

**IDENTIFICATION**

<b><u>Nomination</u></b>	:	Prehispanic City of El Tajín
<b><u>Location</u></b>	:	State of Veracruz
<b><u>State Party</u></b>	:	Mexico
<b><u>Date</u></b>	:	3 October 1991

**DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY**

It was previously thought that occupation of the El Tajin pre-Columbian settlement was in three phases, between 100 BC and AD 1200, but recent research has shown that there was only one phase of occupation lasting from 800 to 1200. It dates from the abandonment of the great centre at Teotihuacán and is contemporary with other settlements such as Tula and Xochicalco on the central plateau and Uxmal and Chichen Itza in the Mayan region. The site was abandoned and partly destroyed after 1200 when the region came under the rule of the powerful Mexico-Tenochtitlan kingdom.

The settlement is divided into three areas, each constructed around a number of open spaces (plazas). In Tajín the plazas are rectangular and in Tajin Chico they are either trapezoidal or in the form of a Greek fret.

The Tajín complex, defined by two streams and an east-west wall, is the lowest-lying of the three. Its three plazas are surrounded on all sides by monumental structures in the form of pyramids, the most impressive of which is the Pyramid of the Niches. First recorded in 1785, it is 36 m square at the base and rises in six steps to a temple at the top. Each storey has rows of square niches, with an overhanging cornice.

Tajin communicates directly with Tajín Chico, which is constructed on an artificial mound 7 m high and measuring 300 m by 1500 m. Like Tajin it has not been excavated completely; however, the Plaza del Tajín Chico and the buildings round it have been fully excavated and have revealed some interesting details of this part of the complex. Especially noteworthy is Building A, which has smaller buildings at each of its four corners, an unusual feature in pre-Hispanic architecture. It is the most richly decorated building in El Tajín, with vertical bands of relief and key-pattern friezes.

The third area, which is linked with and lies above Tajín Chico, is known as the Group of Columns because of the larger of the two pyramidal structures so far investigated, which has a portico supported on columns, themselves richly decorated with relief sculptures.

## **AUTHENTICITY**

The site had been undisturbed for over 500 years when investigations began there, and no additions or reconstructions have been made at any time since.

## **MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION**

There are pre-Hispanic remains over an area of some 959 ha in this region. An area of 600 ha was designated for protection in 1976; this included a specific Archaeological Zone of 80 ha, which was extended in 1991 to 240 ha (designated as Zone A). The remaining area (Zone B) is a buffer zone.

Under the Mexican Federal Law of 1972, the State has title to all archaeological materials, even though they may be in private ownership. Most of the protected area is already in Federal ownership, the remaining area in the east of the area being owned by Petroleos Mexicanos, itself a State enterprise. The Archaeological Zone is administered by INAH (the National Institute of Anthropology and History).

As a result of over forty years' work, the excavated part of the site is in a good state of conservation. However, its size poses problems of supervision. There are also problems resulting from the invasive nature of tropical vegetation and frequent flooding of the lower-lying part of the site (now solved by improved drainage).

INAH and the University of Vera Cruz have been operating a collaborative project for the investigation and conservation of the El Tajín Archaeological Zone since 1984, financed by the Federal Government. A budget of \$4 million has been allocated for 1988-92. It is intended that a site museum should open at the end of 1992.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Qualities**

The artistic, architectural, and historical importance of El Tajín combine to make this a highly significant site. It has been extensively excavated in recent years and as a result it is probably better understood than many of the more famous pre-Hispanic sites in Mexico.

