

Goiás (Brazil)

No 993

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	Historic centre of the town of Goiás
<i>Location</i>	State of Goiás
<i>State Party</i>	Brazil
<i>Date</i>	30 June 1999

Justification by State Party

The territory of Brazil was formed in the space between the Atlantic coast and the line drawn by the Treaty of Tordesillas and was progressively extended to the Plate and Paraguay rivers, culminating in the occupation of the interior. Occupation thus took place from the periphery to the centre. The first people responsible for this formation process were the pioneers (*bandeirantes*) of São Paulo, who went in search of gold and settled areas that today constitute the States of Goiás and Tocantins, Mato Grosso, and Mato Grosso do Sul. This arduous progress towards the heart of the country was only concluded when the federal capital was installed in Brasília on 21 April 1960. Two State capital cities mark the beginning of this venture, Cuiabá (Mato Grosso), close to the geographical centre of South America, and Goiás, close to the geographical centre of Brazil. Of the two only Goiás has preserved urban design and architecture that date back to the 18th century. The surrounding countryside has also remained the same as the landscape the pioneers encountered. Goiás is thus the last witness of this fundamental chapter of the history of Brazil.

Goiás, the capital of the State of Goiás, was part of the 18th century occupation of the heart of Brazil in the search for gold. Vila Boa de Goiás, which became a borough in 1739, today still keeps the original character of its urban layout, of the common lands and private spaces, of the volumetric scale, colouring, and street layout, of the urban construction, in the 260 years that have elapsed, notwithstanding the recent impact of Brasília on the Brazilian Midwest. In addition to its stability and authenticity, the city of Goiás exhibits a series of features that bear witness to its exceptional importance, its universal value.

It was the first officially recognized urban core, the first borough to be planned west of the demarcation line of the Treaty of Tordesillas that defined the boundaries of the Portuguese possessions. The informal urban mesh of a spontaneous essence and the civil and religious architectural ensemble differ from the Minas Gerais urban centres of the mining cycle, with respect to its relation to topography and

the environment, as well as in the scale and building techniques. As the seat of the County and later of the Province of Goiás, it influenced or at least reflected its principal urban characteristics on the built ensembles of the cities similar to Goiás, such as Pirenópolis (former Meia Ponte), Corumbá de Goiás, Luziânia (former Santa Luzia), Pilar, Natividade, Traíras, and Niquelândia (former São José do Tocantins).

From the city of Goiás issued an organized architecture whose influence spread over a very large region, that of the South American Brazilian Central Plateau. Therefore, the city of Goiás holds an incontestable universal value and is in perfect conformity with criteria ii and v for inscription as a World Heritage cultural property. The entire geo-economic region, of mining and of occupation of the central Brazilian plateau, was influenced by the settlement characteristics in the territory and by the architectural ensemble during the 18th and 19th centuries. Furthermore, it was influenced because it represents the beginning of the occupation of this territory, remaining authentic over the 250 years of its existence, although nowadays it is vulnerable to the nearby threat of Brasília.

Goiás bears witness to the way in which the explorers of the territory and the founders of the Portuguese and Brazilian cities, isolated from the motherland and the coast of Brazil, adapted Portuguese models of town planning and architecture to the harsh realities of a tropical region, and borrowed from the Indians several new ways of using local materials.

Criterion ii

Goiás is the last remaining example of the occupation of the interior of Brazil, as it was practised in the 18th and 19th centuries. A fragile site, which is becoming increasingly vulnerable as the city begins to develop again, this example is the more admirable because the surrounding countryside has remained practically unchanged.

Criterion v

Category of property

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*.

