Burgos Cathedral
(Spain)
No 316 Bis

1 Basic data

State Party
Spain

Name of property
Burgos Cathedral

Location
City of Burgos
Castilla y León Region

Inscription
1984

Brief description
Our Lady of Burgos was begun in the 13th century at the same time as the great cathedrals of the Ile-de-France and was completed in the 15th and 16th centuries. The entire history of Gothic art is summed up in its superb architecture and its unique collection of works of art, including paintings, choir stalls, reredos, tombs and stained-glass windows.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
6 March 2014

2 Issues raised

Background
Burgos Cathedral was inscribed in 1984 on the World heritage List without a formal buffer zone.

Clarification of the property boundary in response to the Retrospective inventory was approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2011 (Decision 35 COM 8D). The boundary is drawn tightly around the Cathedral.

One component site of the Route of Santiago de Compostela serial property, inscribed in 1993, traverses the city of Burgos and includes the Cathedral and areas in the historic walled city centre. The site was defined as extending to 30m on either side of the pilgrimage route, and widening to include features of heritage importance.

When this property was inscribed, the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee requested the competent Spanish authorities to envisage the possibility of combining under one nomination the two sites already on the World Heritage List (i.e. Burgos Cathedral (316)

and the Old Town of Santiago de Compostela (347)) and the Route of Santiago de Compostela.

In response to this suggestion made by the Bureau, the Delegate of Spain informed the World Heritage Committee that Spain wanted to maintain the already inscribed sites of Santiago de Compostela and Burgos Cathedral as separate properties on the World Heritage List in view of their individual and particular uniqueness.

In 2013, Burgos City Council submitted a proposal for a buffer zone for Burgos Cathedral, with boundaries defined by the limits of the old medieval city walls.

The following criteria had been used to delineate its boundaries:

- The geographical and topographical features around which the city has developed: the castle hill and the river;
- The city walls that surround the old medieval city centre;
- The Camino de Santiago [Pilgrim's Way of Saint James] that runs through the city;
- The views of the cathedral;
- References taken from urban planning.

The proposed buffer zone incorporated the whole of the historic city and also incorporated, to the south, the free spaces bounded by the Arlanzón River, where visual perspectives exist that relate the Cathedral and the city.

ICOMOS considered that the area of the proposed buffer zone was adequate, as were the protective arrangements.

ICOMOS considered that the management arrangements for the proposed buffer zone needed clarification including the key agencies operating within the proposed buffer zone, their roles and responsibilities and if the management plan has been approved and implemented. Further details were also needed on how the designated views of the Cathedral beyond the buffer zone would be protected and on how the new Urban Development plan awaiting approval related to the Management plan.

In addition, ICOMOS considered that it would be helpful to understand in spatial and management terms the relationship between the two World Heritage Sites of Burgos Cathedral and the Route of Santiago de Compostela within Burgos.

At its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013), the World Heritage Committee adopted the following decision:

Decision 37 COM 8B.55

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Documents WHC-13/37.COM/8B.Add and WHC-13/37.COM/INF.8B1.Add,*

2. *Refers the examination of the proposed buffer zone for Burgos Cathedral, Spain, back to the State Party in order to allow it to:*

   a) *Provide a detailed overview of the site management arrangements that would be put in place in the proposed buffer zone; and in relation to both World Heritage properties;*

   b) *Provide a map showing the relationship between the two World Heritage properties of Burgos Cathedral and the Route of Santiago de Compostela within Burgos.*

Modification

The proposed buffer zone was re-submitted by the State Party in January 2014 with enlarged documentation and information that provided detailed responses to the World Heritage Committee decisions and to ICOMOS's queries.

ICOMOS notes that although the proposal from the State Party is headed: 'Minor Modification to the boundaries of the World Heritage Site 'Burgos Cathedral'. Proposal for a buffer zone', it does not involve a modification of the property boundary. The proposal only relates to the definition of a buffer zone.

The buffer zone falls mainly within the boundaries established for the declared Historic-Artistic Site of Burgos and totally within the Special Plan for the Historic Centre, approved in 1995.

A Special Committee for the custody, defence and promotion of World Heritage is convened when necessary to discuss measure that could affect the buffer zone. It members are key stakeholders.

A Management plan for the proposed buffer zone of Burgos Cathedral is to be developed by the committee of the Strategic Plan Association of Burgos, which has a particular interest in tourism and marketing. The Plan will include measures for:

- Acceptable and sustainable touristic and recreational use;
- The promotion and diffusion of the cultural and the historic values of the enclosed space;
- The encouragement of academic labours that provide greater insight into the knowledge of those values;
- The conservation and recovery of the zone.

A communications and tourism plan for the buffer zone will also be developed.

Burgos Municipal Council will have responsibility for the administration of the protected buffer zone, within the Special Plan for the Historic Centre. Building permits will be directly issued by Burgos Council, which as the manager of the property will evaluate whether any may negatively affect the Outstanding Universal Value.

A Special Unit for World Heritage will be established within Burgos Municipal Council. This Unit will consist of personnel from Burgos Municipal Council, in particular from its area of Urbanism, and it will provide coordinated advice.

The Council has agreed to undertake a joint review of the General Urban Development Plan of 1999 and the Special Plan for the Historic Centre of 1995, in order to incorporate heritage issues related to the two World Heritage sites, such as the long-distance visibility of the Cathedral, the integration of the *Camino de Santiago* in new developments including infrastructural development, and the need to unify certain regulatory criteria related to height and use. The Plan will go beyond protection to encompass regeneration of the Historic Centre.

As part of the Plan review, a new Catalogue will be developed that defines not only important individual buildings but the characteristics of the whole area. This will include the definition of views within, out and from Burgos that need protection. Eighteen viewing points have so far been identified onto the Cathedral and some of these extend beyond the proposed buffer zone.

Two maps have been provided to show the inter-relationship between the Cathedral, the proposed buffer zone and the part of the serial property of the Route of Santiago de Compostela in Burgos. A proportion of the component part of the Route of Santiago de Compostela serial property lies within the centre of the proposed buffer zone.

3 ICOMOS Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for Burgos Cathedral, Spain, be **approved.**

ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party provide to the World Heritage Centre copies of the revised General Urban Development Plan and the Special Plan for the Historic Centre once they are completed and approved.

Aerial photograph showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone