

**A) IDENTIFICATION**

<u>Nomination</u>	:	Zone of the historical monuments of Morelia
<u>Location</u>	:	State of Michoacan
<u>State party</u>	:	Mexico
<u>Date</u>	:	1 October 1990

**B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION**

That this cultural property be deferred until such time as additional information pertinent to the philosophy of conservation employed could be presented for consideration.

**C) ICOMOS OBSERVATIONS**

While recognizing that Morelia indisputably merits inclusion on the List, (likely on the basis of Criteria II, IV and VI), ICOMOS received information during its evaluation in Spring 1991 which brought into question the approach to preservation of certain facades, through removal of their external plaster which would affect the authenticity of these facades. ICOMOS could recommend the inclusion of this property on the World Heritage List on the condition that the conservation policy of Morelia's buildings is consistent with the Venice Charter.

The World Heritage Bureau in June 1991 recommended inscription of the site subject to satisfying concerns expressed with regard to the state of preservation of the historic town centre. Additional information supplied by the Mexican authorities during June 1991 has unfortunately not addressed the problems cited.

## **D) BACKGROUND**

In 1537 a Franciscan monastery was established near the Indian village of Guayangareo in the Michoacan province. In 1541, it became the new provincial capital under Antonio de Mendoza, who had been made the first viceroy of New Spain in 1535, and was renamed Valladolid. Although fifty noble families settled there, as did many Europeans over the next few centuries, the population remained, even as today, predominantly of Indian origin.

Valladolid was long a rival of the town of Patzcuaro, the first episcopal see in Michoacan. As King Philip II (1556-1598) favoured, Valladolid has been the Bishop's see since 1580. At the same time the College of St. Nicholas Obispo (founded 1540 at Patzcuaro), the oldest institution of higher learning in Mexico, was transferred here. The town's economic and cultural life continued to flourish throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.

It was, in fact, because of its importance as an intellectual center that Valladolid was among the principal towns in Mexico's fight for independence in the early 19th century. Two of the leading figures in the struggle were both priests: Miguel Hidalgo and Jose Maria Morelos. In honor of the latter, a native of Valladolid, the town's name was changed to Morelia in 1828.

Capital of the State of Michoacan, Morelia was one of the theatres of the violent conflicts that marked Mexican history in the first half of the 19th century. Once the republic was reestablished in 1869, the town returned to its economic and cultural pursuits. In recent times a surge in population growth came close to endangering the town's cultural patrimony.

Despite all the vicissitudes of history and climate and its inevitable, incessant urban development, Morelia has preserved intact its original structures built of pink stone on a grid layout. Among the town's 249 historical monuments, the most noteworthy include 20 public buildings and 21 churches.

ICOMOS, November 1991