

PORTUGAL

Cultural Landscape of Sintra

Brief description

In the 19th century Sintra became the first centre of European Romantic architecture. Ferdinand II turned a ruined monastery into a castle where this new sensitivity was displayed in the use of Gothic, Egyptian, Moorish and Renaissance elements and in the creation of a park blending local and exotic species of trees. Other fine dwellings, built along the same lines in the surrounding serra, created a unique combination of parks and gardens which influenced the development of landscape architecture throughout Europe.

1. Introduction

Year of Inscription

1995

Agencies responsible for site management

- Comissão Nacional da UNESCO
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (ii) (iv) (v)

Justification provided by the State Party

Sintra et la Serra sont véritablement uniques. Elles sont très belles, certes, mais surtout uniques.

C'est cette singularité qui sert de support à la célébrité de Sintra, sa renommée internationale parmi les poètes, artistes et penseurs. Sa différence repose sur le syncrétisme exceptionnel réussi entre la Nature et les monuments anciens, et sur le caractère pionnier des rêves architectoniques qu'elles suscitérent, notamment dans l'ambiance du Romantisme.

Au Portugal, aucun autre site ne ressemble à Sintra. En Europe, voire dans le monde, il est difficile de trouver un parallèle parfait, de par sa complexité et de par sa symbiose typique entre le *Patrimoine Naturel et le Patrimoine Construit*.

Néanmoins, l'on pourrait citer certaines régions de l'Europe centrale avec leurs palais romantiques superbes entourés de magnifiques paysages datant des années 60 du XIX^{ème} siècle. Rappelons toutefois que le Palais de Pena, à Sintra, prototype du romantisme européen, marqué par un mélange exubérant de styles et ses échos exotiques et médiévaux, précède, d'au moins un quart de siècle, tout ce qui lui est comparable en Allemagne. En sus du *paysage naturel* immense qui l'entoure, il se trouve au cœur d'un parc unique en son genre, composé de milliers d'arbres réunis dans les quatre coins du globe. Un phénomène que l'on retrouve, en quelque sorte, dans le Parc de Monserrate.

Sintra L'Histoire et les Poètes...

Sintra, non dont la forme médiévale connue la plus ancienne, *Suntria*, contient le radical indo-européen *Sun-, «astre lunineux», «soleil». *Sintra*, désignée sous le vocable de «Mont Sacré» par Varron et Columelle. *Sintra*, «Montagne de la Lune» de Ptolomée. *Sintra*, le bourg «plongé en permanence dans une brume qui ne dissipe pas», mentionné par l'érudit musulman Alhimiari. *Sintra*, de Luis de Camões, «où les naïdes cachées/dans les fontaines, fuient au doux enlacement: / où Amour les emprisonne suavement, / en allumant dans les eaux un feu ardent». *Sintra*, le «Glorieux Eden» de Lord Byron. *Sintra*, «le doux séjour» d'Almeida Garret. *Sintra*, «nid d'amour» où, «sous les romantiques frondaisons, les nobles dames s'abandonnaient aux caresses des poètes», comme nous dit Eça de Queiroz.

Sintra, «véritable jardin de Klingsor - et, là au sommet, le château du Saint Graal», selon la vision de Richard Strauss. *Sintra*, résidence privilégiée de Rois et nobles; retraite paradisiaque pour les frères et les ermites; muse inspiratrice de poètes, prosateurs, musiciens, et peintres; pèlerinage obligatoire de toutes les âmes sensibles et de tempérament artistique indépendamment de leur nationalité. *Sintra*, lieu unique en Europe et dans le

monde, chantée jusqu'à l'épuisement en célèbres vers; décrite dans des quirielles de textes; traduite par le chromatisme brumeux d'innombrables toiles; écoutée à travers les cadences éthérées de poèmes symphoniques éloquentes; rêvée de tous ceux qui l'aiment et la visitent.

Notons également que le Bourg de Sintra il même a évolué tout en préservant une organisation de l'espace et de structures caractéristiques des phases successives de son histoire dans un site naturel tout à fait exceptionnel. Une vallée l'isole et délimite clairement sa composante historique par rapport à son environnement contemporain.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

The Cultural landscape of the Serra and the town of Sintra represents a pioneering approach to Romantic landscaping which had an outstanding influence on developments elsewhere in Europe. It is an unique example of the cultural occupation of a specific location that has maintained its essential integrity as the representation of diverse successive cultures. Its structures harmonize indigenous flora with a refined and cultivated landscape created by man as a result of literary and artistic influences. Its integrity is fragile and vulnerable to neglect and unsympathetic management and use.

