

Valparaíso (Chile)

No 959 rev

1. BASIC DATA

<i>State Party:</i>	Chile
<i>Name of property:</i>	Sector of the Historical Area of Valparaíso
<i>Location:</i>	Fifth Region, Province Valparaíso
<i>Date received:</i>	12 February 1999; 21 January 2002
<i>Category of property:</i>	

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*. In terms of *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, this is a section of a living historic town.

Brief description:

The colonial city of Valparaíso presents an example of late 19th century urban and architectural development in Latin America. In its natural amphitheatre-like setting, the city is characterized by a vernacular urban fabric adapted to the hillsides, contrasted with a varied geometrical layout in the plain, and highlighted by church spires of great variety. The city has well preserved its interesting early-industrial infrastructures, such as the numerous ‘elevators’ on the steep hillsides.

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The city of Valparaíso, the second largest in Chile, is located on the Pacific coast some 100 km north of Santiago, in the centre of the country. The geography of Valparaíso consists of a bay, a narrow coastal plain and a series of hills. The bay is wide and deep and well protected to the south yet open to the north. In the port area, the quarter where the settlement started and which stretches from *Plaza Sotomayor* out to *Cerro Artillería*, the coastal line goes further into the sea thus offering shelter to the coast. In contrast, the El Almendral quarter, further to the north, is more exposed to northeast storms.

The morphology of the territory adjacent to the bay is the result of sea regressions and abrasion that, in the course of time, formed several terraces and, upon them, hills. The first terrace is at ca 70 m above sea level, at the height of *Cerros Santo Domingo*, *Concepción* and *Barón*. The second terrace runs along the *Avenida Alemania* (Germany Avenue) and the *Camino de Cintura* (Waist Road), ca 100-150 m. The third terrace, 250 m, corresponds to Valparaíso’s urban limit. The fourth terrace is ca 500 m above sea level.

The nomination dossier stresses the importance of the infrastructures that were typical to the late 19th century, reflecting the rapid economic and industrial development

of the city. Valparaíso imported ideas, techniques and materials especially from Europe, and the rapid building boom, the growth of the harbour, the transportation systems, and the proliferation of ‘*favelas*’ for immigrants characterised the period. Due to the lack of development in subsequent decades favoured the preservation of these features, which have become an important part of its identity, combined with strong social and cultural facets.

Valparaíso used to have as many as 30 elevators, ie cable cars taking passengers on the steep hillsides. The oldest of these is the *Concepción Elevator*, inaugurated in 1883. Fifteen elevators are still in operation; three are included in the core zone of the nomination, and two in the buffer zone. Generally, such elevators have two wooden or metal cars, moving simultaneously in opposite directions. They are mounted on a platform to which are attached the wheels. The track gauge measures 1.600 mm. The rails are anchored to the terrain in different ways according to topography: on a concrete slab fixed directly on the ground, on concrete or brick piers, or on metal or wood structures.

The nominated property is located between the sea and the first terrace, in the area where the city first developed. From the 19th century, the city developed towards the east on an artificial plain, made on a base of rubble, sediments from the ravines and material extracted from the hills. The nominated area is now inhabited by ca 2,500 people, and the buffer zone by over 5,000 people. In 1998 the municipality of Valparaíso had ca 278,000 inhabitants. The nominated area comprises part of the plain and surrounding hills, and is composed of five interlaced neighbourhoods:

- **La Matriz Church and Santo Domingo Square:** The neighbourhood area lies between the hills and the plain. It is spatially linked with Plaza Echaurren and its surroundings, as well as with Cerro Santo Domingo. La Matriz Church (1842), Valparaíso’s founding church, though rebuilt four times having been destroyed by pirates and earthquakes. The architecture is typical transition between colonial and republican styles. The church is surrounded by late 19th century buildings, typical of the seaport architecture. The Plaza La Matriz is the centre of Valparaíso’s most traditional religious activities, such as the Stations of the Cross during the Holy Week.

