

PORTUGAL

Historic Centre of Évora

Brief description

This museum-city, whose roots go back to Roman times, reached its golden age in the 15th century, when it became the residence of the Portuguese kings. Its unique quality stems from the whitewashed houses decorated with azulejos and wrought-iron balconies dating from the 16th to the 18th century. Its monuments had a profound influence on Portuguese architecture in Brazil.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription

1986

Agency responsible for site management

- Comissão Nacional da UNESCO
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (ii) (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

Le Centre Historique d'Évora s'organise selon une maille qui semble relativement uniforme. Cependant, une lecture plus détaillée pourra mettre en évidence un réseau de monuments et

d'immeubles intéressants soit par leurs dimensions, soit par leur usage, ainsi qu'un ensemble d'espaces urbains – places et rues – qui démontrent l'existence de mailles homogènes résultant du processus de formation de la ville au long des siècles, mais qui constituent un tout très cohérent.

La richesse du patrimoine architectural de la ville est révélé non seulement par les grands immeubles religieux, militaires et civils, remarquables par la noblesse des matériaux, mais aussi par les ensembles de modestes habitations populaires ou de simples immeubles isolés. Une partie de ces immeubles sont des éléments structurels de 1a maille urbaine d'autres ne se révèlent qu'à l'intérieur des édifices par l'espace et les éléments décoratifs qu'ils conservent. (fresques, stucs, bois sculpté), et à l'extérieur (bandes décoratives peintes sous les toitures, portes, fenêtres, sculptées)

En effet Évora-Centre Historique maintient toutes les traces typiques des villes médiévales du sud de l'Europe, notamment des ruelles étroites et sinueuses et une grande richesse de variantes dans une homogénéité exemplaire de chaque période de construction.

Mais Évora-Centre Historique possède une concentration monumentale peu commune et elle se reflète non seulement dans une seule période artistique mais en plusieurs. L'architecture militaire présente des exemplaires rares soit de l'époque romaine, soit du style manuelin, soit encore du type Vauban. Mais aussi de très beaux exemplaires de l'architecture érudite ou populaire se trouvent fréquemment au centre historique, qu'ils soient du style gothique, manuelin et « mudejar », renaissance, baroque, rococo et néoclassique. Tout ceci est fort remarquable dans les 385 immeubles classées dont 36 sont des monuments nationaux.

Mais le Centre Historique est surtout une ville construite anonymement, au long des siècles par la culture de tout un peuple – Évora est volume et contre volume, ombres et lumière, forme urbaine enrichie par la permanente variété des situations créées par un code linguistique apparemment simple.

Évora est tout à la fois murailles, tours, églises, temples, maisons, palais, aqueduc, ponts et jardins, arcades et ruelles ...

Un ensemble d'éléments que le temps a réunis, rendus complémentaires suivant une dynamique qu'il est impossible d'interrompre sans risque de rupture. Évora est une source inépuisable de surprises, une ville incomparable et magnifique.

Le Centre Historique d'Évora est donc un ensemble unique, qui répond non seulement à un seul mais à plusieurs critères comme applicables à la considération d'un ensemble comme patrimoine mondial.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

After recalling that the city of Evora was placed by a group of experts on the list of historic towns which could be included on the World Heritage List, ICOMOS justifies the nomination of the Portuguese government on the basis of criterion (IV) and secondarily criterion (II).

Criterion (IV). Evora is the finest example of a city of the golden age of Portugal after the destruction of Lisbon by the earthquake of 1755.

Criterion (II). The cityscape of Evora alone can enable us to understand the influence exerted by Portuguese architecture in Brazil, in sites such as Salvador de Bahia (included on the World Heritage List in 1985).

Committee Decision

The Committee made no statement.

- No information available if Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value
- No need to seek a decision from the Committee on changes to the Statement of Significance
- Proposal for revised text has not been made by State Party

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone has been defined

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Regulation of the Urbanization Plan of the City (chapters concerning the classified urban centre, the protection of heritage, and its use); Basic law of Cultural Heritage (notably control of alternations made to the classified buildings, as well as any archaeological excavations when necessary); protected zones of architectural and urban heritage; municipal regulation on publicity and propaganda; regulation on the occupation of public areas

Actions taken/proposed :

- Urban restoration program by neighbourhoods or by building assemblages; realize integrated interventions in order to better living conditions, notably typologies, hygiene, and salubrity; the redefinition of space, final construction, etc. tied to programs for the amelioration of infrastructures; parking lots and social equipment, always while keeping with the values of protection of heritage
- Timeframe: 2006 and following years

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Urban centre

Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group since 25/02/1982
- Site manager/coordinator on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority primarily involved with the management of the site: national and local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

Actions proposed

- Make the procedures for the changes easier to realize within the framework of protection legislation, notably concerning project plans, and more strictly enforce the building restoration plan. Regulation of the law which establishes the basis of the politics and protection and evaluation of cultural heritage
- Increase and improve technical means, such as developing investigation, programs, projects, and testing
- Find new financial means in order to increase the budget for restoration and conservation of the historic centre of Evora

