

# Cologne Cathedral (Germany)

No 292 rev

## 1. BASIC DATA

<i>State Party:</i>	Germany
<i>Name of property:</i>	Cologne Cathedral
<i>Location:</i>	State of North Rhine – Westphalia
<i>Inscription:</i>	1996
<i>Brief description:</i>	

Begun in 1248, the construction of this Gothic masterpiece took place in several stages and was not completed until 1880. Over seven centuries, successive builders were inspired by the same faith and a spirit of absolute fidelity to the original plans. Apart from its exceptional intrinsic value and the artistic masterpieces it contains, Cologne Cathedral testifies to the enduring strength of European Christianity.

## 2. ISSUES RAISED

### *Background*

The buffer zone boundaries were defined in 1996, as a complementary measure for which a request was made to the State Party by the World Heritage Committee, to enable inscription on the List. The initial buffer zone was limited to the area immediately adjoining the cathedral, on the right bank of the Rhine, covering a surface area of 16.8 ha.

A major problem arose in 2002 when the new master plan for the City of Cologne included a project for five buildings more than 100 metres tall in the Deutz district on the right bank of the river, and in the main visual axis of the cathedral.

The World Heritage Committee then decided to conduct an initial study mission (27 COM 7B.63). In the following year, it inscribed Cologne Cathedral on the *List of World Heritage in Danger* (28 COM 15B.70), and then it repeated its requests that the State Party should take into consideration the visual impact of the projected buildings in the Deutz district, and define a buffer zone on the right bank which would involve control of property development and architectural projects to ensure respect for the outstanding universal value of the property (29 COM 7A.29).

The issue is that of considering Cologne Cathedral in its cultural landscape, and of ensuring its visual integrity. The universal value of the property includes protecting the skyline formed by the cathedral in its urban setting, in accordance with the Vienna Memorandum (2005) concerning the relationship between world heritage sites

and efforts to find appropriate contemporary architectural solutions.

In December 2005, the municipal authority decided to stop the construction programme for the Deutz district in order to respect the visual integrity of the cultural landscape, and the skyline, in the main axis towards the east.

The World Heritage Committee took note of this new situation, and removed Cologne Cathedral from the List of World Heritage in Danger (30 COM 7A.30). This decision, and the decision taken in the following year (31 COM 7B.110), requested the constitution of an appropriate buffer zone for the preservation of the values of the cultural landscape of the cathedral in its historic urban environment, and the taking of appropriate protection measures. The new buffer zone must include a significant part of the right bank of the Rhine, in the area of the Deutz district.

### *Modification*

The minor modification proposal concerns the definition of a new buffer zone which meets concerns relating to the visual integrity and urban cultural landscape of the cathedral. It covers an urban surface area of 258 hectares.

It consists of a basically rectangular main strip along the left bank of the Rhine, which corresponds to the location of the old town close to the river.

The two bridges over the Rhine, one in line with the cathedral and the other a little way downstream, are in the new buffer zone, as is part of the Deutz district on the right bank. The zone is basically triangular, with the summit of the triangle in the visual axis of the cathedral and the base of the triangle running along the Rhine. The visual angles thus protected on either side of the main axis to the east of the cathedral are around 30° to the north and 40° to the south.

ICOMOS notes with satisfaction that the criteria of visual integrity of the cultural landscape defined by Cologne Cathedral have been taken into consideration. ICOMOS considers that the definition of the new buffer zone meets the criteria relating to visual integrity and the cultural landscape of the cathedral in its urban setting, in accordance with the previous recommendations of the World Heritage Committee and the Vienna Memorandum (2005). The new zone is appropriate to ensure the expression of the property's outstanding universal value. The protection measures which apply to the new buffer zone must however be specified in more detail.

