

## Ubeda-Baeza (Spain)

No 522 rev (bis)

### 1. BASIC DATA

*State Party:* Spain

*Name of property:* Ubeda-Baeza: Urban duality, cultural unity

*Location:* Autonomous Community of Andalusia  
Province of Jaen

*Date received:* 30 June 1999; 25 January 2002

*Category of property:*

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of two *groups of buildings*. In terms of *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, the nomination represents historic centres of living historic towns.

*Brief description:*

The two small cities, Ubeda and Baeza, in southern Spain, received their urban form in the Moorish period in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and after the *Reconquista* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. An important development took place in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the cities were subject to renovation in the lines of the emerging Renaissance. This planning intervention was part of the introduction of the new humanistic ideas from Italy into Spain, and it also became an important reference for the further diffusion of such influences to architectural design in Latin America.

### 2. THE PROPERTY

#### *Description*

The two small towns, Ubeda and Baeza, are located in southern Spain, between the regions of Castile and Andalusia. The population of Ubeda was ca 32,000 in 1996, and of Baeza ca 16,000. Being on the frontier of the two regions, the towns have assumed a character of contrasts, which is reflected in the urban fabric that is of Arabic and Andalusian origin, contrasted with the religious complexes, public buildings and palaces that reflect more northern influences. The original Moorish settlements developed on the northern slopes of the valley of Guadalquivir River. They are situated some 10 km from one another. Both towns are articulated in two parts: the fortified site of the former Alcázar, the citadel, faces south, while the medieval town developed towards the north-west in the case of Ubeda, and to north-east in Baeza. The site of Alcázar has remained with no specific use. The more recent development of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has continued growing on the north side, while the river side has retained a more natural context, characterised by the growth of cereal and olives.

*Ubeda:* The walled historic town of Ubeda is nearly square in form, with the site of the Alcázar in the south-east

corner. From here the streets spread towards the town gates. The medieval focus of the town was the mosque, transformed into cathedral church, and the market in the centre of the urban area. There remain several medieval churches and convents, built in Gothic-Mudéjar style. The renovation in the period from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries resulted from improved economy, and a series of public buildings and palaces were constructed by the noble families.

The most important historic buildings in Ubeda include:

- The Palace of Francisco de los Cobos, designed by Luis de Vega (1531, now in municipal use);
- The funerary chapel of El Salvador del Mundo, Andrés de Vandelvira (1532-53);
- The Palace of Vázquez de Molina (1546, now town hall);
- The Hospital Honrados Viejos (1548, now an occupational centre);
- The Palace of the Déan Ortega (1550, now a tourist hotel – *parador*);
- The Pósito (1558, now a police station);
- The Palace of the Marqués de Mancera (1580-1600, now a convent);
- The Cárcel del Obispo (Bishop's Prison, late 16<sup>th</sup> century, now a law court);
- The Church of Santa María (13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries).

*Baeza:* The walled, old town area of Baeza has an oval form, the site of the former Alcázar facing south-west. In its general character it resembles Ubeda, with its spontaneously grown urban layout and the winding narrow streets. The monumental ensemble of Baeza brings together the most representative buildings in an axis starting from the Plaza de Santa María and running through the steep Cuesta de San Felipe down to the Cañuelo Gate. The dominant reference point is the Cathedral, which owes its present form to the 1570s, with some later additions. In front of the Cathedral are the Casas Consistoriales Altas (1511-26), which, like the 1557 extension of the Cathedral Sacristy alongside it, is currently not in use. The Fountain of Santa María (1564) occupies a prominent position in the small square facing the Cathedral, and then comes the former Seminary of St. Philip Neri (1598-1660), now used as administrative offices for the Junta de Andalucía. Adjoining it is the Jabalquinto Palace of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, currently not in use, and facing it is the Colegio de las Madres Filipenses, with the 13<sup>th</sup> century Church of Santa Cruz beyond. The ensemble is completed at its lower end by the University, constructed in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

#### *History*

Both Ubeda and Baeza have ancient origins. With the Moorish conquest of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, they became fortresses, which quickly attracted fortified urban settlement with a characteristic layout of narrow irregular streets. Ubeda was the Iberian *Bétula*, the Roman *Ebdete*, and the Arab *Obdaz* or *Obdazza*. It was conquered by Christian army of Ferdinand III in 1233-34, playing a role as a frontier fortress after the fall of Granada in 1492. Baeza was a minor settlement in the Roman times (*Beatia* or *Biatia*) but gained importance under the Arab rule. It was taken over by the Christians in 1226-27, and remained

a place of invading armies. Both towns prospered for a brief period in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and were partly renovated.