- **Echaurren Square and Serrano Street:** This area has a predominantly commercial character, marked by the presence of the Port Market, different types of commercial establishments, and active street trade. The Echaurren Square was renovated in 1886, becoming an important meeting place related to the ‘*porteña*’ (port) culture. The buildings represent three types: a) ‘block building’ or ‘island building’, facing four streets; b) ‘head building’, facing three streets; and c) buildings facing two streets. The most outstanding among the block-buildings is the *Astoreca Building* (1906), in the northern end of the square, built for commercial and residential purposes in a symmetrical and orthogonal order. The Cordillera Elevator, with an access station in Serrano Street, was built in 1887, but renewed after two fires. It is the only one with a single-stretch stairway alongside it.

- **Prat Pier, Sotomayor and Justicia Squares, Sea Museum Quarter:** This area comprises the main transversal axis of the area being nominated and displays

the largest public spaces. It links the beginning of the historical Quebrada San Agustín – the current Tomás Ramos Street – with the coastline through the Justicia and Sotomayor Squares and the Prat Pier. The square is surrounded by administrative and service buildings of different periods and styles, including the eclectic Old Intendancy Building (1906-1910) by the Chilean architect Ernesto Urquieta. Plaza Sotomayor's main landmark is the Public Monument to the Iquique Heroes (1886). The square opens to the sea, framed by two towers of the regional railway terminal and the port and customs administration premises. Beyond the towers there is the Prat Pier, a much frequented tourist and recreational area. The Sea Museum, at the top of Cerro Cordillera, stands on the site of the old San José Castle, a fortress built to repel the attacks of corsairs and pirates. The current building (1840) was renovated in late 1960s.

- **Prat Street and Turri Square:** This area in the plain evolves around the foothill and stretches out from Plaza Sotomayor to the beginning of Esmeralda Street, encompassing the Plazuela Turri as a singular public space. The area presents the markedly rectangular block characteristic of the plain, as well as its typical buildings, with frontage towards two or three streets. The buildings are examples of monumental architecture in their volume and formal expression.

- **Cerro Alegre and Cerro Concepción:** Historically, these two hills, separated by Urriola Street, form a single neighbourhood. To a large extent, this was planned and developed by German and English immigrants, starting from the first half of the 19th century. The area combines the different types of public spaces of Valparaíso: squares, viewing points, promenades, alleyways, stairways, the elevators' top station and the havens usually formed by street intersections and bifurcations. The buildings have examples of different ways of adaptation to the inclined terrain, including the use of the roof as a fifth façade. The traditional residential architecture incorporates the styles characteristic of the native countries of the first inhabitants, the British and German immigrants. Wood is the predominant building material, both in structures and finishes, but corrugated metal is also common. The materials were often imported as ballast on ships that would return loaded to Europe.

History

The territory was originally inhabited by Chango Indians, who lived on farming and fishing. The site of Valparaíso in the Valley of Quintil, on the Pacific coast, was discovered by Juan de Saavedra in 1536. The settlement was founded by Pedro de Valdivia in 1544, and it was designated the first port of the nation in 1554. The settlement developed first in the areas known as Juna Gomez (today Carampangue), San Francisco, and San Agustín. At the end of the 16th century, a road connection was built from Valparaíso to Santiago. The Spanish immigrants introduced the Catholic faith, and built the first chapel in the settlement village, at the foot of the San Francisco ravine. The church of La Matriz was built there in 1658, followed by the construction of the fortresses. At this time, other religious orders arrived, including the Augustinians and the Franciscans, and the settlement started taking shape. The commercial centre and the warehouses

occupied the main coastal area. The opening of Cape Horn meant intensive wheat trading from Valparaíso to El Callao in the 18th century. The urban layout developed mainly around two focal points, the seaport with the commercial centre, and the Almendral beach area with farmhouses and small businesses. After a disastrous earthquake in 1730, the inhabitants were forced to move on the hillsides, thus developing the most characteristic feature of the town. From this time on, most of the settlement developed over the hills.

