

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	The historic monuments zone of Querétaro
<i>Location</i>	State of Querétaro, Municipality of Querétaro
<i>State Party</i>	Mexico
<i>Date</i>	29 November 1995

Justification by State Party

Located near a large prehispanic archaeological site of the Teotihuacán and Toltec periods, which has so far been little studied, the present site of Querétaro was initially settled by an Otomi group fleeing from the Conquistadores into lands controlled by the Chichimecas. Twenty years later, in 1550, Spaniards flocked to the site, attracted by the opening up of the road to the mines at Guanajuato and Zacatecas, and the outlines of the new town were laid down around a centre already established by the Franciscans. However, the indigenous people who quickly settled around this centre had an influence on the basic urban characteristics of Querétaro.

Criterion ii

The structure of this remarkably hybrid town opens out like the pages of a book, separated by the north-south axis, on which the ensemble of San Francisco is located. To the west the streets in the Spanish quarter are straight and the blocks regular and rectangular, whereas to the east the pattern of the indigenous quarter is irregular - curvilinear or diagonal.

Criterion ii

This organization of the urban space, starting from the very centre of the town, is both characteristic of and exceptional in the towns of New Spain, and has led some contemporary writers to talk of a harmonious way of life or cohabitation by the two cultures, and even, from 1680 onwards, of the "glories of Querétaro" as foreshadowing the bicultural Mexico of today and the emergence of an ideal form of coexistence in the New World.

Criteria ii and iv

The town witnessed a new development in the 18th century around this central structure of twenty blocks on the Spanish side and thirty on the indigenous, each covering a similar area. It followed the lines of the indigenous settlement rather than the Spanish rectangular layout, which was more normal at that time. It was in the 18th century that Querétaro reached its highest level of economic wealth, which manifested itself in a number of planned architectural and ornamental ensembles with special characteristics and of high quality.

Criterion iv

The interiors of some of the religious buildings, of which the convents of Santa Rosa and Santa Clara are the main examples, were embellished with an exuberant ensemble of decorative works - retablos and sculptures in gilded and polychrome-painted wood, paintings, wrought iron, etc.

Criterion iv

There were also many new lay and religious buildings erected at this time, conventional in form but enriched by surprising constructional and decorative elements on their elevations, such as the multilobate arcading of the palaces or the unusual caryatids in the courtyard of San Agustín.

Criteria i and ii

The use of rocaille as the predominant Baroque decorative motif replaced the architectural structure and orders that were used, even in the Baroque period, invading not only the interiors of Santa Clara and Santa Rosa, but also appearing as structural elements in the form of buttresses on the church of San Francisco, the Jesuit church, and, above all, the church of Santa Rosa.

Criteria i and iv**Category of property**

In terms of the categories of property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the historic zones of Querétaro constitute a *group of buildings*.

History and Description

History

The extensive archaeological site known as El Pueblito or El Cerrito, which is dominated by a 30 m high pyramid, is situated 7 km from the centre of Querétaro. The limited investigations carried out there indicate that it experienced two phases of growth: AD 400-600 in the Teotihuacán period and AD 650-1050 in the Toltec period.

At the time of the Spanish invasion the lands around this abandoned site were the territory of the nomadic Chichimecas; they were occupied by Otomi people from nearer the Aztec capital; around 1520 they settled on the site of the present town. The Otomi leader Kho-ni, who took the name Fernando de Tapia when he adopted the Christian faith, was granted permission in 1532 by the Second Royal Audience to establish an indigenous village on the site, along with the Spaniard Juan Sanchez Alanis. Two years later Spanish settlers coming up the Lerma river, accompanied by a large number of Tarasco Indians, arrived at the site, which was given the name "Querehtaro," a Tarasco word meaning "at the ball-court," a reference to the form of the narrow valley in which the settlement was situated.

From the outset the town had a unique character. The indigenous settlement founded in the name of the Spanish Crown was based on the presence of three indigenous groups - Otomis, Tarascos, and Chichimecas; they shared the area with the Spaniards, who entrusted the laying out of the town to Sanchez Alanis. Thanks to its favourable environmental and geographical conditions it quickly assumed a double pivotal role in the structure and organization of the new lands of the colony. On the one hand it was the link between the mountains of the south-east that had to be crossed in order to reach the capital of New Spain, passing through the rich lowlands (El Bajío) of the north-west, stretching some 700 km almost to the Pacific coast. At the same time it was the boundary between the southern lands, gradually settled by the Spaniards, and the northern region, which was under the control of hostile nomad peoples such as the Chichimecas.