History and Description

History

The origins of the town of Goiás are closely related with the history of the more or less official expeditions (*bandeiras*), which left from São Paulo to explore the interior of the Brazilian territory. One expedition, under the command of Fern. Dias Pais, explored the region of Minas (1673–81), and another expedition, under the command of Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva, explored the region of Goiás (1682), finding some gold. However, the discoveries at Minas were far superior and, from 1700, attracted a vast number of people; the population of Brazil went from 80,000 to over one million in a few years. As a result of wars in the coastal regions, attention was again drawn to the interior; in 1718, gold was found in Cuiabá (the current capital of Mato Grosso), and three years later the son of Bartolomeu Bueno discovered gold in Rio Vermelho, where he was nominated the superintendent of the mines of Goiás. One year later he

established the settlement of Santana, and a chapel was built there in 1729.

In order to guarantee better control of the mines of Goiás, the Portuguese authorities decide to reinforce the regional government. In 1739, the governor of São Paulo chose Santana, which took the name of Vila Boa de Goiás. The mining village was thus doubled in size by adding to it a small administrative quarter. In 1748, Goiás was chosen as the headquarters of a new sub-district; its first governor was Dom Marcos de Noronha (1749–55), who transformed the modest village into a small capital. Amongst the first constructions was the Casa de Fundação (1750) for the control of gold, the governor's palace (1751), and the military barracks (1751). Under his successors the town continued being improved, including the construction of the Casa de Câmara e Cadeia (1761), improvement of the roads and streets, building of the fountains of Carioca and Chafariz de Cauda, and opening of a theatre (1772–77). The governor Luis da Cunha Meneses (1778–83) planted trees, improved the street alignment, laid out the public square of Chafariz, and opened a slaughterhouse (1778–83). He also had the urban master plan prepared (1782), providing the town with a structure that has survived till the present day.

In 1770 an inevitable decline in gold mining began and Goiás entered a long period of stagnation. It retained its status as a capital, but remained far behind Rio de Janeiro, and so further progress was arrested. In 1935–37 its administrative status was removed but the townscape remained intact. In 1950 IPHAN, the conservation authority of Brazil, listed its principal churches and the barracks, and in 1951 the Casa da Câmara, the palace, and the main areas in the centre. The inauguration in 1960 of the new capital city of Brazil, Brasília, gave the region a new impetus. Since the 1980s Goiás has been revitalized with some new constructions. Fortunately, the entire centre area was listed by IPHAN for protection in 1978.

Description

The town of Goiás is built between two series of hills, along a small river, the Rio Vermelho. The areas on the right bank are tight up against the north-western hills (Cantagalo and Santa Barbara), and have a popular character, indicated by the church of Rosario, which was traditionally reserved for slaves. The areas on the left bank, limited by the hills to the south-east (Dom Francisco and Chapeu do Padre), are reserved for the more representative groups of buildings, including the parish church (today the Cathedral) of Santana, the governor's palace, the barracks, the Casa de Fundação, extending to the Praça do Chafariz (200m long), and climbing towards the hill of Chapeu do Padre. Here are also to be found the historic residential quarter and a characteristic market place.

The town is characterized by the harmony of its architecture, due to the proportions and types of buildings. At the same time, the history of construction can be read in the variation of styles from the classical 18th century buildings to the eclectic architecture of the 19th century.

The zone proposed for inscription consists essentially of the zone listed and protected by IPHAN in 1978. To this have been added some typical 19th century streets, which are considered to be important for appreciating the history of the town. IPHAN has already initiated the process for including these streets in the protected area. The buffer zone surrounds

the nominated zone, including green areas and hillsides, where new constructions are under strict control.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The ownership of the town of Goiás is mixed, including a large number of private owners, as well as the municipality, the State, and the diocese. IPHAN itself owns a few listed properties.

The first listing of limited historic buildings was undertaken in 1950 and 1951, but the entire historic core of the town was listed by the State (IPHAN) in 1978. The protection is based on the Federal Constitution of Brazil and the Decree for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of 1937 at the federal level. The Regional Decree of 22 April 1993 regulates the preservation of the historic and natural landscape, including the core and the buffer zones. On 29 August 1996 the municipality approved the Urban Master Plan, developed jointly with IPHAN to respond to the conservation requirements of the historic areas. Furthermore, there is a recent decree creating an Area of Environmental Protection that includes both Goiás and its surroundings. All industry and mining activities are banned.