5. Management Plan

- No management plan, preparation will be completed in 12/2005
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Department of the Historical Centre of the Town Hall of Evora

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- The annual working budget comes mostly from the Town Hall, yet there are several other financial sources: the Town Hall of Evora, the Southern Regional Direction of Buildings and

Monuments, the Portuguese Institute of Architectural Heritage, and private entities (habitation, commerce, and restaurants)

- Before its inscription, the site received \$3,500 from UNESCO in 1983 for the creation of a « Neighborhood Laboratory » and for the « 4th World Colloquium of the Organization of World Heritage Cities – OPCM », held at Evora in 1997; it also obtained about 22,480 EUR from UNESCO for the travel expenses for the representatives of certain cities
- Funding is insufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: not provided

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Average : conservation, management, promotion, education, visitor management
- Bad : interpretation

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Above all in management, elaboration of projects, conservation and restoration, inventory and georeference, historical research, and meetings with the population

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 141,387 in 2004 (number of tourists who look for information at the Municipal Tourist Offices ; it is estimated this number represents 10% of the tourists who entered Evora)
- Visitor facilities: The Tourism Office, recently renovated, has a waiting room, a room for specific information, a small auditorium for 20 people, and some offices for the two directors ; five employees specializing in tourist material ; free access to all the information material on the city and its main monuments ; a promotional bibliography on Evora
- Visitor needs: Centre for the Interpretation of Heritage

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; studies related to the value of the site; condition surveys; archaeological surveys; transportation studies; commerce in

the historic centre; location of habitation park; the color of Evora ; scenic illumination and ambiance ; public space

- All studies have been used to better urban management and the cultural heritage of the historic centre

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage site among visitors, local communities, businesses and local authorities
- Special events concerning World Heritage status: colloquiums, conferences, expositions
- Web site available
- Involvement of local population: Public discussion of a strategic plan for the city, an urbanization plan for Evora, a traffic and transportation plan, and a “strategy for culture”; sector meetings with the entities who own a great percentage of heritage (the Archdiocese, the Army, and the University) ; regular working meeting of the Municipal Consulting Commission of Art, Archeology, and Heritage Protection

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Systematic intervention through archaeological excavations; Restoration and protection measures for important monuments such as, the Cathedral, the Church of St. Francis, the Church of the Misericordia, the Museum (work in progress), the Public Granary (work in progress), the theater, the ruins of the Convents of St. Domingos of the Palace of the Sepúlvedas (work in progress), Palace of the Zuzartes and its tour annex, a part of the Casas Pintadas (Forum Eugénio de Almeida), the walls, etc.
- Present state of conservation: patchy

Threats and Risks to site

- A decrease in the population inhabiting the historic centre, although the arrival of students has partially compensated for this, could still be

a risk ; the tearing down of buildings which are empty and therefore more vulnerable to degradation ; a loss of attachment to the historic centre and therefore a risk in the loss of identity ; a decline in restoration efforts ; the loss of various functions within the historic centre ; construction risks ; the decline of local usages

Measures proposed/taken

- Rebuilding of structures and the creation of new attractions for the inhabitants; with the creation of the Society for Urban Restoration we want to intervene where the building structure is most damaged, in order to create habitat ional space while still maintaining the essential elements of the heritage. On the other hand, we want to better the living conditions of the inhabitants of the historic centre and build equipment and services close by (in the forms of education, support for seniors, sports, commerce, etc.) ; Timeframe: Rebuild and restore 600 buildings over 10 years

studies, in general, as well as inventory and research; protection and restoration of important monuments

- Weaknesses of management: Lack of duly adapted methods of intervention for structures ; lack of financial means for the conservation and restoration of monuments ; lack of financial means for the restoration of habitations ; lack of flexible, yet more precise program tools ; lack of management tools

Future actions:

- Bilateral Exchanges: Exchange with other cities through studies and pilot programs. Eventual hiring of consultants outside the authority of the management of the site who could establish the bases and the tools for urban planning and also propose a related plan (indicators, etc.); try to find technical and financial means at the national level for the conservation and restoration of monuments, notably through patrons; international assistance from World Heritage Fund is not sought

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- The governing authority foresees briefly establishing indicators to better control the maintenance of the outstanding universal value of Evora's historic centre

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, economic and management
- Strengths of management: After the inscription, the main interventions made are as follows : elaboration and application of an urbanization plan ; renovation of basic infrastructures ; municipal rehabilitation programs for inhabitants ; joint programs between the central public administration and the local administration for the restoration of buildings ; renovation of the pavement of the historic centre ; cable television ; improvement of public transportation ; redefinition of certain centre commerce ; great improvement of ambient urban lighting ; scenic illumination of monuments ; renovation of the municipal market ; transformation of a barracks and other buildings into a college; requalification des axes de commerce; growth of cultural organizations; systematic intervention by means of archaeological excavations; growth of