
The Loire Valley between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes, France

No 933 Bis

1 Basic data

State Party

France

Name of property

The Loire Valley between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes

Location

Loiret, Loir-et-Cher, Indre-et-Loire and Maine-et-Loire departments

Centre-Val-de-Loire and Pays-de-la-Loire regions
France

Inscription

2000

Brief description

The Loire Valley is an outstanding cultural landscape of great beauty, containing historic towns and villages, great architectural monuments (the châteaux), and cultivated lands formed by many centuries of interaction between their population and the physical environment, primarily the river Loire itself.

Date of ICOMOS approval of report

10 March 2017

1 Issues raised

Background

In 2000, "The Loire Valley between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes" was inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i), (ii) and (iv). The initial nomination dossier however was inconsistent in its treatment of the Château de Chenonceau: although not shown on the maps indicating the boundaries of the property, the château was described in an information sheet in the dossier, stating that it was one of the property's principal monuments. The State Party wishes to correct this inconsistency by requesting a minor modification of the property's boundaries. In addition, the State Party wishes to correct an error in the initial nomination dossier, as the insertion of the upper part of the spur known as the Éperon de Marnay (Azay le Rideau) had been omitted.

Modification

The modifications proposed by the State Party constitute an increase of 627 ha in the property's area, which is thus raised from 85,394 ha to 86,021 ha. The buffer zone area is increased from 208,934 ha to 213,481 ha.

In the nomination dossier of the inscribed property, the Estate of Chenonceau is referred to as one of the principal monuments of the property, but it was not shown on the maps. The dossier did however mention the possibility of exceptions to the property boundaries in order to ensure the coherency of the Valley and its human occupancy "if the value of certain sites, located a certain distance from the ridge of the hill or on a tributary, requires their inclusion to encompass major landscapes or monuments," and the Estate of Chenonceau was referred to as one example.

The State Party proposes to correct the absence by including the Estate of Chenonceau (182 ha), comprising the château, its outbuildings, its park and gardens, part of the village of Chenonceaux and part of the river Cher running from the D80 trunk road to the east, up to the start of the Rue du Cher (on the left bank of the river) to the west. The area of the park of the château to the south of the river Cher is located in the municipality of Francueil. The proposed boundary also includes the historic road between Chenonceau and Amboise, in its present-day width, which passes through the municipalities of Civray-de-Touraine and Chisseaux.

The State Party justifies the inclusion of the Estate of Chenonceau as from a historical and architectural viewpoint, this château, built across the river Cher, is indeed a "Château de la Loire". Built in the first quarter of the 16th century by Thomas Bohier, the treasurer of Francis I, and subsequently extended, before being embellished and enhanced with gardens in the second half of the 16th century, it embodies the architectural flourishing of the Loire Valley in the Renaissance, in the first and second French Renaissance periods. It soon became a property of the Crown, is strongly linked to the history of the kings of France, and – located less than two and a half leagues from the Château d'Amboise – constitutes an essential part of the royal domain.

The Château de Chenonceau has been listed as one of France's Historic Monuments since its inscription on the national list of 1840. Its park is similarly listed by the order dated 7 November 1962. The Maison des Pages and the Church of Chenonceaux are also protected as listed Historic Monuments.

The boundaries of the Estate of Chenonceau were established in accordance with the "amended protection boundaries" introduced in 2005. The associated municipalities, i.e. Chenonceaux, Civray-de-Touraine, Francueil, Chisseaux and Amboise, are set to approve before June 2017 the management plan adopted in 2012.

ICOMOS considers that the inclusion of the Estate of Chenonceau is necessary in the light of the property's Outstanding Universal Value, and that this inclusion will help to maintain the property's integrity.

As for the Éperon de Marnay, the State Party proposes including in the property boundaries the upper part of the interfluvium between the river Indre and the river Loire (445 ha) – which currently forms part of the buffer zone –

as the current boundaries only include the lower part. The interfluvium marks the southern limit of the main course of the river Loire to the south, and that of the river Indre to the north. The modification consists of including the zone of confluence between the river Loire and the river Indre to the east up to the RD57 main road, from the limit of the village of Lignières-de-Touraine to the hamlet of Luré in the municipality of Azay-le-Rideau.

