

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° 500

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : San Francisco de Lima

Location : Lima

State Party : Peru

Date : December 30, 1987

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria II and IV.

C) JUSTIFICATION

Founded on 5 January 1535, the city of Lima played a leading role in the history of the New World from 1542, when Charles V established the vice-royalty of Peru there, to the 18th century when the creation of the vice-royalties of New Grenada (1718) and particularly of La Plata (1776) gradually put an end to the omnipotence of the oldest Spanish colony in South America.

The colonial city had 54,000 inhabitants in 1755. Today, it has a population of five million, mostly due to the influx of Andean peoples which began during the Thirties and intensified over the years. This demographic change explains the serious modifications to the urban landscape, deeply marked by the recent course of events. Scant trace of the historic centre of Lima can be seen in the present metropolitan area, with the exception of a few remarkable ensembles like the Plaza de Armas with the Cathedral, the Plaza de la Vera Cruz with Santo Domingo, and especially the monumental complex of the convent of San Francisco. Founded by the emperor Charles V and Francisco Pizarro, the convent spread south of the Rimac over eight "solares" or four "cuadres", making it at the time the largest area reserved for a religious establishment in a new city in the Americas.

Although urban development in the 20th century, notably the construction of the Avenida Abancay in 1940, has whittled away at this immense domain, San Francisco still presents an ensemble of convent buildings that is remarkable for its surface area, its coherence, the beauty of the architecture and the richness of

interior decorations. Within the monumental complex are three churches - San Francisco, la Soledad and El Milagro - which connect with a number of communal areas laid out around five cloisters. It covers a surface of 190 meters from east to west and 160 meters from north to south.

The majority of the buildings date from the 17th century, because the disastrous earthquake of 1656 destroyed the original buildings, some of which, like the Church of the Miracle (El Milagro), had been built prior to 1553. The reconstruction undertaken in 1657 owes much to the Portuguese architect Constantino de Vasconcellos who was succeeded in 1668 by his disciple Manuel de Escobar, a native of Lima. Vasconcellos expertly adapted the baroque structures to the risk of earthquakes by applying indigenous construction techniques : common joists and ribs are of wood, vaults and cupolas of earth on reed lattices. The climate of Lima, which is divided between four months of sun and eight of garua, the fine drizzle typical of the Pacific coast region, led the architect to adapt the structure's bossage to the local light. Although somewhat flat on sunny days, the facades of San Francisco and La Soledad become enticingly poetic in foggy weather due to the particular treatment of their exteriors.

Inside the church, the projections of the bossage and the reliefs in white on a red ocher background highlight the lovely simplicity of volumes and let the full symphony of the gilt and color of the baroque altarpieces burst forth. Several of the most striking features of the convent building, such as the main two-storey cloister, the chapter house, and the monks' choir, are universally known and admired. Their incontestable architectural quality is enhanced by splendid decoration : the azulejos wall coverings, marble altarpieces, frescoes and canvas paintings, the "artesonados" ceilings of the cloister, the stalls in the monks' choir and in the chapter house, the woodwork in the sacristy, and others.

Recognizing the efforts made by the international community since 1975 to save and preserve San Francisco de Lima, ICOMOS would hope that the appeal launched on 2 April 1987 by the Director General of UNESCO will be reinforced by the inscription of this ensemble on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria II and IV.

- **Criterion II.** The Franciscan convent of Lima played an essential role in transmitting the European cultural heritage to America and particularly in the profound aesthetic changes that characterize the appearance of Peruvian baroque. Imported works of art (paintings from the schools of Rubens or Zurbaran, azulejos from Andalusia, etc.) were complemented early on by local creations. It is significant that an azulejos workshop was established at the convent which exerted such considerable artistic influence in the vice-royalty of Peru in the 17th and 18th centuries.

- Criterion IV. San Francisco de Lima is an outstanding example of a convent ensemble of the colonial period in Latin America and, along with Santa Catalina de Arequipa, which ICOMOS takes the opportunity to point out here, is one of the most complete.