With the independence of Chile in 1810, Valparaíso soon became the most important harbour town on the Pacific coast. This meant commercial transactions with Europe as well as with the United States, ending Chile's dependence on Spain. Around 1839-40, Valparaíso was granted independent administrative status as an *Intendencia*, and in 1842 it became the capital of the Province of Valparaíso, with fiscal warehouses and the Stock Exchange. At this time, the town attracted great numbers of immigrants from England, France, Germany, and the United States, contributing to the development of shipping and commerce. This influence can still be appreciated on the streets at the foot of hills in Arsenal (now Bustamante), La Planchada (now Serrano), La Aduana (now Prat) and Del Cabo (now Esmeralda). The city acquired a cosmopolitan image. In the 1840s and 1850s, more warehouses were built between the present Aduana Square and the Duprat fortress. In 1852, a railway was built to the inner cities of the region and to the capital, Santiago.

In the second half of the 19th century, the position of Valparaíso was further strengthened as the main harbour and commercial centre of the country, and its activities included mining activities with Tarapaca and Antofagasta. The main economic resource gradually shifted from wheat to saltpetre. Following this development, the town was articulated into areas characterized by their principal activities, such as commerce, harbour, industry, and business. The streets of Planchada and Aduana were the main areas for diplomatic missions, banks, and international agencies. Between 1847 and 1870, Valparaíso attained its characteristic identity as a commercial and financial centre. The town expanded, and the chain of hills was connected by the Cintura highway some 100 m above the sea, based on the project by Fermin Vivaceta in 1872.

In 1903, the electrical train system started operating, providing the first change to the 19th century urban environment. In 1906, a violent earthquake struck the region, causing damage especially in the downtown area, and leading to substantial reconstruction programmes. In addition, the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the national independence gave a further incentive to erect public, commercial, and private buildings of high quality. In 1914, however, the opening of the Panama Channel meant that Valparaíso lay aside from the great commercial routes between the two oceans. The economic crisis of saltpetre reduced the importance of the port, and, at the same time, Santiago consolidated its status as the political and economic centre of the country. The world economic crisis in 1929 further contributed to the change. Nevertheless, Valparaíso continued its development, even though facing serious social and economic problems. As a result, solutions were sought, and new construction activities expanded in the upper zones of the city,

including the areas of Juan Gomez, San Francisco, San Juan de Dios, and de Jaime, the present Francia Avenue.

Management regime

Legal provision:

The historic area has a mixture of public and private properties. There are seven historic monuments, three of them in public ownership and four privately owned. Many of the private owners are large institutions, such as banks, shipping companies, and real-estate offices.

The historic area is subject to a series of legal regulations, eg No 17.288/1970, regarding the designation of 'typical zones' and historic monuments. Regulation No 16/1988, in accordance with the Local Regulation Plan approved by the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism, is concerned with 'lookouts' (*miradores*), green areas, and funiculars. The Ordinance of 1991 regulates facade ornamentation and storefront signs. The Act on Real Estate Co-ownership encourages the rehabilitation of the historic areas.

The survey of buildings and sites (1994-96) has allowed new data to be added to the catalogue and protection of the buffer zone, so as to avoid a negative impact on the nominated area, and to control the buffer zone.

Management structure:

The general management authority is with the Municipality and the Regional Preservation Monuments Council. Other responsible bodies include the National Preservation Monument Council (1998), the Heritage Research Department (1998), and the Development Council (1997). The Valparaíso Foundation (1998) and the Cultural Baburizza Palace Council (1998) are expected to make the execution of action plans effective in the future. However, a more global view is considered necessary in order to define and conduct projects aiming at the integration of heritage objectives into the urban development process.

At present the historic quarter of Valparaíso lacks a comprehensive management plan. However, the City of Valparaíso, through the Heritage Research Department and the Development Council, is now advocating the establishment of a comprehensive plan regarding technical, legal, financial, and social issues. A Management Committee has been established, composed of private and public entities; their task is to deal with all fields of activities in the town, and to submit a programme of investments for the next five years, according to the 'Valparaíso 2000' programme. An agreement has been signed between the Municipality and the University of Valparaíso to outline the bases for the Directory Plan in the historic area. Current development projects include the Urb-Al programme for historic cities in Europe and Latin America, sponsored by the European Union. The Pact-Arim Project '93 for the rehabilitation of neighbourhoods of Valparaíso is sponsored by the French government. The Plan for Facade Recovery has already consisted of the renovation of some 200 buildings.