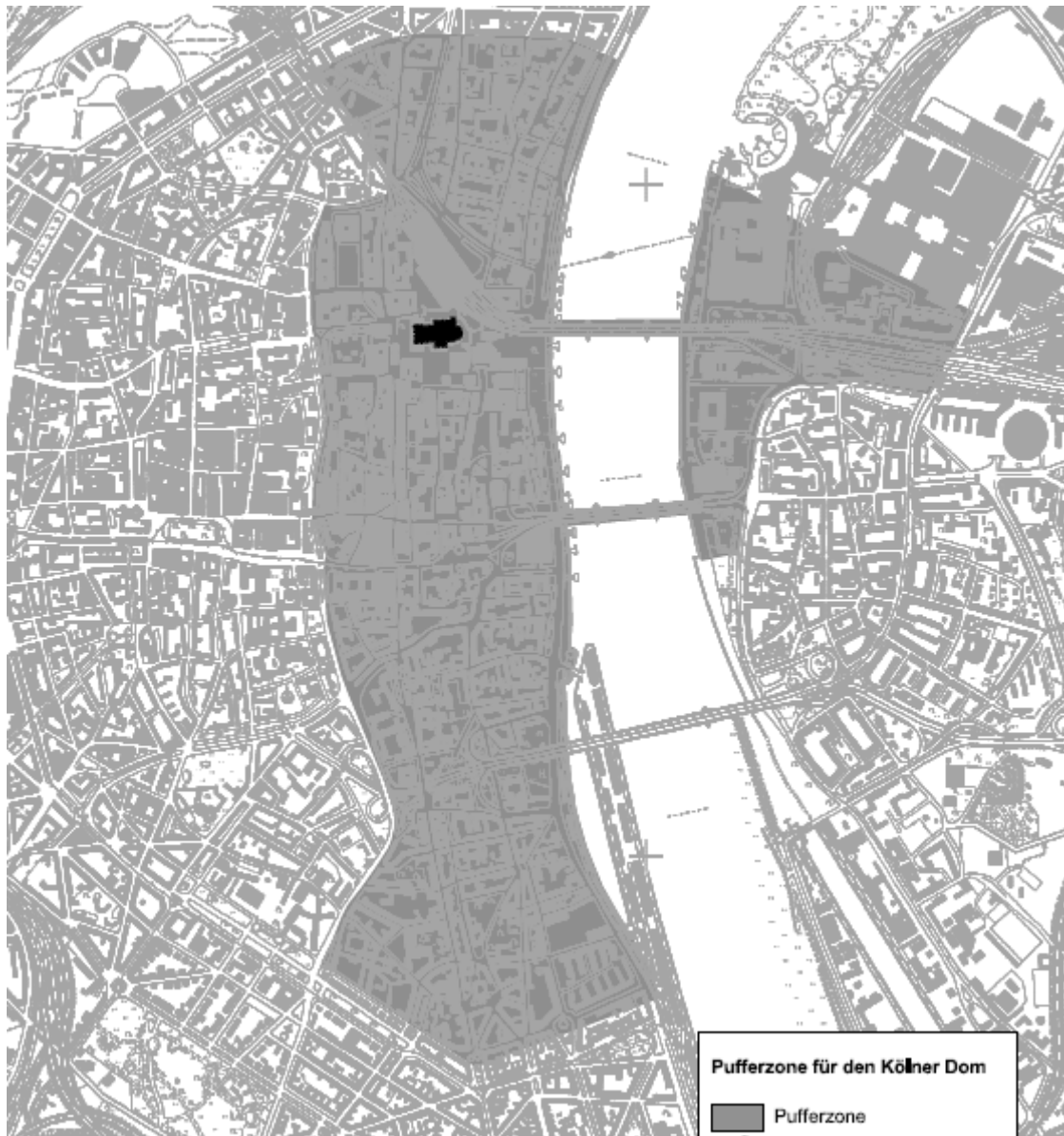
ICOMOS notes that the definition of the new buffer zone is purely geographical. It could also be supported by historical criteria, particularly on the western limit of the western part of the buffer zone on the left bank. It could follow the medieval boundary of the historic town, which would enable the inclusion of five historic churches in Cologne, including that of the archbishop-elect of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation.

### 3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

ICOMOS recommends that the minor modification to the boundaries of Cologne Cathedral, Germany, be *approved*.

ICOMOS requests that the protection measures which apply to the new buffer zone should be specified in more detail, thereby supplementing the management plan.

ICOMOS recommends that reflection should continue concerning the limits of an extended buffer zone based on historic criteria.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property