

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The historic centre of Córdoba (extension of the Mosque of Córdoba)
<i>Location</i>	Córdoba, Comunidad Autónoma Andaluza
<i>State Party</i>	Spain
<i>Date</i>	20 October 1993

Justification by State Party

The proposal is to extend the property already inscribed on the World Heritage List (The Mosque of Córdoba; No. 313; inscribed on the List at the 8th Meeting of the World Heritage Committee in 1984 under cultural criteria i, ii, iii, and iv) to include its surroundings.

These comprise the streets surrounding the monument and all the parcels of land opening on to these, together with all the blocks of houses around the Mosque-Cathedral. To the south this area extends to the further bank of the river Guadalquivir (to include the Roman bridge and the Calahorra), to the east to the Calle San Fernando, to the north to the boundary of the commercial centre, and to the west to incorporate the Alcázar des los Reyes Cristianos and the San Basilio quarter.

The historic centre of Córdoba, by virtue of its extent and plan, its historical significance as a living expression of the different cultures that have existed there, and its relationship with the river, is an historical ensemble of extraordinary value, comparable with those already inscribed on the World Heritage List. This proposal is formulated so that the nominated area (ie the surroundings of the Cathedral) would guarantee the best protection, conservation, and safeguarding of the building that is already on the List, taking into account the fact that the idea of an historic monument refers not solely to the isolated historical creation but also to the urban landscape in which it is situated and which bears witness to a civilization.

History and Description*History*

The site of Córdoba is determined by two geographical features - the mountains of the Sierra Morena, with their mineral wealth, and the river Guadalquivir, which skirts and then cuts through them. As such it is a natural site for human settlement, for reasons of trade and defence.

Its early history is not known, but there was a flourishing Carthaginian township there in 206 BC, when it was captured by the Romans, who recognized its strategic and commercial importance and made it into the capital of the province of Hispania Inferior (Baetica). It was adorned with many fine public and private buildings and enclosed by imposing fortifications. Among its illustrious sons were the two Senecas and the poet Lucan.

With the onset of the barbarian invasions of the 6th century, Roman society on the Iberian peninsula crumbled, and Córdoba fell to the Visigoths in 572. Despite the destruction wrought during this period, Córdoba retained its identity as a town throughout the Visigothic rule.

In 711 the town was one of the first to fall to the Moorish conquerors, led by Tarik-ibn-Zayid, after his great victory at the Battle of Guadalete. When Abd-al-Rahman I was deposed as Caliph of Damascus in

756 he set up his court at Córdoba and laid the foundations for the most glorious period of the city's history. He began building the Great Mosque in 786, on the site of a Roman temple of Janus which had been converted into a church by the Visigoths, with the intention of creating a structure that outshone the mosque of Damascus. Work on it continued over the two succeeding centuries.

At the same time Córdoba became the centre of a great realm renowned for its artistic and intellectual predominance and its liberal toleration of other religions. At its height the city is said to have enclosed over 300 mosques and innumerable palaces and public buildings, rivalling the splendours of Constantinople, Damascus, and Baghdad. The Caliphate of Córdoba collapsed after the bitter civil war of 1009-31, and only the Great Mosque survived as a symbol of its achievements. With the accession of power by the Almoravid and, subsequently, the Almohad dynasties in the 12th century Córdoba recovered much of its former glory, however, as capital of Al-Andalus. Its intellectual supremacy was assured by great scholars such as Averroes (Abu Walid-ibn-Rusch) and Maimonides (Musa-ibn-Maymun).

In 1236 the city was captured by Ferdinand III the Saint, and Córdoba entered the Christian world again. The Great Mosque became the Cathedral and new defensive structures were raised, among them the Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos (Fortress of the Christian Kings) and the Torre Fortaleza de la Calahorra, as befitted its role as a frontier town under constant threat of attack from the Moors.

With the re-establishment of Christian rule over the whole of the Iberian peninsula Córdoba lost much of its political and intellectual importance. It did, however, preserve an important commercial role, because of the proximity of the copper mines of the Sierra Morena.

Description

The historic centre of Córdoba, clustering round the Mosque-Cathedral, preserves much of its medieval urban fabric, with its characteristic narrow, winding streets. This is interspersed with impressive administrative and religious foundations.

Its earlier, Roman, past is, however, also in evidence. The sixteen-span Roman Bridge was originally thrown across the fast-flowing Guadalquivir during the Second Civil War between Caesar and Pompey in the 1st century BC. It has undergone a number of rebuildings and additions since that time. Other Roman remains visible in Córdoba are the fine mosaics in the Alcázar, the columns of the 1st century AD temple, and sections of the Roman wall.