Tourism management is an issue that is given attention, since that Valparaíso contains some 40% of the total tourist attractions on the coast. Valparaíso together with Vina del Mar, are also the main connections to other sites inland. Tourism is a source of concern to the local

authority, causing problems in waste management and health services. Improvement is required in the management of accommodation, food, and recreation. Other problems relate to traffic congestion, theft, prostitution, and begging.

Resources:

The national legislation on the protection of historic buildings is currently in the process of being modified. It is expected that the regional administrations will receive more autonomy as a result. The creation of the National Heritage Preservation Fund is backed by government resources. Furthermore, there is funding from taxes, donations, and other private sources. The city is currently actively promoting awareness of the qualities of the historic areas, in order to attract investors and raise funds for conservation programmes.

Justification by the State Party (summary)

The universal value of Valparaíso lies basically in that it is an exceptional section of the heritage left by a period of history with worldwide implications that typified the modern age - the industrial age and its associated trade. On the one hand, Valparaíso is an extremely authentic, integral testimony of that period and, on the other hand, it is one of the monuments which shows the creative, globalizing ability of the universal culture of the decades around 1900 with a greater degree of consistency and harmony.

Criterion iii: Few eras in the history of humanity have led to such significant changes in people's lives in such a short period of time as the Industrial Age. This is true not only because of particular changes in labour and production relations, but particularly because of the high degree of creativity that it was able to introduce into all kinds of things. This process had undoubtedly achieved such a depth and extent towards the end of the 19th century that one can say that it constituted a cultural tradition that was able to propose a way of life, a way of seeing things (*Weltanschauung*), a morality, particular customs, technology, scientific know-how and a series of schools of art. This culture disappeared in the 20th century.

Few towns conserve those testimonies, for their ports had to be transformed, new warehouses had to be built, railways had to be modernized and their urban fabric had to be transformed to incorporate modern buildings. In contrast, after having been the first major port after the difficult passage through the Strait of Magellan and having become the most important port in the South Pacific, Valparaíso stopped forming part of international trade routes after the opening of the Panama Canal. This circumstance, which meant that the town entered into a process of economic backwardness, has led to the fact that it is now an exceptionally authentic example of that cultural tradition.

The exceptional nature of this property, however, does not only lie in its tremendous authenticity, but also in the series of highly innovative human creations that this cultural tradition was able to produce to cope with a peculiar geographical milieu. To do so, it availed itself of the best of the age's industrial tradition and technologies, of avant-garde architecture, of vernacular influences introduced by immigrants and sailors, of a spirit of

enterprise and of the will to consolidate a modern, progressive urban community.

3. ICOMOS EVALUATION

Actions by ICOMOS

The nomination of Valparaíso was first presented in 2000 under the heading: 'Historic Quarter of the Seaport City of Valparaíso'. At the time, the nomination included the entire historic town, which did not have appropriate management structures. In its evaluation, ICOMOS recommended that the site should not be inscribed.

The current, revised nomination has been reduced from the previous, proposing a more limited area of the historic town, as well as a revised justification. An ICOMOS expert mission visited the site in July-August 2002. Subsequently, the city of Valparaíso organized an international seminar (7-11.11.2002) to discuss the proposed nomination. It was also discussed during the international seminar on modern architecture in America, in Mexico, December 2002. Additional information regarding the nominated property has been received in December 2002.

Conservation

Conservation history:

The development of Valparaíso has been strongly affected by its topography; it has also been subject to various natural disasters, including earthquakes and tsunamis. The progressive deterioration of the building stock in the historic area is a subject of concern. However, the current investments in the renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings have already promoted an improvement in the condition of the urban fabric.

Since 1994, the Municipality has made special efforts to increase the knowledge of the historic area and its condition, undertaking a survey of the historic structures and issuing regulations for their protection and preservation. The encouragement for renovation has resulted in the rehabilitation of several warehouses, which are now used as bars, pubs, or cafés, giving the city a new night life and an interesting tourist development in this area. There have also been a number of other renovation works, following a project known as 'Transversal Axis', which has favoured poorer areas assisting in their economic and social development.

