missions has been included in the buffer zone based on concerns regarding its historic integrity. ICOMOS notes

that the river is an important connecting element of the properties and that the buffer zone regulations ensure that this special role is retained.

The buffer zone protects well the five serial components in San Antonio; however, there are two areas where the rationale for initially excluding segments is not clearly demonstrated. ICOMOS requested the State Party to consider the inclusion of these segments in the buffer zone, which the State Party agreed to.

In Rancho de las Cabras no buffer zone is envisaged as, according to the State Party, the surrounding area is rigorously protected as extensive agricultural land and cannot change its use due to flood plain protection. The State Party provided further photographic documentation illustrating that vegetation cover blocks sight relationships between the site and its surroundings. ICOMOS considers that the surrounding properties seem to be effectively protected at present but that due to this it would just be a formality to add an appropriate buffer zone which could add long-term protection in case the attribution as agricultural land may change in the future, and medium- or high-rise development be envisaged which would be visible above the vegetation cover.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and the buffer zone of the five mission complexes is adequate. ICOMOS further recommends that a buffer zone for Rancho de las Cabras is defined in the future.

Ownership

San Antonio mission ownership is predominantly in the hands of public institutions and shared by the City of Antonio, Bexar County, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, National Park Service, San Antonio River Authority, State of Texas, Texas General Land Office, Texas Park and Wildlife Department. In addition some components belong to two private bodies and one public corporation.

Protection

The Missions of San Antonio are protected by federal laws and designations, Texas State laws and designations, City of San Antonio ordinances, and cooperative agreements, easements, and deed restrictions. Mission Valero (the Alamo), Mission Espada and Mission Concepción have been designated as National Historic Landmarks in the 1960s. Mission San José is a National Historic Site since 1941. The other four missions are on the National Register of Historic Places. At the federal level, Mission San José is also designated as a Texas State Historical Site and all five missions are Texas State Antiquities Landmark as well as on a local level City of San Antonio Local Landmark. None of these designations is recent and the latest have been attributed in the 1980s. ICOMOS considers that these protective designations ensure effective protection at the highest level.

The surrounding buffer zone is protected by a number of protective and regulatory instruments which have been

put in place by the relevant authorities to protect the historic setting and surroundings of the five mission complexes. In terms of protection, the buffer zone is managed by the City of San Antonio, which is asked to consult the members of the advisory committee to add an additional level of protection in the buffer zone in the future, by developing a new type of view shed ordinance which will protect 360 degrees around the perimeter of each mission compound. ICOMOS considers that the protection of the buffer zone is sufficient and that the future ordinance will significantly strengthen the protection of visual integrity.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate.

Conservation

The state of conservation of the nominated property is generally good. Conservation and rehabilitation measures are ongoing in several locations of the missions. All conservation measures undertaken follow a programmed approach integrating scientific analysis of materials and methods as well as documentation. The measures are lead by local conservation staff and technicians who are also advised by academics from universities and research centres or institutions in Texas, United States and abroad. Following the completion of conservation projects, long-term monitoring procedures are established and the structures continue to stay closely monitored.

The traditional construction materials are subject to gradual decay and degradation, in particular the historic plaster surfaces which are exposed to wind and water erosions. To control these conditions, maintenance procedures have been established on the basis of sustainable techniques and use of traditional materials similar to the original ones. The maintenance procedures also include the re-pointing of masonry with compatible lime mortar which is undertaken on a five- to seven-year cycle.

San Antonio River has been negatively affected by river regulations starting from the 1950s, which also had impacts on the water distribution channels and former agricultural fields of the San Antonio missions. In the meantime, the historic water distribution channels and their dams in the vicinity of the river have been recovered by the National Park Service, with the aim of reinstating the original function and features. The city of San Antonio has also embarked in the so-called San Antonio River Improvement Project, which involves river recreation and maintenance activities.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the property is overall good and the conservation measures undertaken are appropriate.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

Management of the nominated series is complex and based on the ownership structure which includes nine different owners as described above. These owners will remain responsible for the day-to-day management of their respective properties. For overarching issues which concern all serial components of the property, an advisory committee has been established in 2012 to advise on preservation, interpretation and outreach activities and to make recommendations on frameworks for continued cooperation. The advisory committee includes all landowners, the General Land Office, the San Antonio Conservation Society, the National Parks Conservation Association, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, and Los Compadres de San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. The advisory committee meets at least quarterly while in between urgent issues are coordinated by the National Park Service. ICOMOS considers that the advisory committee does qualify as an overarching management mechanism for the property.