It was also to have an important supply function for the mining towns of Guanajuato and Zacatecas. By 1680 it had become the third city of New Spain, after Mexico and Puebla, with a population of over thirty thousand. The wealth of Querétaro in the mid 18th century is reflected by the important buildings that were built or reconstructed at that time, giving the town its special Baroque appearance. In the early 19th century its prosperity was based on textile manufacture and tobacco production, which provided employment for one-third of its forty thousand inhabitants. Its considerable degree of autonomy, as witnessed by the appointment of a *Corregidor* in 1770, encouraged exceptional commercial activity.

However, Mexican independence in 1810 spelt the beginning of Querétaro's economic decline. The region saw many military engagements, continuing to the end of the century. It was also the site of important historic events: the peace treaty with the USA was concluded there in 1848, and in 1867 the Emperor Maximilian was imprisoned and later executed there after the defeat of his army nearby. With the beginning of the revolutionary movement in 1910 Querétaro once again assumed a central place in the nation, since it was here that the new National Constitution (which is still in force today) was signed on 5 February 1917 by all the revolutionary groups after two months of debate in the Teatro de la República.

After remaining static at around 35,000 inhabitants between 1910 and 1940, the population began to rise rapidly. From 50,000 in 1950 it reached 130,000 in 1970, and now stands at around 450,000.

Description

The area nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List covers 4 km², with 203 blocks. There are 1400 designated monuments, of which twenty are religious and fifteen are used for public services. In terms of area Querétaro is in sixth place among the forty Historic Monument Zones in Mexico, but it occupies fourth place (after Mérida, Mexico City, and Puebla) in terms of the number of historic buildings.

The site of the town is defined by two lines of hills with a level area some 1500 m wide between them through which the river runs. The first chapel (La Cruz) was built on a small hillock at the eastern end of the valley, and the axis of its nave was used by Juan Sanchez Alanis as the line of the six parallel streets of the Spanish colonial settlement that he laid out, three running north to the river and three to the south. These are crossed by six streets at right-angles. The spaces between the streets are not equal, but they nevertheless give an appearance of regularity, in contrast with the irregular plan of the streets to the east of the Franciscan establishment. The only exception is the Plaza de Armas, the seat of government, which was arcaded on two sides and surrounded by government buildings and the residences of the leading citizens.

It was not intended that Querétaro should become an episcopal see and so no place was allocated in the plan for a cathedral. However, all the monastic orders established themselves there. First came the Franciscans, Augustinians, and Dominicans, who founded large houses, and they were followed by the Jesuits and Filipenses,

as well as female orders. All have left imposing Baroque ensembles, of which the convents of Santa Teresa, El Carmen and, in particular, the convents of Santa Clara and Santa Rosa, are outstanding.

The many non-religious buildings in Querétaro, again mostly Baroque, are not innovative or exceptional in plan. Their special significance lies in the design and construction of a wide range of multilobate arches, to be found only in the interiors of the houses and palaces, which give the Baroque architecture of Querétaro an exceptional and original character, which is enhanced by the "Pink Stone of Querétaro," eagerly sought and used in other parts of the region.

It is the buildings erected during the economic heyday of the town in the last quarter of the 17th century which gave Querétaro its present-day appearance. The religious houses of San Antonio, El Carmen, and the Jesuit College were rebuilt and expanded and the churches of the Congregation of Guadalupe and Santo Domingo were built, mainly from the financial resources provided by Juan Caballero y Ocio, who was responsible for establishing Jesuit missions in California. The original Franciscan monastery of Santa Cruz was also expanded, and became the first Apostolic College of *Propaganda Fide* founded by the Holy See in the Americas.

Between 1726 and 1735 the most striking feature of the townscape of Querétaro was built: the 1.28 km long aqueduct that brought water to a central distribution point near the church of Santa Cruz. The 18th century saw the construction of a number of high-quality public buildings, such as schools and hospitals.

Especially noteworthy are the interiors of the churches of Santa Clara and Santa Rosa. The work of Mariano de las Casas, they outdo conventional Baroque in their profusion of rocailles and arabesques decorating balconies, consoles, niches, baldachins, curtains, draperies, and the like and the vivid polychrome statues of saints, angels, and apostles.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The historic centre of Querétaro is covered by the 1972 Federal Law on Archaeological, Artistic and Historical Monuments and Zones. It was declared a Historical Monuments Zone by Presidential Decree on 30 January 1981. Regional measures of protection are the Law on the Protection of the Historical Heritage of the State of Querétaro (1991) and the designation of the Conservation Zone of the Historic Centre and the Traditional Quarters of Querétaro by the Municipal Council in June 1995.