In the Moorish period, until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, both cities had their Alcázar, the citadel that was also the residence of the governor. Outside the citadel, there developed an urban area, which was surrounded by defence walls. The street network developed organically, linking the citadel with the city gates. In the centre of the town there was the mosque, and next to it probably the market. Outside the town walls there were small settlements. In this period, both towns obtained the basic form which has since been retained.

After the *Reconquista* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the rural areas were initially abandoned. The towns obtained some privileges that allowed them to develop a new urban oligarchy. The urban fabric remained fundamentally Islamic, but there were some works of renovation in the houses and repair of the defence walls. The Alcázar loses its function but remains as a *plaza de armas*. A new centre develops in the town itself. In Ubeda, the former mosque is transformed into a church with a market on its side. Similar process takes place around Plaza de S. Paolo in Baeza. Convents and monasteries are introduced often in Mudéjar style.

The most important development takes place from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The economy is improved due to the development of agricultural activities, the growing of olives and vines. The society remains highly hierarchic, and the economy is in the hands of a small minority of nobles and the church. There is no substantial change in the general urban fabric, but there are a number of interventions that give new features to both towns. The wall that separated the Alcázar from the town is now demolished, and there are new housing and new public buildings built in free areas near the former Alcázar, which develop into a second centre of activities. There is also new expansion outside the town walls.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the towns suffer of abandonment and agricultural production is drastically diminished. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the land properties of the church are confiscated and small farming gradually develops. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, there is some transformation inside the old towns, but the main development continues outside.

### ***Management regime***

#### *Legal provision:*

The nominated area of Ubeda is 37.2 ha and Baeza 26.2 ha. There are protection zones outside the core areas: Ubeda 62.4 ha and Baeza 78.3 ha. Both towns are included in a landscape protection zone extending over 44.2 km<sup>2</sup>.

The nominated properties are subject to several legal provisions regarding their protection. These include the Spanish Cultural Heritage Law (1985) and the equivalent statute of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia of Andalusian Historic Heritage Act (1991). Ubeda was protected as a historic area in 1955, and Baeza in 1966. The protected areas are subject to strict controls over any form of intervention, which must be authorised by the Provincial Historic Heritage Commission. There are several levels of listing for protection. In Ubeda, within the

old town and outside the walls, there are eleven buildings listed as national monuments. In Baeza, these are eight.

#### *Management structure:*

The Municipalities of Ubeda and Baeza have set up (in 1999) a common heritage management body, the *Ubeda-Baeza World Heritage Consortium*. This body is in charge of the integrated management of all the actions in the historical town sections of both cities. This Consortium has as members the municipal architects and officials in charge of the relevant departments, representatives of the *Historical-Artistic Heritage Advisory Council* (established in 1998), the directors of the Rehabilitation Workshop Schools of both cities, as well as being attended by officials of the Regional Administration. Ubeda has also the Municipal Housing Board which is involved in the activities related to land use and construction. Furthermore, there are the relevant tourist organisations.

The relevant urban management plans include: Special Plan for the Protection, Internal Reform, Urban Improvement and Catalogue of Ubeda (1989), Special Plan for the Protection, Internal Reform, Urban Improvement and Catalogue of Baeza (1990), Urban Development Master Plan of Ubeda (1997), Urban Development Master Plan of Baeza (1997). Furthermore, the following plans have an impact on the environment: Special Physical Environment Plan and Catalogue of Open Spaces and Protected Goods of the Province of Jaen (1987); Bases and Strategies of the Spatial Development Plan of Andalusia (1998); Strategic Plan of the Province of Jaen (2001).

#### *Resources:*

The financial resources for the protection of the two towns and their environment are provided mainly by the municipalities, but funds are provided also by regional administration and the central government. In the last decade, public investments have been over 30 million €

### ***Justification by the State Party (summary)***

The exceptional feature of the cities of Ubeda and Baeza lies on the fact that throughout history they have developed and structured in a dual fashion. This complementary duality makes them operate in many aspects as a single city, with their own affinities and features and differential shades of meaning which characterise their morphology and historical development until present times. And all this within a coexistence and twinning framework over time.

***Criterion ii:*** The cities of Ubeda and Baeza achieved an exceptional development in the Renaissance characterised by the influence of Humanism and their condition of cultural confluence place. This allowed for the emergence of a highly personalised Renaissance in which the development of constructive solutions in the field of Stereotomy made it possible to adopt complex architectural solutions, which have had an evidenced and relevant impact on the architecture of Spanish America. Ubeda and Baeza confirm, in this versatile way of dialogue with the American cultural world, their character of an open and universal project. They have promoted from the creative genesis of architectural knowledge to the transfer of ideas, men and talent a presence that endorses their aspiration of being acknowledged by the intrinsic value of their works,

and at the same time by the outreach of this same universality.