Committee Decision

Bureau (July 1995): The Bureau recommended that the Committee inscribe the nominated property on the List on the basis of criteria (ii), (iv) and (v) considering that the site is of outstanding universal value as it represents a pioneering approach to Romantic landscaping which had an outstanding influence on developments elsewhere in Europe. It is an unique example of the cultural occupation of a specific location that has maintained its essential integrity as the representation of diverse successive cultures. Its structures harmonize indigenous flora with a refined and cultivated landscape created by man as a result of literary and artistic influences. The Bureau however recommended that the State Party be invited to change the name of the site to "The Cultural Landscape of Sintra".

Session (1995): The Committee considered that the site is of outstanding universal value as it represents a pioneering approach to Romantic landscaping which had an outstanding influence on developments elsewhere in Europe. It is an unique example of the cultural occupation of a specific location that has maintained its essential integrity as the representation of diverse successive cultures.

The Committee decided to inscribe this property on the basis of criteria (ii), (iv) and (v) and under the following name: The Cultural Landscape of Sintra.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- 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 and is adequate

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Core, buffer and transitory zones are in course of measurement and implementation as laid down in the Management Plan
- Protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, urban centre, national park, religious use, rural landscape

Management/Administrative Body

- Steering group since 20/04/2003
- 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

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced in 01/2005
- Management plan is considered to be adequate
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: The Sintra World Heritage Centre

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Funding provided by Sintra Town Hall, "Cultursintra" Foundation, Sintra-Monte da Lua Park of Monserrate, IPPAR, Portuguese Institute of Tourism, Arts Institute and European Community financing (if approved)
- Extra funding through World Heritage status
- Funding is sufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 15

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

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

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

- Professional School of Patrimony Recuperation, with head office in Sintra
- Restoration Laboratory of the Archaeological Museum of S. Miguel de Odrinhas
- Several faculties of Architecture, in the metropolitan area of Lisbon, give their support in the architectural restoration and renovation

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 347,398 in 2004 (visitors of the monument most visited in Sintra, the "Palácio Nacional de Sintra", real number of people who visit Sintra is superior)
- Visitor facilities: Tourism Information Posts with maps and tourism publications; buses, taxis, horse carriages and centenary trams, parking lots, public restrooms, restaurants, bars, hotels, typical confectionary, guided tours in most parts of the monuments opened to the public, various pedestrian circuits marked on site, easy access to Lisbon and other places of tourist interest, varied commerce
- Visitor needs: Better access for the handicapped, better parking lots, more hotels (smaller and "charm" ones), and nocturnal animation

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment, studies related to the value of the site, condition surveys, archaeological

surveys, visitor management, transportation studies

- Studies used for the preparation of the Management Plan namely in the diagnosis of the state of the monuments and Sintra

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention emblem used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage site among visitors, local communities, businesses and local authorities
- Special events concerning World Heritage status: Cultural Festival of Sintra, exhibitions
- Web site available: www.cm-sintra.pt
- Involvement of local population through the establishment of a Public Opinions Council

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Bureau sessions: 24th (2000); 25th (2001)
- World Heritage Committee sessions: 24th (2000); 25th (2001); 26th (2002); 27th (2003); 28th (2004); 29th (2005); 30th (2006)

Conservation interventions

- The first phase of the restoration work made on the roof and exterior decoration of the Monserrate Palace was concluded in August 2004; Several archaeological excavations were made since the classification and are still in course; There are restoration works to the Heritage Municipal Buildings properties in the Historical Centre; regarding private buildings there are various programs of rehabilitation in course; collaboration protocol exists in the environmental areas as well as in the protection of nature
- Present state of conservation: adequate

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, natural disasters, number of inhabitants; visitor/tourism pressure, construction and industry pressure
- A fragile cultural landscape with lack of specific protection regulation, both at national and municipal standards

- The vastness of the classified area, where it is necessary to adjust the exploration of functions of frailness and of nature of goods considered
- Demographic pressure and lack of accessibility
- Inadequate quality of the services regarding the heritage, tourism and commerce in Sintra

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- Preparations for implementation of monitoring programme of the Management Plan

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, social, economic and management
- Strength: After its classification as World Heritage the site was better valued by the population, the inscription is a motive of pride for everybody
- Weaknesses of management: The Heritage is numerous, fragile and stretches over a large area, presenting a susceptibly varied state of conservation. With the implementation of the Management Plan the situation hopefully will be solved