

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° 526

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Colonial city of Santo Domingo, Archaeological Sites of La Isabela and La Concepcion de La Vega.

Location : National District, Province of Puerto Plata, province of La Vega.

State party : Dominican Republic

Date : 27 April, 1989.

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the archaeological sites of La Isabela and La Concepcion de La Vega not be included on the World Heritage List.

That the inclusion of Santo Domingo be deferred in order to permit the authorities of the Dominican Republic to submit complementary information on the state of conservation of the urban fabric and environment.

C) JUSTIFICATION

The Dominican Republic has submitted a proposal to include on the World Heritage List the colonial town of Santo Domingo, its capital, as well as the archaeological sites of La Isabela on the north coast and La Vega in the Central Cordillera. This one proposal thus covers three significant moments in the history of Hispaniola during the period following the discovery of the island by Christopher Columbus in 1492: settlement of La Isabela on the Atlantic Coast in 1493, founding of La Concepcion de La Vega in 1496, and the founding of Santo Domingo on the Caribbean coast on 4 August 1498.

The symbolic value of these three properties is evident. La Isabela claims the title of first Spanish colony in the New World. La Concepcion de La Vega, founded at the foot of Santo Cerro, was probably one of the very first forts built by the conquistadores on the island before a new town, Santo Domingo, came into being, upon which Ferdinand the Catholic bestowed the royal coat of arms in 1508. Built on a site chosen by Bartholomew Columbus in 1496, Santo Domingo is justifiably proud to have been the site of many firsts in the Americas: the first cathedral, the first hospital, the first monastery, the first customhouse and the first university.

Yet ICOMOS find it disconcerting to find a single proposal for three cultural properties that are so distant from one other (La Isabela is more than 200 km by air from Santo Domingo) and whose present situations are extremely different. La Isabela is a potential archaeological site on the coast; la Concepcion de La Vega is a partially excavated archaeological site open to visitors since 1980; the historic centre of Santo Domingo is in a capital city of nearly one million people.

Aware of the extremely high quality of the monumental heritage of Santo Domingo, the model colonial town created by Nicolas de Ovando, whose gridiron plan was subsequently adopted by nearly all town planners of the New World, ICOMOS believes that the commemorative value attached to the traces of Christopher, Bartholomew and Diego Columbus is so strong there it epitomizes and transforms that of La Isabela and Concepcion de La Vega.

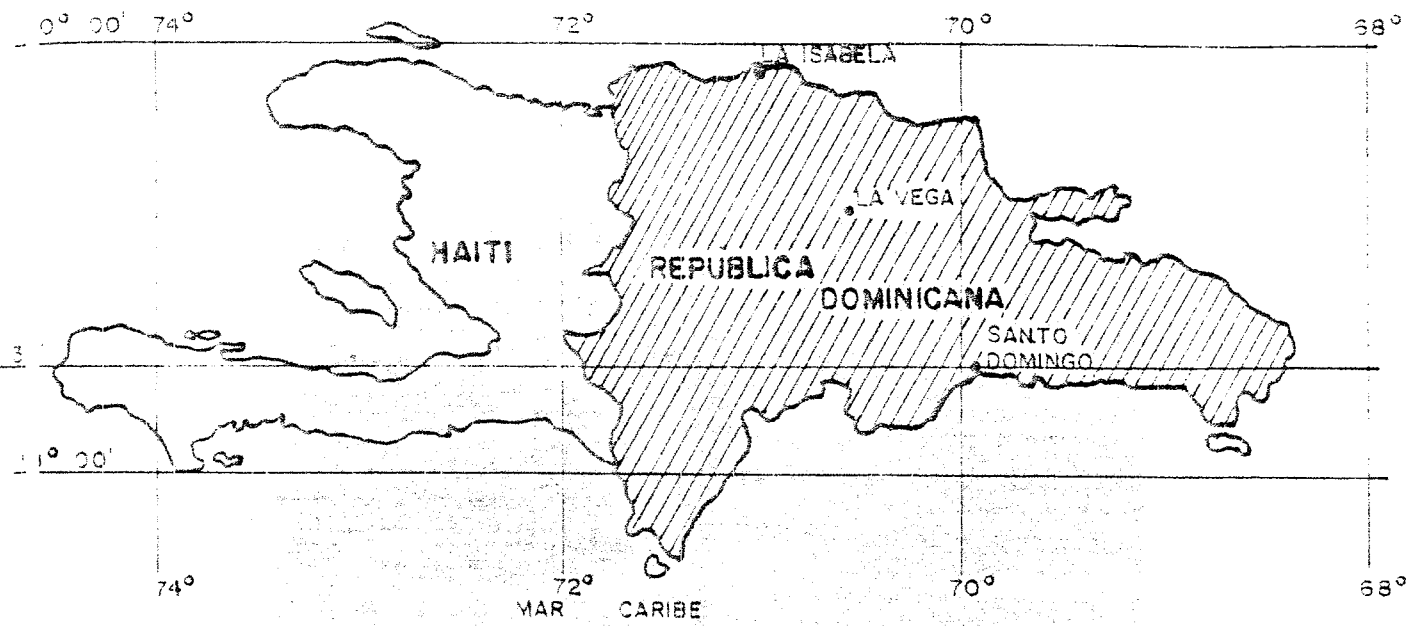
To strengthen the justification of a positive opinion on a proposal restricted to the historic centre of Santo Domingo, ICOMOS, taking note of the Dominican Republic's policy of safeguarding, rehabilitating and restoring monuments which has been in effect since 1965, would like to have more detailed information concerning the preservation of the city's urban fabric and environment. The intrinsic value of the 41 buildings or ensembles mentioned in the nomination being beyond any doubt, one may wonder about the future of the old blocks of the historic centre and the general evolution of the capital as it prepares to celebrate in 1992 the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the New World. An aerial view of the entire metropolitan area and specific information on ground plans, urban projects and management plans are essential in order to evaluate the dossier along with a series of photographs and slides showing the townscape and not just the protected monuments.