Financial resources for management as well as human resources differ considerably between the serial components. The San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, which is primarily government funded, has a base operating budget of slightly less than 3.8 million US Dollars. The expertise available to the missions is varied and highly skilled with several universities cooperating and providing advice. The site does not have a site specific risk preparedness or disaster management concept as the State Party assures that natural disasters are of little concern to the property. ICOMOS considers that a disaster response plan should nevertheless be integrated into the management plan

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

A so-called management plan has been submitted with the nomination dossier. The plan describes all institutions which partner in the management and broadly defines their contributions and fields of responsibility. Following this the plan established a list of eight goals and provides an overview of actions – introduced only by their heading – which are to be implemented. What remains completely unclear is when, by whom, with which resources these are to be implemented and what the achieved outcomes will be. Completely missing are indicators to allow for quality assessment.

This document has been adopted by all nine property owners and provides a very general basis for the coordinated management. However, ICOMOS considers that it should be referred to as a document of management aims and principles rather than a management plan. ICOMOS further considers it desirable to develop a strategic planning document in the future which can provide more detailed guidance and activities,

including an implementation schedule, to the management partners.

Involvement of the local communities

The advisory committee which guided the preparation of the nomination held a number of public consultation meetings and invited all community members, who claimed descend from one of the missions included to contribute to the nomination dossier. This opportunity was taken up by some individuals who contributed to the documentation submitted. ICOMOS was contacted by individuals who presented themselves as members of the indigenous community regarding a development project in the buffer zone, which is discussed above. However, ICOMOS considers that this aspect does not imply a general opposition of indigenous communities to the nomination at hand.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the management system for the overall serial property is adequate; ICOMOS further considers that a strategic management plan should be developed on the basis of the principles, goals and actions agreed by all owners.

6 Monitoring

The nomination provides a number of monitoring indicators divided according to the specific goals they monitor. The indicators are presented with the periodicity of the exercise, which ranges from daily to annually and the location of monitoring records. ICOMOS considers that the indicators presented are relevant and sufficient, but that the responsible agencies for each indicator should be defined and that the methods of evaluation should be described in more detail to ensure consistent standards over different monitoring cycles.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that that the monitoring indicators are sufficient but that responsible agencies and standard evaluation methods need to be defined.

7 Conclusions

ICOMOS considers that the San Antonio Missions are an exceptionally complete example of the Spanish Crown's efforts to colonize, evangelize, and defend its empire. The missions are also testimony to an interweaving of cultures from the European and North American continents. The five missions a unique example of mission complexes lying in unusual proximity connected through the San Antonio River. In such density of evangelization activity, it is even more remarkable, that each mission established its own dependent communities and prepared these for eventual secularization.

ICOMOS considers that the San Antonio Missions fulfil criterion (ii) as an example of the interweaving of Spanish and Coahuiltecan culture, which remains illustrated in the integration of the indigenous settlements towards the central plaza, the decorative elements of the churches which combine and integrate indigenous natural designs, as well as the post-secularization evidence which remains in several of the missions. Authenticity can be justified despite some concerns regarding Mission Valero, which, however, is an important component of the series. Likewise, integrity is demonstrated for the individual mission complexes and the series as a whole.

The State Party did positively respond to ICOMOS' recommendation to modify the buffer zone in two areas located south of the Mission San José and north of Mission Valero. ICOMOS further recommends that a buffer zone should also be defined for Rancho de las Cabras in the future to provide long-term protection against medium- or high-rise development, even though this may seem highly unlikely to occur at present.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are urban and infrastructure developments, however, protection measures in place seem to prevent any inappropriate developments through complex approval procedures. All five properties enjoy national protection as National Historic Sites or National Historic Landmark. Conservation measure are appropriate at the missions have at their availability a wide range of expertise including from universities and national institutions.

An advisory committee brings together all property owners and stakeholders to ensure the overarching coordination of management. The so-called management plan submitted contains goal, principles and general fields of action which all stakeholders agreed to in writing. ICOMOS recommends however that a strategic management plan is developed to provide more detailed management guidance to all management authorities in the serial property. ICOMOS considers that also the monitoring scheme would benefit from more detail in terms of agencies responsible for the monitoring exercise as well as standard evaluation methods to ensure consistency over several monitoring cycles.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the San Antonio Missions, United States of America, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criterion (ii)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The San Antonio Missions are a group of five frontier mission complexes situated along a 12.4-kilometer (7.7-

mile) stretch of the San Antonio River basin in southern Texas. The complexes were built in the early eighteenth century and as a group they illustrate the Spanish Crown's efforts to colonize, evangelize and defend the northern frontier of New Spain. In addition to evangelizing the area's indigenous population into converts loyal to the Catholic Church, the missions also included all the components required to establish self-sustaining, socio-economic communities loyal to the Spanish Crown.