**Criterion iv:** Ubeda and Baeza offer an outstanding and unique way of conceiving a relationship between two cities, to the extent of making up an urban duality, which has turned them historically into two complementary and inseparable cities. This quality has stayed alive until present time and reached its clearest materialisation in their architecture sites, which are an exceptional sample of distribution of urban functions, so that the sum of the monumental site of Baeza (public, ecclesiastic and educational) and the monumental site of Ubeda (aristocratic and palaces) make up a complete Renaissance urban scheme of a high architectural quality, which is not just a mere repetition of schemes but also acquires its own identity by means of the particular cultural confluence. This peculiar Renaissance and their dual and two-headed expression turn Ubeda and Baeza into an exceptional and relevant example.

### 3. ICOMOS EVALUATION

#### *Actions by ICOMOS*

The nomination of Ubeda-Baeza has already been proposed twice in the past. In 1989, the nomination consisted of the two historic centres. The recommendation of ICOMOS then was that the two cultural properties should not be included on the World Heritage List, considering that there were other historic towns in Spain, which were far more important than these two. In 2000, a revised nomination was limited to the principal Renaissance areas. Again, ICOMOS did not recommend inscription, comparing the architecture of Ubeda and Baeza with similar Italian examples.

An ICOMOS mission visited the nominated properties in July 2002. ICOMOS has also consulted its Committee on Historic Towns and Villages, as well as several experts in the history of architecture and urban planning.

#### *Conservation*

##### *Conservation history:*

Having hardly had any development over a long period, from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Ubeda and Baeza have retained much of their historic fabric. The more recent development has been relatively limited. The historic towns have been protected from 1955 (Ubeda) and 1966 (Baeza), and they have been subject to conservation and rehabilitation works particularly in the last decade.

##### *State of conservation:*

Notwithstanding the current efforts in terms of planning and sustenance of the building stock, both Ubeda and Baeza face various types of problems. In both cases, the walled town area has remained in the 'periphery', and the main focus of activities now takes place outside the walls. The historic centres suffer from difficult accessibility, and the lack of facilities. Some of the streets in the historic areas are only accessible on foot. The narrow streets also cause traffic jams.

Such practical problems make the historic areas less attractive than more recently built areas which have better facilities. In fact, a large percentage of old buildings is abandoned (in Ubeda 91 buildings within the walls, 100 outside; in Baeza 10 and 88 respectively). Several buildings are in need of rehabilitation work of different degrees (in Ubeda ca 500 and in Baeza ca 300).

Due to the efforts of the local authorities, many of the monumental buildings in Ubeda have administrative or cultural types of functions, which guarantees the necessary maintenance for them. The tendencies are however different comparing Ubeda and Baeza: while in Ubeda, the residents tend to transfer to new areas, this is not the case in Baeza, where the current level of use of the historic centre would seem to continue.

##### *Management:*

The management of the two towns still faces serious challenges due to the current condition of the building stock and the objective difficulties raised by accessibility and lack of facilities in the historic centres. There are however several special programmes aimed to improve the situation, which are currently being implemented.

##### *Risk analysis:*

The province of Jaén is an area of high environmental risks due to the process of impoverishment of land. There are heavy seasonal rains and the slopes of the river valley are fairly steep, which contributes to the loss of fertile soil. Nevertheless, possible landslides are not considered a direct threat to the historic towns. On the other hand, this part of Spain has the highest seismic hazard in the country. The specific risks in Ubeda and Baeza are however more related to the condition of the historic building stock and the current trends of development. The lack of appropriate functions and the difficulty of access make the historic areas unattractive to modern users, which tends to discourage efforts of sustainable development.

#### *Authenticity and integrity*

Ubeda and Baeza have retained a large part of their historic fabric, even though the state of conservation of some of the buildings does cause concern. A part of buildings is abandoned and even in ruins. The buildings along the main street of Ubeda have been renovated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the whole of the city has retained its overall character of traditional housing developed since the Middle Ages. The main commercial activities have developed outside the walled city. In the case of Baeza, the eastern part of the old town is best preserved, while the western part has some recent constructions, and the former Alcázar site has remained vacant. The areas to the south of the walled city have not been developed, and are currently protected for their landscape values. While the general landscape in the region is dominated by the cultivations of olive trees, the immediate surroundings of both Ubeda and Baeza have not retained the same quality, but rather suffer from unattractive structures and roads. It is also noted that some of the on-going restorations and rehabilitation projects are not considered sympathetic to historic fabric. In several cases, only the external features are retained or rebuilt.