### **Comparison with other sites**

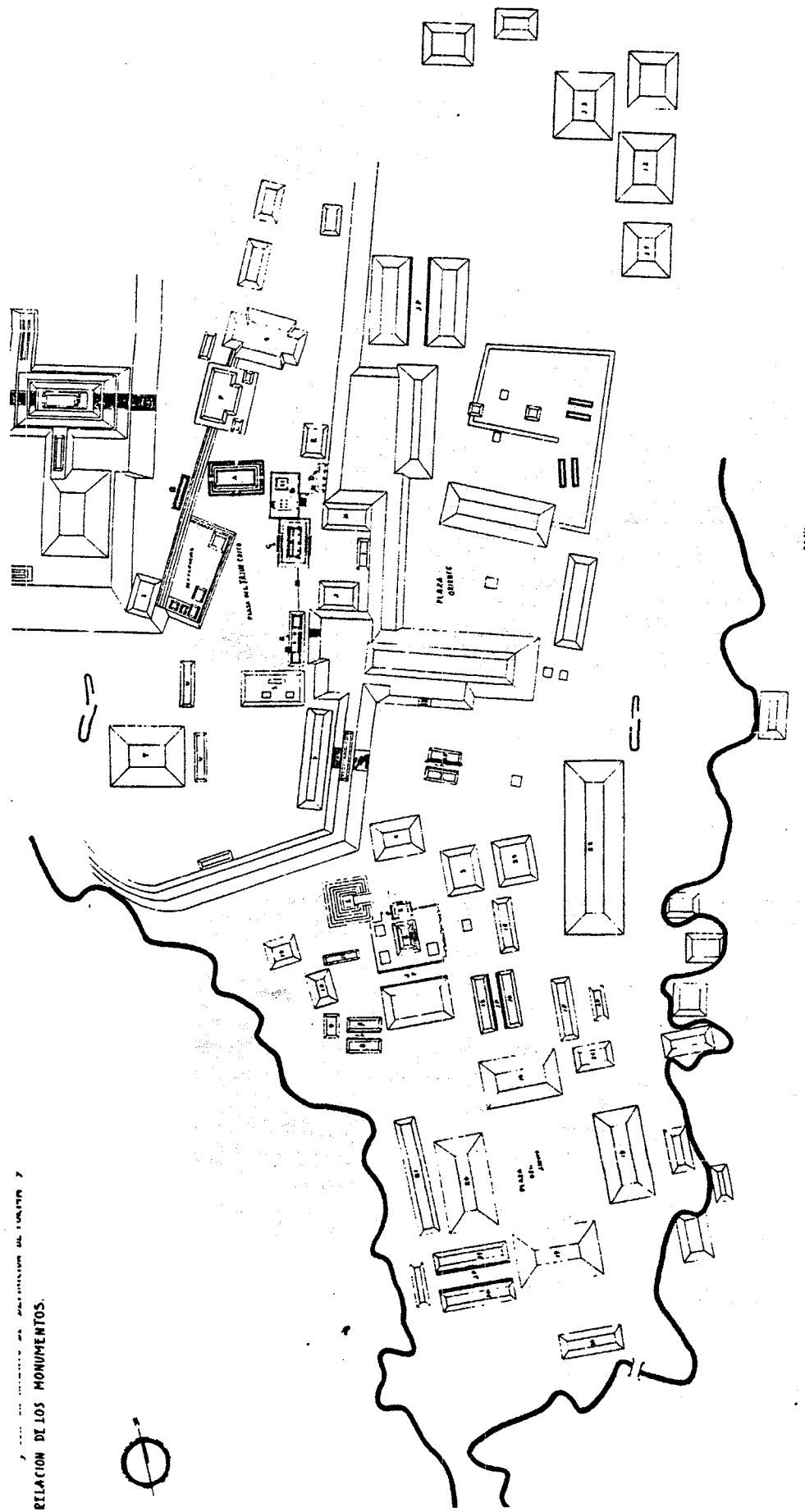
The ICOMOS Bureau, only one of those members had personal knowledge of the site, sought the views of a leading academic expert on the ancient towns of Mexico. His report was unequivocally in favour of the inclusion of El Tajín on the World Heritage List because of its artistic, architectural, and historic importance.

