

# ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ  
WORLD HERITAGE LIST N° 383 Rev.

## A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : The Cathedral, the Alcazar and the Lonja in Seville

Location : Autonomous Region of Andalusia

State Party : Spain

Date : December 4, 1986

## B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I, II, III and VI.

## C) JUSTIFICATION

At the request of ICOMOS, the government of Spain has included in one nomination three leading monuments in Seville, the Cathedral, the Alcazar and the Lonja, which originally were to be nominated separately. The proximity of these three monuments to the heart of the city, their obvious complementarity, and the fact that all the high points of the history of Seville are represented, give this nomination great coherence.

The Cathedral, one of the most vast and ornate religious edifices in the world, contains in its complex structure the wide range of styles resulting from its troubled history. In the chapel of the Granada, for example, there remain the capitals of several columns dating from the time of the Visigoths. These are the last vestiges of the original cathedral which in 712 the Arab conquerors condemned to destruction. But it is, above all, one of the major witnesses of the Almohad period at its apogee. In 1147, when it became the capital of a Muslim empire that covered the whole of the Maghreb, Seville endowed itself with monuments whose splendor the Arabian travelers took great pleasure in pointing out. The Giralda, which was formerly the minaret of the Great Mosque (built 1172-1198 by the emir Yaqub al-Mansur), rivals in size and elegance of decor the Koutoubia of Marrakech and the Tower of Hassan in Rabat, the other two major monuments of the period. The minaret escaped destruction and was turned into a bell tower after the reconquest of Seville in 1248. In the 16th century it was topped with a bronze statue symbolizing the Christian faith, which serves as a weather vane (Giraldillo), at an altitude of 97.52 m.

The only other part of the Cathedral which preserves the memory of the Great Mosque is the Patio de los Naranjos on the north. This is a marvelous interior garden midway between a sahn and a

cloister.

The Christians, indeed, wished to replace the mosque, which was destroyed beginning in 1401, with a cathedral in the Gothic style, unsurpassed by any other. In 1420 Seville became one of the largest international work sites of the 15th century; the most renowned Spanish, Flemish and German architects and sculptors were employed. Seville's prosperity following the discovery of the New World further bolstered the already considerable financial means made available for the construction and embellishment of the Cathedral. In the 16th century, it was enhanced by an incomparable ornamentation of stained glass, altar pieces, grill work and stalls. In the 17th century, the Cathedral was still the beneficiary of rich donations, and was filled with baroque sculptures and paintings by the great Sevillian painters Murillo and Valdés Leal.

Like the Cathedral, the Alcazar and its gardens contain representative traces of the principal phases of the history of Seville. This palatial fortress was erected beginning in 712 by the conquering Arabs to control the Guadalquivir. It boasts a crenelated enclosure from the Almohad period as well as several interior spaces dating from before the Reconquest (Patio de las Muñecas, Patio del Yeso).

After 1248 it became a royal residence and was renovated under the reign of Peter the Cruel (1350-1369). The palace constructed in the interior of the Alcazar in 1364-1366 illustrates the syncretism proper to Mudéjar art which borrows its techniques and decorative expression from the Arabian art in Andalusia.

More than any other space, and despite the addition of a level in the 16th century, the Patio de las Doncellas is evocative of a captivating aesthetic which survived Christianization with its finely worked stuccos, artesonados ceilings, the azulejos of the galleries, and the fountain which rises at the middle of the courtyard.

The work undertaken between the 15th and 17th centuries partially respected the palace of Peter the Cruel (the Salon of the Ambassadors is a striking example) and retained in particular the general layout of the Alcazar and its gardens. Although each century left its imprint on the decoration of the apartments, the fountains or the pavilions, the traditional refinement of an Andalusian palace was left intact.

The third monument included in the nomination is the Lonja, which is located between the Cathedral and the Alcazar. Unlike the first two, it is not the product of rival civilizations and successive epochs.

In order to have control over trade with the American colonies, Philip II decided to have a new "Casa de Contratacion" built and had the plans for it drawn by his favorite architect, Juan de Herrera. This "Hall of Trade" was to replace a similar establishment which had been located in the Alcazar outbuildings since 1503. The hall designed by Herrera was constructed between

1583 and 1598 in the severe style favored by the architect of the Escorial. However, even after the last of the work had been completed in 1649, the "Casa de Contratacion" never occupied the chosen premises. Used for various temporary purposes, the Lonja became, in 1784, the Archivo general de Indias and, as from 1790, housed all the historic and diplomatic collections relative to the American colonies.

ICOMOS recommends that the monumental complex formed by the Cathedral, the Alcazar and the Lonja in Seville be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I, II, III and VI.

- **Criterion I.** In the restricted perimeter covered by the proposal, the Giralda constitutes a unique artistic achievement, a masterpiece of Almohad architecture. The immense Cathedral with five naves which replaced the mosque is the largest Gothic edifice in Europe.

The elliptical space of the Cabildo, created by Hernan Ruiz, is one of the most beautiful architectural works of the Renaissance.

- **Criterion II.** The Giralda influenced the construction of numerous towers in Spain and, after the conquest, in the Americas.

- **Criterion III.** The Cathedral and the Alcazar of Seville bear exceptional testimony to the civilization of the Almohads and to that of Christian Andalusia dating from the reconquest of 1248 to 16th century, which was thoroughly imbued with Moorish influences.

- **Criterion VI.** The Cathedral, the Alcazar and the Lonja are directly and tangibly associated with a universally important event: the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1492-1493. The tomb of Christopher Columbus is in the Cathedral. Plans were made in the Admirals Hall for a number of history's greatest explorations, notably the circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan and S. del Cano (1519-1522). In the Lonja are conserved the most precious documents from the archives of the colonies in the Americas.

ICOMOS, May 1987