ICOMOS, May 1988

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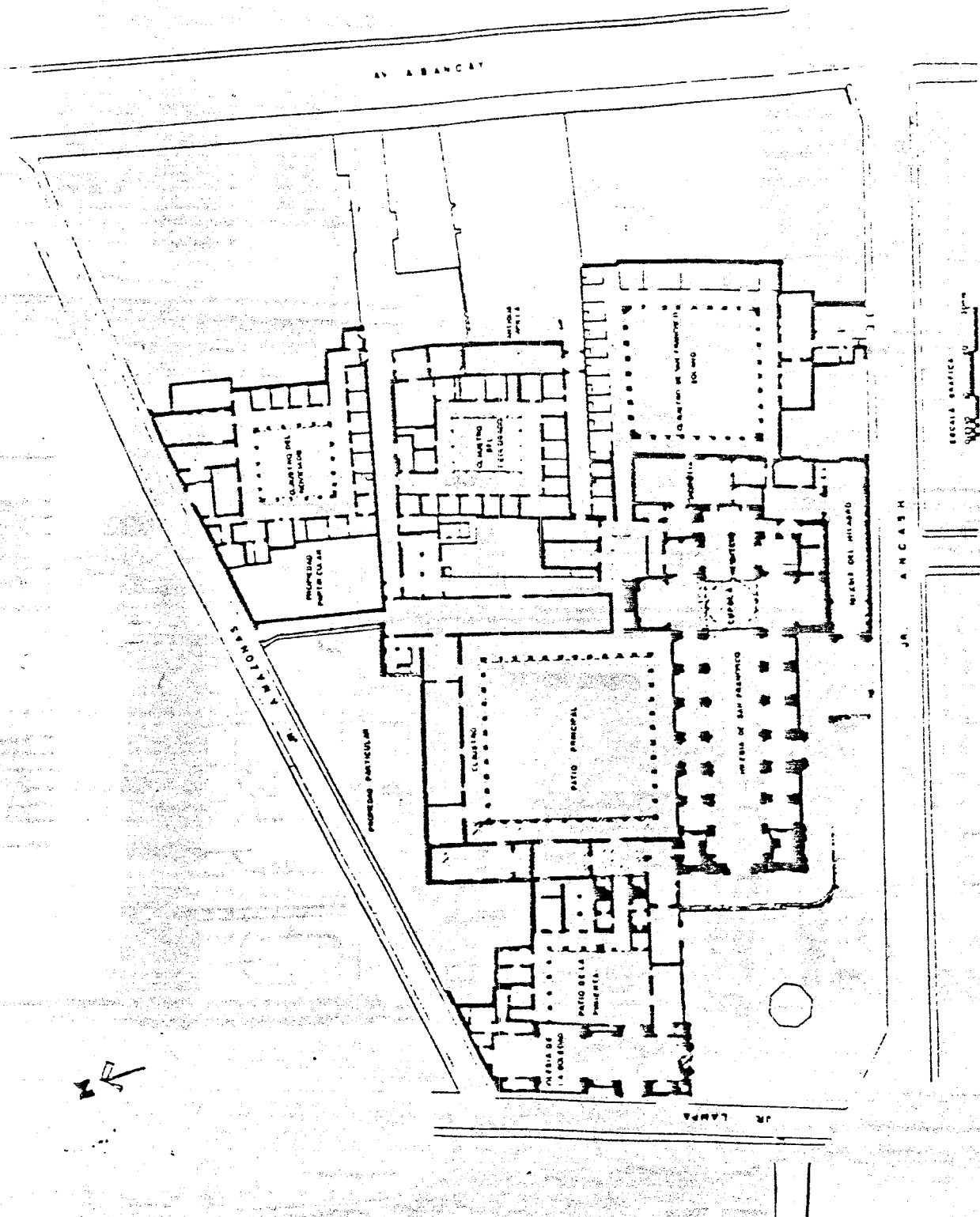
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ICOMOS, July 1988



Plan of the Monastery