## **ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION**

That this cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria iii and iv.

- **Criteria iii and iv** : El Tajín is of great significance in that it is the best preserved and most thoroughly excavated example of a pre-Hispanic town from the period between the Teotihuacan and Mexico-Tenochtitlan empires. It is crucial to an understanding of artistic and socio-economic development in these intervening centuries.

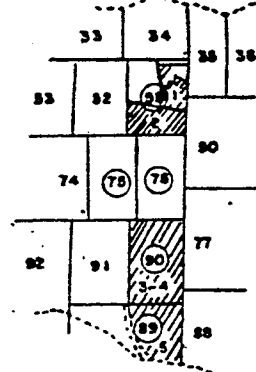
ICOMOS, October 1992



RELACION DE LOS MONUMENTOS.

El Tajin : plan du site archéologique /  
plan of the archaeological site

LOCALIZACION



LOTE: OJITAL Y POTRERO.  
 MUNICIPIO: PAPANTLA.  
 ESTADO: VERACRUZ.



Y = 85 000.00

X = 137 000.00

X = 138 000.00

Y = 85 000.00

Y = 84

Y = 84 000.00

PARCELA N° 74

PARCELA N° 30

PARCELA N° 92

PARCELA N° 77

Y = 83 000.00

Y = 83

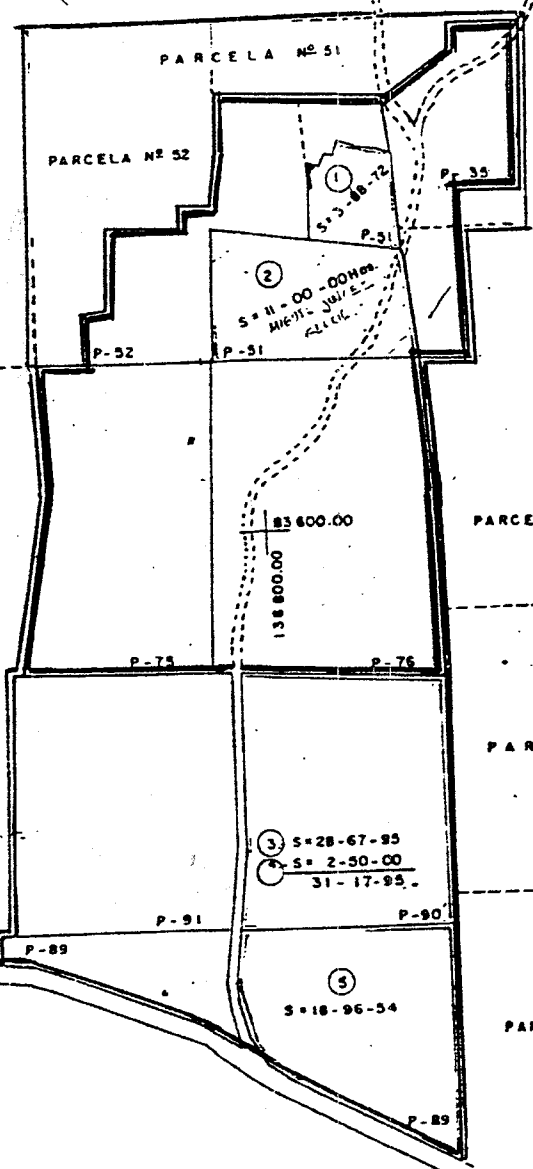
A COATZINTLA

PARCELA N° 88

A PAPANTLA

Y = 82 000.00

Y = 82



PLANO GENERAL DE LOCALIZACION DE LA ZONA ARQUEOLOGICA ' EL TAJIN '	
MUNICIPIO DE PAPANTLA. ESTADO... VERACRUZ.	
PAPANTLA DE OLARTE 4 JUNIO DE 1991	
LEVANTO	

El Tajin : plan de localisation du site archéologique /  
 plan of localization of the archaeological site