The missions' physical remains comprise a range of architectural and archaeological structures including farmlands (*labores*), cattle grounds (*ranchos*), residences, churches, granaries, workshops, kilns, wells, perimeter walls and water distribution systems. These can be seen as a demonstration of the exceptionally inventive interchange that occurred between indigenous peoples, missionaries, and colonizers that contributed to a fundamental and permanent change in the cultures and values of all involved, but most dramatically in those of the Coahuiltecan and other indigenous hunter-gatherers who, in a matter of one generation, became successful settled agriculturists. The enclosed layout of each mission complex and their proximity to each other, the widespread sharing of knowledge and skills among their inhabitants, and the early adoption of a common language and religion resulted in a people and culture with an identity neither wholly indigenous nor wholly Spanish that has proven exceptionally persistent and pervasive.

Criterion (ii): The San Antonio Missions are an example of the interweaving of Spanish and Coahuiltecan culture, illustrated in a variety of elements, including the integration of the indigenous settlements towards the central plaza, the decorative elements of the churches which combine Catholic symbols with indigenous natural designs, and the post-secularization evidence which remains in several of the missions and illustrates the loyalty to the shared values beyond missionary rule. The substantial remains of the water distribution systems are yet another expression of this interchange between indigenous peoples, missionaries, and colonizers that contributed to a fundamental and permanent change in the cultures and values of those involved.

Integrity

The five missions were selected based on their geographical and functional relationship in the San Antonio River Basin. Although founded independently, the missions are located at a distance of less than five kilometres from each other and shared a common approach to defence against attacks. The missions as a group, and not individually, combine all functional elements needed to understand their purpose and role in colonization, evangelization and eventual secularization. The property is of sufficient size to adequately ensure the representation of the Outstanding Universal Value. Several serial components are affected by development pressures and past changes to their setting have had negative impacts on integrity. Especially in Mission Valero (the Alamo) massive urban development happened

decades ago and has destroyed the visual connection to the river setting. However, it appears that development threats are reduced by urban planning restrictions and the property can be considered free of immediate threats at present.

Authenticity

The missions have evolved over time and not all remains which characterize the missions today date back to the time before secularization. Especially in the 19th century, structures were added to the complexes and these were even extended or modernized in the 20th century. However, the stratigraphy of the different consecutive additions is well legible in most sites and early physical remains can be easily identified. The churches with the exception of Mission San José retain authenticity of material, design and workmanship in relation to their original construction. Four of the serial components have retained some authenticity in use and function as their church complexes are still used for church services. Missions Espada, San Juan and the Rancho de las Cabras illustrate a very high degree of authenticity in setting. Mission Valero is the only serial component in which authenticity is limited in a number of aspects. However, as it contributes an important element to the series as the foundation of the San Antonio Missions, the first one to be created by the Franciscan Order and the first enclave that acted as a pole of attraction to the rest, these shortcomings are acceptable within the overall series.

Management and protection requirements

The Missions of San Antonio are protected by federal laws and designations, Texas State laws and designations, City of San Antonio ordinances, and cooperative agreements, easements, and deed restrictions. Mission Valero (the Alamo), Mission Espada and Mission Concepción have been designated as National Historic Landmarks. Mission San José is a National Historic Site and the other four missions are on the National Register of Historic Places. At the federal level, Mission San José is also designated as a Texas State Historical Site and all five missions are Texas State Antiquities Landmarks as well as on a local level City of San Antonio Local Landmarks. The Texas Historical Commission must review in advance any modifications proposed for the structural elements located in the nominated property.

The United States National Park Service manages all the property within the boundaries of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, which was established under Public Law 95-629 (1978) and Public Law 101-628 (1990). The four mission churches within the National Historical Park are owned and operated by the Archdiocese of San Antonio. The State of Texas owns the property of Mission Valero/The Alamo. Management of the nominated series is complex and based on an ownership structure which includes nine different owners. These remain responsible for the day-to-day management of their respective properties. For overarching issues which concern all serial components of the property, an