### **Comparative evaluation**

The political situation in Spain in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries differed from that of Italy. Partly this was due to the strong absolutism, which contrasted humanist ideals, partly it was due to the colonisation of America, which exhausted the resources of the country. At the same time, however, Spain and Italy had close contacts, which facilitated the gradual introduction of the Renaissance spirit to Spain, though this was a slow process.

While in architecture a new impact was already seen at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, in town planning it only became more apparent in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the king changed his capital city between Valladolid, Toledo, Zaragoza, Barcelona, and Granada, and these cities were subject to new construction schemes. In most cases, however, Spanish Renaissance interventions were limited to single buildings or small areas. A number of interesting projects were undertaken in towns, such as Salamanca (Plaza Mayor), Santiago de Compostela, Seville, Granada, and Toledo, which are inscribed on the World Heritage List. The principal royal undertaking was the monastery of Escorial (WH 1984, i, ii, vi) near Madrid.

The architect Andrés Vandelvira (1509-53), pupil of Diego de Siloe, was one of the principal architects who contributed to the introduction of the Renaissance style in Spain. He was responsible for founding an architectural school in classical manner in Spain, becoming an important reference in the history of architecture of the country. He worked on several projects in Ubeda, though his main work is considered to be the Jaén Cathedral (begun 1546).

Considering the history of Renaissance architecture in general, obviously several important examples have already been inscribed on the World Heritage List. These include Pienza and Urbino (inscribed in 1996 and 1998) in Italy, where Renaissance interventions date from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century, while in Ubeda and Baeza similar projects were realized half a century later. In fact, the Italian towns are prototypes, to which later interventions will necessarily be referred. At the same time, Ubeda and Baeza bear witness to the introduction of such new design concepts into the Spanish context, where they did become a well-known reference.

The design concepts that were expressed in the urban space, and palace and church architecture of Ubeda, Baeza and Jaén had notable influence in Latin America. This influence came especially through architectural treatises (eg by Alonso de Vandelvira, son of Andrés and others) for the design of urban spaces and buildings. Prominent examples include the cathedrals of Mexico City, Puebla and Merida, the religious architecture of Sucre in Bolivia, and the cathedral of Lima in Peru. Influence has also been documented in the development of monastic architecture in America, such as the open chapel of the *indios*.

### **Outstanding universal value**

#### **General statement:**

The historic towns of Ubeda and Baeza have been qualified by the State Party as forming an urban duality, which has characterized their morphology and historical

development as 'twin towns' (*criterion iv*). The towns have also been proposed for their exceptional development in the Renaissance period, and the impact that the architectural solutions would have had in Spanish colonial America (*criterion ii*).

While not sharing the State Party's claim for an 'urban duality', ICOMOS considers that Ubeda and Baeza, in the current formulation of the nomination, undoubtedly has great interest. They are early examples in Spain of the introduction of the design criteria of the Italian Renaissance. Furthermore, their considerable influence in Latin America has been well documented. Of interest is also the introduction of Renaissance interventions in an urban area that had its origins in the Islamic period.

Nonetheless, ICOMOS takes note of the problems faced in the management of both towns, and the lack of quality in many restoration and rehabilitation projects. It is considered necessary to redefine the nominated areas and appropriate buffer zones. Particular attention should also be given to providing coherent guidelines for restoration and rehabilitation in the historic area in general, as well as sympathetic improvement of the immediate surroundings of the historic areas towards the river valley.

#### **Evaluation of criteria:**

**Criterion ii:** The nominated properties are an example of particular interest in the introduction to Spain of Renaissance design criteria in the design of urban spaces and architecture. The prototypes of these designs are clearly in Italy, but Ubeda and Baeza can be recognized as two of the most notable examples in Spain. Through architectural treatises as well as through personal contacts, these examples were known in Latin America, where they were taken as models for architectural and urban schemes, exemplified in a number of important religious ensembles.

**Criterion iv:** While not consisting of prototypes, as is the case with some Italian examples (Pienza, Urbino, etc.), Ubeda and Baeza, nevertheless, are outstanding examples of urban ensembles, including civic and religious buildings, which have become models for similar developments in the New World.

## **4. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendation for the future**

The State Party is invited to elaborate the norms and guidelines for the restoration and rehabilitation of historic buildings and areas so as to be coherent with the internationally accepted criteria. Action should also be taken to restore the surroundings of the historic areas.

### **Recommendation with respect to inscription**

That the property be *deferred* subject to redefinition and verification of the nominated areas and buffer zones.

ICOMOS, March 2003