Management

In addition to the control exercised by IPHAN on behalf of the Federal State, the listed properties are managed by the regional superintendence and the authorities of Goiás.

The Urban Master Plan of 1996 establishes policies for urban development, limits the perimeter of the town, regulates the preservation of historic and natural heritage in the area, and controls building norms and standards. A new Department of Infrastructure and Urbanism was created in 1999 whose function is to design and manage the development of the town. IPHAN acts as a partner and adviser in issues related to the conservation of heritage.

The recent creation of a non-governmental association, *Pro Cidade de Goiás Patrimônio Mundial*, which has the objectives of raising awareness and involving the population, is worth noting. Another association, NATIVA, focuses on the protection of the natural environment.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

The historic town of Goiás has preserved its urban fabric reasonably well. The public buildings are in good condition. However, about 30% of the private houses are considered in poor condition, while the rest are in good or normal condition.

The municipality plays an active role in promoting the conservation and rehabilitation of historic structures. Such programmes are undertaken in partnership with various institutions and organizations. The projects include restoration of the Museum of Sacred Art of Boa Morte (1997), the Cathedral of Santana (1998), and the church of Santa Barbara (1999), burial of electric poles and wiring, cleaning up of the Rio Vermelho, protection of the municipal archives, undertaking a university research programme on cultural heritage, promotion of educational programmes

regarding heritage, and establishment of the association *Pro-Cidade de Goiás*. IPHAN has established a local office in Goiás to provide administrative and technical assistance in restoration works.

The main pressures affecting the property come mainly from the current development trends. In this regard, the candidature of the historic area to the World Heritage List has been beneficial in accelerating the decision-making process at the local level. The current level of tourism is relatively modest. However, measures are being taken to improve the reception of visitors and the presentation of historic sites. No natural hazards are indicated.

Authenticity and integrity

Goiás went through a long period of stagnation from the 19th century until recent times. Its townscape has therefore not been subject to any major changes in modern times, except perhaps for the reconstruction of the church of Rosario in Gothic Revival style in 1933. Otherwise, Goiás is a good example of the appearance of the mining town of the 18th and 19th centuries, including its natural environment, which has remained intact. The few constructions that have taken place since the 19th century have been made using for the most part traditional techniques and building materials, or their size and architectural expression do not jeopardize the integrity of the place.

Goiás and its hinterland bear a rich cultural tradition that includes not only architecture and construction techniques but also music, poetry, gastronomy, and popular events. Many of these traditions are still alive and form a substantial part of the cultural identity of Goiás. The historic centre has an important meaning for the local community, not only on the account of its urban and architectural values but also for its rich social and cultural life. The relatively modest development of tourism reinforces the genuineness and authenticity of these cultural manifestations.

As a conclusion, the historic town of Goiás is considered to have well preserved its historical authenticity and its integrity, including the continuation of local traditions.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

The nomination of Goiás was first proposed in 2000, and an ICOMOS expert mission visited the site in January 2000. ICOMOS also consulted its International Scientific Committee on Historic Towns and Villages, CIVVIH. The nomination was deferred by the Bureau, requesting the State Party to verify the justification of the outstanding universal value and the definition of the nominated area. The State Party has now provided additional information regarding the construction techniques of the place, as well as its comparison with sites already inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Qualities

ICOMOS recognizes that Goiás bears important witness to the occupation and colonization of central Brazil. It can also be seen in the context of mining towns. The historic town of Goiás represents an authentic testimony to such developments and could be considered complementary to the town of Diamantina, already inscribed on the List.