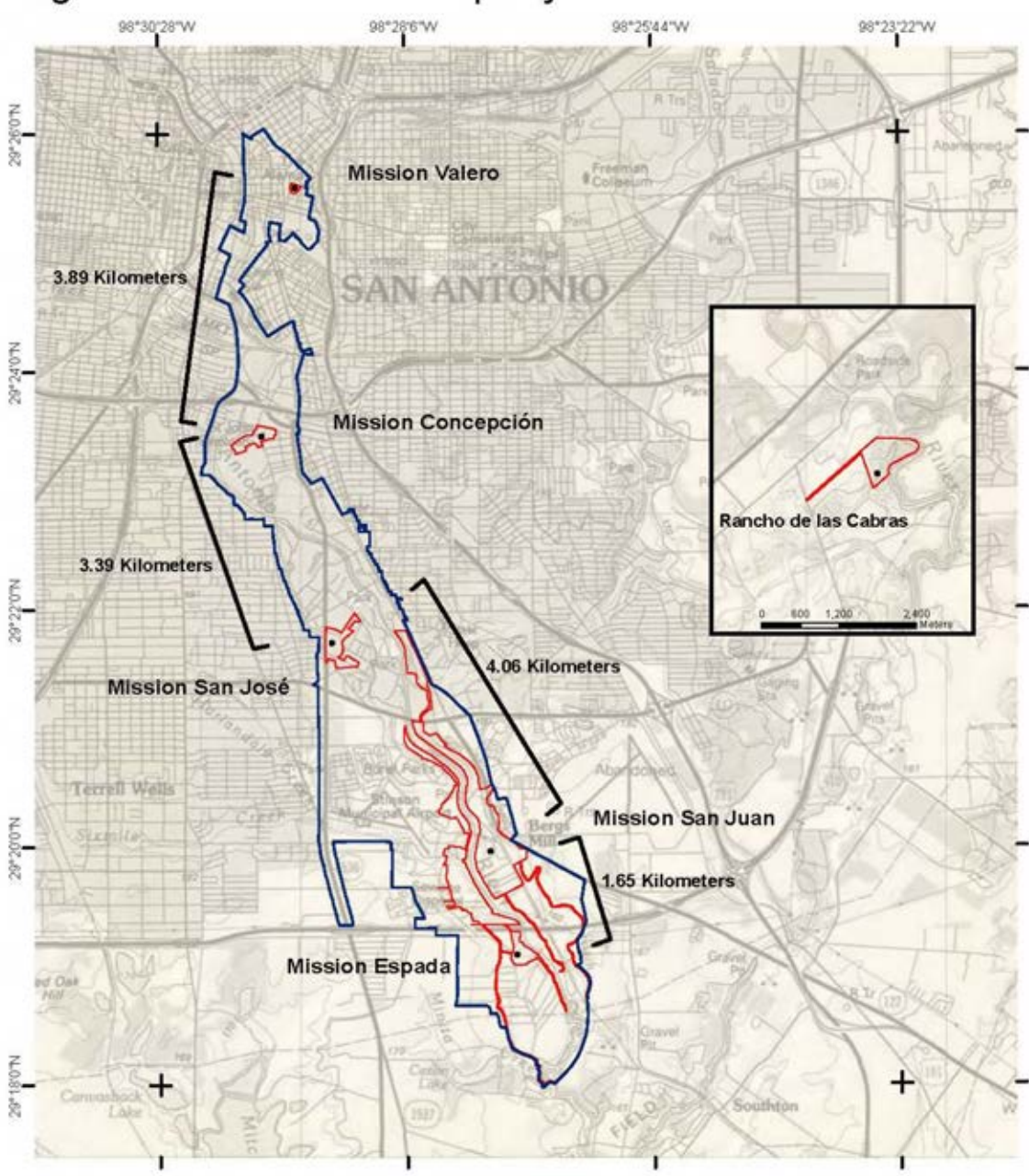
advisory committee was established in 2012 to advise on preservation, interpretation and outreach activities and to make recommendations on frameworks for continued cooperation.

A document of management objectives describes all institutions which partner in the management of the property and broadly defines their contributions and fields of responsibility. This document has been adopted by all nine property owners and provides a general basis for the coordinated management. There is continual monitoring for potential threats to the property to ensure none jeopardize the attributes that sustain the property's Outstanding Universal Value. Perhaps the most significant potential threat is the rapid growth and development of the City of San Antonio. The San Antonio River is an important connecting element of the properties and the buffer zone regulations ensure that this special role is retained.

Additional recommendations

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

- Defining and formalizing a buffer zone for Rancho de las Cabras;
- Preparing on the basis of the management document submitted a strategic management plan, integrating also disaster response mechanisms, which provides all property owners guidance on management strategies and actions on the basis of the goals, principles and actions they have agreed upon.



Legend
 Nominated Property
 Buffer Zone



Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983
 Date: February 2015

Map showing location of the nominated properties



Mission Concepcion, church and convent



Mission San Juan, church



Mission Espada, church



Mission Alamo