An urban development plan was prepared for Querétaro as required by the 1976 Federal General Law on Human Settlements (see *Management* below).

Management

Ownership is divided among the Federal, State, and Municipal Governments and private foundations, organizations, companies, and individuals.

Responsibility for overseeing the application of the 1972 Federal Law is the responsibility of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), which is part of the National Council for Culture and the Arts (CNCA) of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP). The State and Municipality also have roles in the protection and management process, by virtue of their respective statutory instruments.

The first general urban development plan dates from 1982 and came into effect in 1991; the part relating to the historic centre which forms the subject of this nomination is spelled out in greater detail in the 1988 Partial Development Plan for the Development of the Historic Zone. Querétaro also plays an active role in the 100 Towns Programme, set up by the Ministries of Social Development, Urban Development, Public Works, and Ecology in 1993, the objective of which is "to give sites and monuments the best functional role while at the same preserving their cultural value." Two programmes aimed at active public participation in conservation have been conducted by the Municipality since 1994. There are also more than a dozen private foundations working on the conservation and restoration of the main monuments in the town, the largest of which, that for Santa Clara, has invested more than half a million dollars in its work in the past five years.

The area proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List comprises the central zone (a) and the two buffer zones created under the 1981 Presidential Decree. A complete survey and inventory of all the monuments and sites was carried out by INAH and results published in four volumes in 1990.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Querétaro suffered badly from military activities in the latter half of the 19th century, and essential restoration work had to be carried out. The opportunity was taken to reroute and enlarge the main north-south axial road, the Calle Corregidora. However, systematic conservation and restoration work did not begin until the 1940s, following the initial designation under the provisions of the 1934 Federal Monuments Law of the historic centre as the Typical and Monumental Zone of the Town of Querétaro in 1942. Over the last fifteen years conservation and restoration projects have expanded and intensified, covering all the public buildings, the former monasteries, and many privately owned properties. This has been coordinated through the INAH Regional Centre in Querétaro itself; they are supported by the specialist group of the Ministry for Social Development for the State of Querétaro and by the State and municipal conservation and urban development commissions.

Authenticity

Querétaro is an ancient colonial town that continues to exist largely within its original town plan of the 16th century and retains a very high proportion of old buildings, notably from the 17th and 18th centuries. As a significant group of buildings making up a living urban ensemble its authenticity is of a high order.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committee on Historic Towns and Villages on the cultural significance of the site. An ICOMOS expert mission visited Querétaro in February 1996.

Qualities

Querétaro is a well preserved Spanish colonial town which retains its original street layout virtually intact, and also a high proportion of its 17th and 18th ecclesiastical and secular buildings.

Comparative analysis

There are many fine Spanish colonial towns in Central and South America, and many of them (including six in Mexico) are already inscribed on the World Heritage List. Querétaro is of special significance for two reasons. First, its urban layout is unique for Spanish colonial towns in the Americas in that its town plan was from the start divided into two distinct sections - one rectilinear and intended for Spanish settlers and the other composed of smaller, winding streets where the indigenous population lived. Secondly, the wealth of the town in the 18th century resulted in the erection of a number of high-quality religious and lay buildings and the appearance of a remarkably rich and profuse form of post-Baroque decoration.

ICOMOS observations

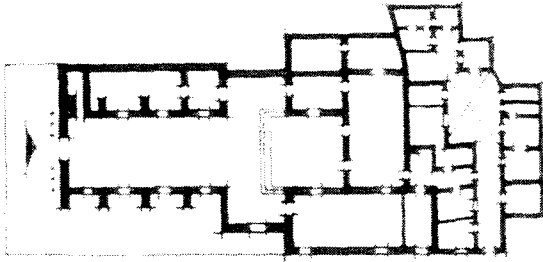
The case for the inclusion of Querétaro on the World Heritage is a strong one, by virtue of its unique original town plan and the quality of its buildings. This nomination does, however, raise the general problem of Spanish and Portuguese colonial towns in the Americas, a number of which figure on tentative lists submitted by States Parties in Latin America. ICOMOS proposes therefore to initiate a comparative study of these towns, which will be of value both to ICOMOS and to the World Heritage Committee when future nominations are received.