The urban layout of Goiás is an example of an organically developed colonial town, adapted to the conditions of the site. The architecture of public and private buildings is unpretentious, plain, and severe in character, and the whole is harmonious, resulting also from the continuity of a coherent use of local materials and vernacular techniques, as interpreted by local craftsmen. It is further recognized that the community of Goiás has maintained many traditional and cultural issues that have been lost elsewhere in the country, and the site has not been negatively affected by tourism. The whole site is embedded in an attractive river valley.

The main qualities of Goiás, its exceptionality and its outstanding universal value, lie less in its artistic aspects and rather more in its being a genuine and rare document of the way in which the explorers of the territory, in an isolated situation, adapted models of planning and construction to the realities of a tropical region, borrowing from the indigenous people the use of local materials and techniques.

Comparative analysis

The nomination dossier compares Goiás with two types of Brazilian town:

1. Colonial towns, such as those stemming from the exploitation of gold or diamonds (Ouro Preto or Diamantina): mining towns in mountainous areas were generally constructed without following regular plans, adapting themselves to the physical sites. In the case of Goiás, the river was the basis for the first urban layout and played a significant role in its form, dividing it in two parts, which is somewhat exceptional in Latin America.
2. Towns related to the occupation of central Brazil (Goiás, Guinea, and Brasília): Goiás is the first of these, and differs substantially in its urban and architectural features from the others, including Ouro Preto (inscribed 1980), Serro, and Diamantina (inscribed 1999).

The austere architecture of Goiás is characterized by the use of vernacular, *adobe*, *taipa*, and *pau-a-pique* techniques, which have continued over time, giving the town its particular harmony. It also represents the original conditions of such mining towns in an authentic and less altered state than any other.

The special significance of Goiás is based on its being one of the key references in the process of the colonization of the Brazilian inland, which as a whole differed from the rest of Latin America because of its Portuguese connection. This process has already been documented through the inscription of Ouro Preto (inscribed 1980: criteria i, iii), Diamantina (1999: ii, iv), and the Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Congonhas (1985: i, iv) in the interior, and Olinda (1982: ii, iv) and São Luís (1997: iii, iv, v) on the coast.

The closest comparison to Goiás is probably with Diamantina and Ouro Preto, both related to the exploration of the rich resources of Brazil, the former of diamonds, the latter of gold. The two have some similarity to Goiás in their organic development but differ in terms of architecture. Ouro Preto is characterized by its very fine Baroque ensembles; Diamantina has fairly formal qualities in its buildings, even though integrating with local craftsmanship. Goiás was born as a truly vernacular settlement and has remained as such. It

differs from the other two in being more austere and more local in character and workmanship.

ICOMOS recommendations for future action

ICOMOS recommends that particular attention be given to the control of future tourism developments, mitigating any changes that might be introduced to the area and the single properties.

Brief description

Goiás testifies to the occupation and colonization of the lands of central Brazil in the 18th and 19th centuries. The urban layout is an example of an organic mining town, adapted to the conditions of the site. The architecture of the public and private buildings is modest in form, but the whole is harmonious, resulting also from the coherent use of local materials and vernacular techniques.

Statement of Significance

The historic town of Goiás constitutes an important testimony of the occupation and colonization of central Brazil. The urban layout of Goiás is an example of an organically developed colonial town, adapted to the conditions of the site. The architecture is plain and severe in character, and the whole is harmonious, resulting also from continuity in the coherent use of local materials and vernacular techniques, as interpreted by local craftsmen. The site has retained its remarkable setting intact.

ICOMOS Recommendation

Recognizing the additional information provided by the State Party regarding the outstanding universal value of Goiás, ICOMOS recommends that this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii and iv*:

Criterion ii In its layout and architecture the historic town of Goiás is an outstanding example of a European town admirably adapted to the climatic, geographical and cultural constraints of central South America.

Criterion iv Goiás represents the evolution of a form of urban structure and architecture characteristic of the colonial settlement of South America, making full use of local materials and techniques and conserving its exceptional setting.

Bureau Recommendation

That the Historic Centre of the Town of Goiás be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii and iv*.