State of conservation:

The municipality of Valparaíso has carried out a survey on the state of conservation of the buildings in the nominated area and the buffer zone. Three categories have been identified: 'good' = buildings that have preserved their original architecture and have appropriate use; 'regular' = structures that have been subject to modifications or the use is not adequate; 'poor' = structurally poor condition or inappropriate new features. Accordingly, the condition of most buildings in the southern part of the core zone is 'good', while in the northern part it is 'regular'. A dozen buildings are reported to be in poor condition. Also in the buffer zone, the southern part is far better preserved than the northern part.

Management:

The regional and municipal authorities of Valparaíso have undertaken a series of measures to provide a sustainable basis for the development and improvement of the facilities made available to the population. Particular attention has been given to raising the awareness of and involving the population and property owners in the process. This includes subsidies for the improvement of façades in certain key areas, the preparation of a manual for interventions in public areas, and developing training programmes in the conservation and rehabilitation of the historic structures.

Risk analysis:

Valparaíso has faced serious economic and social problems which have contributed to the decay of the building fabric. Such problems have been related to safety and security, as well as to the overcrowding of certain areas, and abandonment and neglect of others. The city has also suffered of the problems of traffic congestion, waste management, and air pollution. Due to the provisional character of a large part of the building fabric, fire is also considered a serious problem.

In terms of natural hazards, the city is exposed to heavy storms from the north. Valparaíso has always been subject to earthquakes, which have caused destruction in the past centuries. It still remains one of the major risk factors. To this can also be added the potential risk of tsunamis, even though these have not occurred since 1822.

Authenticity and integrity

The city is the result of spontaneous development, partly vernacular housing, partly based on more academic design. It is a city with a strong urban life and related problems. The vernacular buildings reflect continuity in land use and construction techniques. The character of the city is in the continuing response to the cultural landscape, the maintenance of the picturesque, natural amphitheatre of the site, the mixture of different types of buildings, and the persistence of characteristic urban features, such as passages, stairs, elevators, etc. The spontaneity of construction has resulted in a relatively heterogeneous ensemble, the city has many problems to solve in relation to conservation and planning control.

As a whole, the city has retained its character deriving from the economic boom of the last decades of the 19th century. This concerns particularly the harbour facilities, transportation systems, power supply infrastructures, and typical urban service and control systems of the period. The physical character of the period is also expressed in the variety of building types reflecting the needs and possibilities of the various classes.

Comparative evaluation

The nomination dossier refers the specificity of Valparaíso, compared with other seaport cities, to two factors: a) it is 'a Latin American city of 19th century imprint applying European and North American models to its architecture and urban layout'; b) it is 'a city where these models

resulted in quite unique man-made forms by the sheer force of its geography and environmental conditions’.

One of the issues that is highlighted in the nomination is the use of ‘elevators’ as an essential means of transport in the city. In this regard, it is noted that, in the 19th century, the urban traffic systems developed gradually from horse-driven cars to electric-powered tramways. In 1860, three tramlines were opened in London and one in Birkenhead. The invention of dynamo (generator) led to the use of electrified wires over tram rails, soon proliferating in Britain, Europe and the United States. The cable car was first introduced in San Francisco in 1873, then in Seattle, operating on steep hills. Similar vehicles were set up in Lisbon and in Valparaíso towards 1900, and they are still in use in both towns.

Valparaíso has similarities with several other major ports in South America and Europe. The nomination dossier makes reference to Santiago de Cuba, Salvador de Bahia, Lisbon, and Naples. To these could be added others, such as Rio de Janeiro or Liverpool. All of these are seaport cities that have experienced similar developments, and have developed the required infrastructures as a response to the geographical situation. Santiago de Cuba has similar architecture, but has perhaps retained greater authenticity. Salvador de Bahia has a different character in its architecture, but here too there was need to establish a connection between the seaport level and the high plateau (65 m), and the elevators already appear in the 17th century. Lisbon has some similarities with Valparaíso, but the construction of its hillsides dates from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period. The remarkable reconstruction of the centre of Lisbon after the earthquake in the 18th century also distinguishes it from Valparaíso. Modern traffic system developed here from the mid 19th century, including similar cable cars as in Valparaíso; several are still in use today. Naples was an important city in the antiquity, and one of Europe’s foremost capitals in the 18th century. Italy’s first railway was built from Naples to the royal residence of Portici in 1839, and the first funicular railway of Italy was opened here in 1880.