Recommendation

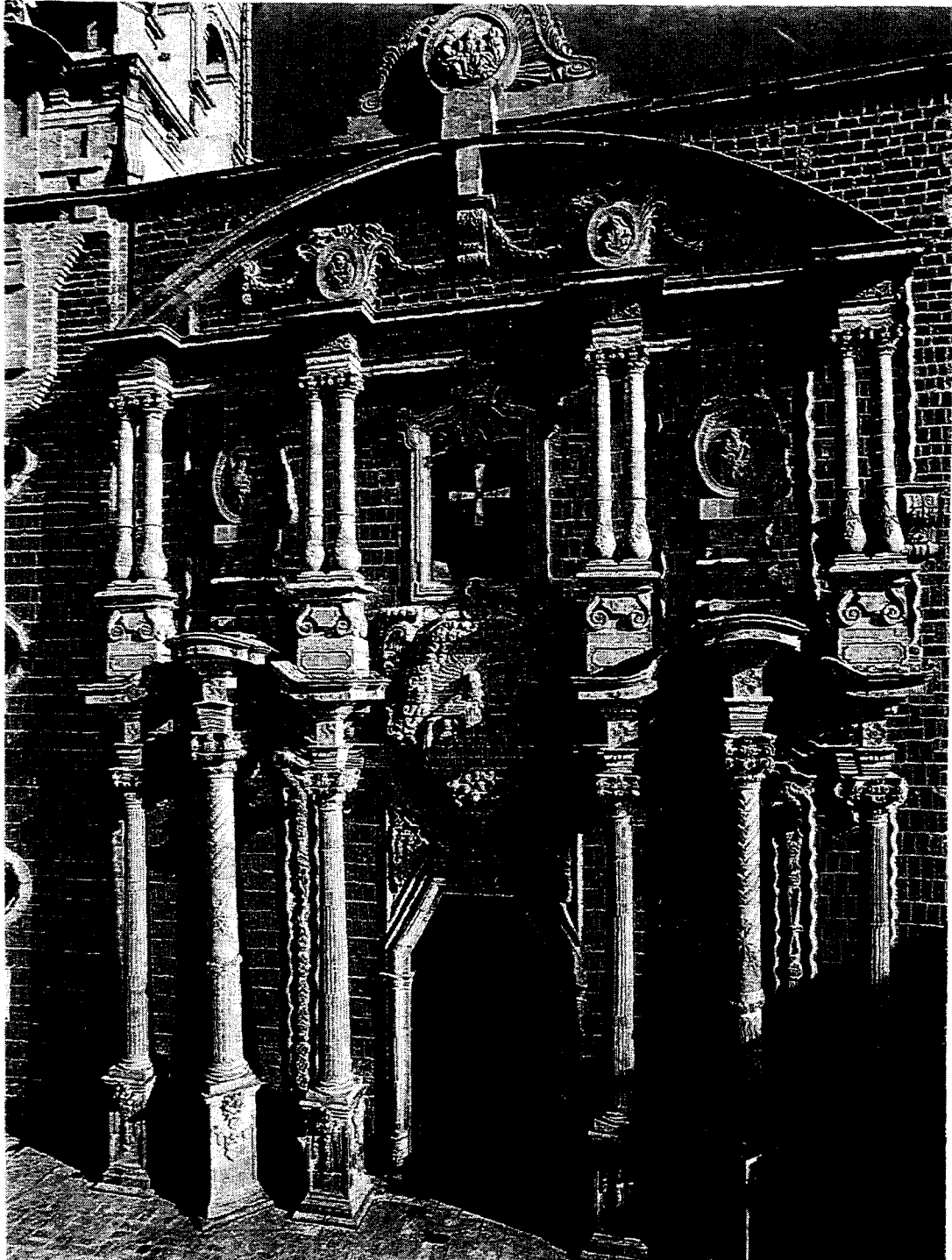
That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii and iv*:

Querétaro is an exceptional example of a Spanish colonial town whose layout symbolizes its multi-ethnic population. It is also endowed with a wealth of outstanding buildings, notably from the 17th and 18th centuries.

ICOMOS, October 1996



SAN FELIPE



Querétaro : San Felipe



ARCHITECTURE CIVILE



Querétaro : architecture civile

Querétaro : civil architecture