ICOMOS, April 1990

As of the 5 October no new elements had been received that answer the questions posed by ICOMOS and the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, notably with regard to the environment of the historic centre of Santo Domingo.

However, the mission which UNESCO has entrusted to Professor Raymond Lemaire may enable the World Heritage Committee to make a new evaluation of the dossier at the December 1990 session.

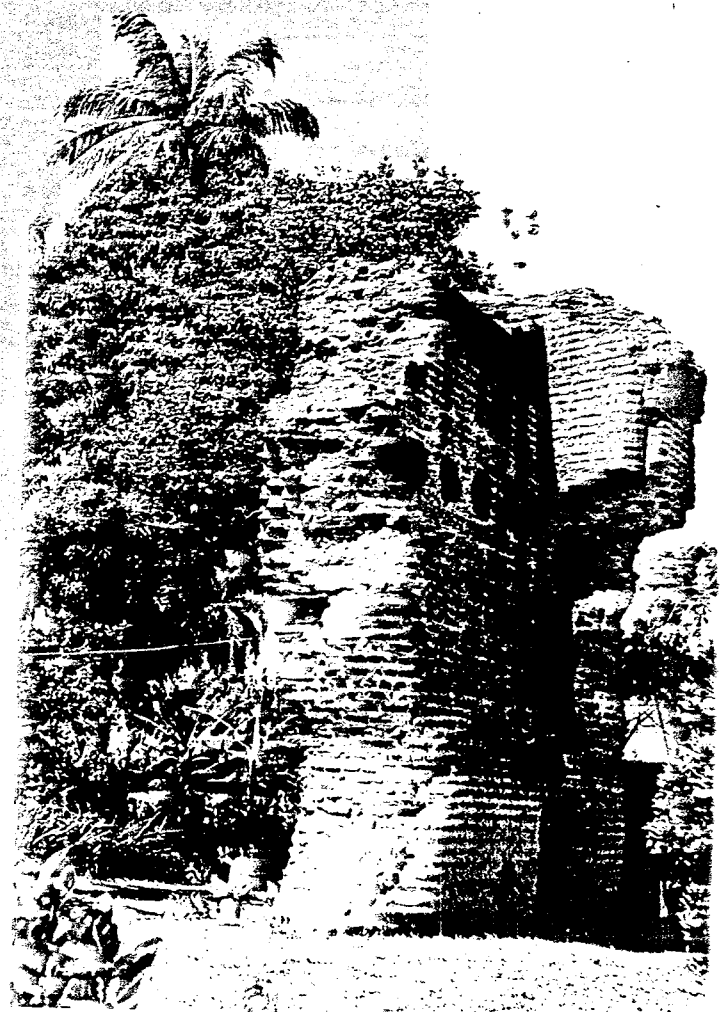
ICOMOS, October 1990



Localisation des 3 sites proposés /
 Location of the 3 proposed sites



Site de La Isabela /
 Site of La Isabela



Site de La Concepcion de La Vega
 Site of Concepcion de La Vega