The gardens of the Alcázar formed part of the Moorish design for the area around the Mosque, and are good examples of Moorish Andalusian garden design, with effective use of water. The remains of the monumental Caliphal Baths are nearby. During the Moorish period there were many small places of worship around the Great Mosque. Most of these have disappeared, but their minarets survive at, for example, the churches of Santiago and San Lorenzo and the Hermitage of Santa Clara. Another important monument from this period is the Almodóvar Gate.

There are reminders of the important Jewish population of Moorish Córdoba in the quarter known as La Judería, which best preserves the original street pattern, and the small 14th century Synagogue, converted for Christian use after the expulsion of the Jews in 1492.

The Christian structures of the Alcázar date from the early 14th century, and were built as a royal residence; they show strong Mudéjar influence in their design. The Torre de la Calahorra formed part of a medieval fortress, perhaps from the beginning of the Christian period; it assumed its present form in 1369.

There are some important churches in Córdoba. The church of San Jacinto (now the Palace of Congresses and Exhibitions) is in Florid Gothic style and was completed in 1512. Local tradition maintains that the Chapel of San Bartolomé is Moorish in origin, but the style is clearly Christian, in the Gothic-Mudéjar style. The churches of San Francisco and San Nicolás date from the same period, when Ferdinand III encouraged a great deal of church construction.

There are also important buildings from the 16th century, such as the Seminary of San Pelagio, the Puerta del Puente, the Casa Solariega de los Páez de Castillo, and the Casa del Marqués de la Fuensanta del

Valle, which illustrate the religious, military, and architectural styles of the period. From the 18th century come a number of civic buildings, including the Triunfos de San Rafael and the Hospital del Cardenal Salazar.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The historic centre of Córdoba is protected under the provisions of Law No. 16 on the Spanish Historic Heritage (1985) and Law No. 1 on the Historic Heritage of Andalusia (1991). It is also regulated by the statutory General Urban Plan of Córdoba (1984) and Royal Decree No. 1/91 on town and country planning.

Ownership in the property comprising the proposed extension is vested in private individuals, the Catholic Church, and public authorities.

Management

Overall supervision is the responsibility of the Spanish Ministry of Culture, the Junta de Andalusia, and the Ayuntamiento of Córdoba.

The Plan General de Ordenación Urbana (PGOU) was approved in 1984. It is based upon a detailed analysis of the area. It sets out proposals for the overall urban structure, zones for different uses, proposals for open spaces, communications and transport, building controls and regulations, and the urban landscape.

The area within the proposed extension of the World Heritage Monument is the subject of special attention. This forms the basis for the Plan Especial de Protección del Conjunto Histórico de Córdoba, which is currently being completed and which contains detailed specifications and regulations pertaining to conservation within the designated area.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Conservation within the historic centre of Córdoba has hitherto been sporadic and largely unregulated. Individual monuments such as the Mosque-Cathedral have been well maintained and conserved, but much of the rest of the centre showed evidence of serious deterioration. The 1984 Plan General represents the first serious coordinated attempt to conserve and protect the historic urban fabric, and a number of projects were launched in advance of the current Plan Especial coming into effect.

Authenticity

Córdoba has grown organically and continuously over two millennia. As a result many of its buildings, among them the most important, bear witness to successive changes in taste, reconstruction following destruction, and changes in use. However, the townscape, which is the essence of this proposed extension, has an authenticity of its own.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Córdoba in May 1994. The mission reported favourably on the state of conservation of the major monuments (with the exception of the church and monastery of Santa Clara). The current Plan was highly praised, particularly because it would become even more effective if the proposed extension of the World Heritage Monument is approved. It was not considered that a buffer zone was necessary in this case.

Comparative analysis

The most direct comparison must be with the other large historic cities of Andalusia, Granada and Seville. In Granada the Albayzín quarter is separated spatially from the administrative centre of the city, the Alhambra, by a deep valley and so lacks the quality of nucleation around a major public building that distinguishes Córdoba. The situation in Seville is, however, directly comparable with that of Córdoba. It might be argued that the latter played a more important role in history and that the quality of its buildings is generally higher.

Recommendation

That this proposal for extension of World Heritage monument No 313 be approved and inscribed on the basis of the existing criteria i, ii, iii, and iv.

ICOMOS, October 1994