The State Party justifies the inclusion of the *Éperon de Marnay* as it is occupied by a mosaic of small parcels of orchards and vineyards. This long-established land pattern now constitutes a relict, bearing witness to a centuries-old organisation, and representing historic agricultural landscapes of the Loire valley of which today few vestiges remain. Associated with the agricultural plateau is a zone of troglodytic dwellings and their cellars, at the foot of the hill. This composition constitutes a characteristic feature of the Outstanding Universal Value of the inscribed property.

Finally, the State Party also refers to the fact that this modification will enable the inclusion of the extremity of the interfluvium forming a belvedere, which affords views across the Loire Valley together with 360° panoramic perspectives.

The State Party supports its proposal by referring to the boundary principles described in the nomination dossier of the initial property, which stated that boundaries were chosen as follows: "The proposed longitudinal extension runs from the mouth of the Maine, in Anjou, to Sully-sur-Loire, in the Orléanais. As for the lateral extension, it is proposed that the principle of making it run from one ridge to the other of the two hills in the valley should be adopted." The inclusion of the extremity of the spur would thus be consistent with this principle of co-visibility.

As for the *Éperon de Marnay*, the State Party indicates that a national protection project for sites (Article L 341-1 et seq. of the French Environment Code) is currently being prepared concerning the upper parts of the spur. Its management as a listed site is in line with the recommendations made in the regional prefectural order of 15 November 2012 concerning the Unesco Loire Valley management plan.

ICOMOS considers that the inclusion of the *Éperon de Marnay* will enable a greater degree of protection of the landscape quality of the inscribed property.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the proposed modifications contribute to maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the Loire Valley and will have a positive impact on its integrity, protection and presentation to visitors.

3 ICOMOS recommendations

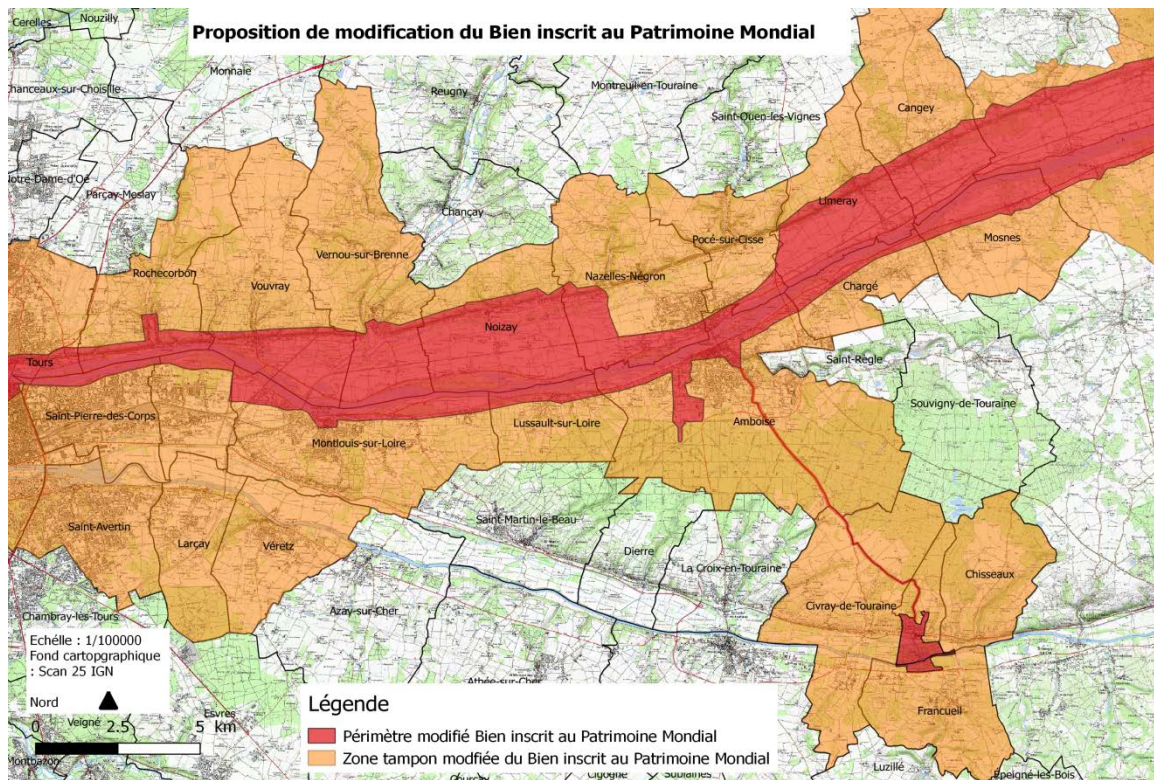
ICOMOS recommends that the proposal of a minor modification of the boundaries of the Loire Valley between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes, France, **be approved**.