As a result of the War of the Pacific (1879-84), which involved Chile, Bolivia and Peru over the control of the South American coast, Chile became an important exporter of valuable minerals, eg sodium nitrate (‘Chile Saltpetre’, used as fertilizer and as a component of dynamite). This led to the rapid development of Valparaíso as a major port in the region. This economic boom lasted until the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, which caused major changes in international connections.

The urban fabric of Valparaíso represents, in its central parts, the eclectic architecture typical of the late 19th century, and over the hills a form of vernacular, spontaneous development using wood and ad hoc materials, eg metal sheets. These characteristics are fairly common to many towns that developed in the same period, and not outstanding in themselves. Nevertheless, Valparaíso is presented as an exceptionally well-preserved example of the complex infrastructures reflecting the development of the industrial harbour town, which distinguishes it from other cities that developed in the same period.

Outstanding universal value

General statement:

It is noted that the nomination of Valparaíso has gone through a long process, during which the associated values have been gradually defined. The discussion has also involved a number of experts in international seminars. The property is now understood as an exceptional example of heritage left by the industrial age and associated sea trade of the late 19th century. In fact, the city was the first and most important port on the South-Pacific coast after the passage through the Strait of Magellan. It had a major impact on this region from the 1880s until the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914. After this date, its development was in decline, which allowed the survival of its harbour and urban fabric as a testimony to the period of its main development.

Towards the second half of the 19th century, Valparaíso became a major target for immigration involving diverse nationalities from North-Americans and British to Germans, French, Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese. It also received some of the consequences of the ‘gold fevers’ of Australia and California. The urban fabric and cultural identity of Valparaíso are thus distinguished by a diversity, which sets it apart from other Latin American cities. Considering the narrow strip of land and the ‘layers’ of hills over which Valparaíso was built, its character was also strongly marked by the geography of its location.

Evaluation of criteria:

Criterion iii : The built heritage represented by Valparaíso is an expression of the early phase of the globalisation in the world. It also refers to the network of trade routes, particularly in the eastern Pacific, that were created as a result of the development of technology and new resources. There will be no doubt about the universal nature of the globalisation itself. Due to the lack of development and, consequently, relative lack of change compared with other port cities, Valparaíso has retained various features that bear witness to its functions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Such references need to be searched not only in the building stock, but also especially in the infrastructures, particularly those related to harbour activities, eg quays, storage facilities, and customs buildings (The harbour area also has various sunken shipwrecks). To this should be added the systems of transport built in the town, such as the tramlines and ‘elevators’.

4. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation for the future

Recognising the wish of the municipal authorities to advance knowledge of the urban fabric and the values associated with Valparaíso, as well as the efforts undertaken for its protection and conservation management, ICOMOS recommends that the authorities continue the initiatives taken so far, and especially:

- Systematically identify, make inventories, and protect the infrastructures related to the historic functions of the harbour area, such as quays, depots, and customs facilities, as well as the transport systems, tramlines and elevators;

- Develop the conservation management plans in the entire maritime port area of Valparaíso;

- Clarify with more precision the norms and guidelines in areas that are adjacent to the protected zones, eg Plaza de Intendencia, Cementario, Pantheon, Plaza de San Francisco.

Furthermore, ICOMOS recommends to the State Party to consider the possibility of changing the name so as to better reflect the outstanding universal value of Valparaíso as a major merchant port on a world trade route.

Recommendation with respect to inscription

Taking into account the above, ICOMOS recommends that the nominated be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of ***criterion iii***:

Criterion iii: Valparaíso is an exceptional testimony to the early phase of globalisation in the late 19th century, when it became the leading merchant port on the sea routes of the Pacific coast of South America.

ICOMOS, March 2003