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed modification of the buffer zone of the Loire Valley between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes, France, **be approved**.

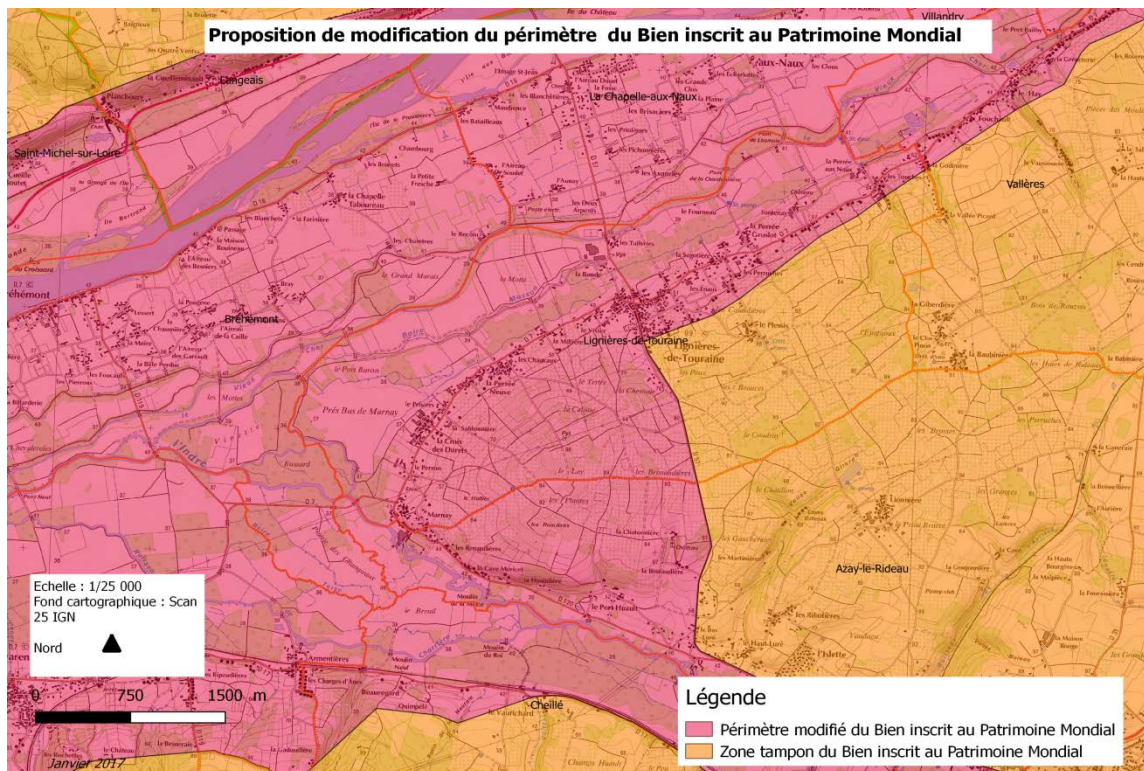
Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following points:

- a) Continue consultations with the municipalities affected by the minor modification of the property boundaries in line with the management plan approved in 2012,
- b) Finalise the national protection of the sites for the upper part of the *Éperon de Marnay*,
- c) Provide the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS with updated maps of the Loire Valley property as presented in the 2012 management plan;



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone – Domaine de Chenonceau



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone - L'éperon de Marnay