

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/AA/1636/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 17 December 2020

H. E. Mr Peter Reuss
Permanent Delegation of Germany to UNESCO
9, rue Maspéro
75116 Paris

World Heritage List 2021 – Interim report and additional information request ShUM Sites of Speyer, Worms and Mainz (Germany)

Dear Ambassador,

As prescribed by the revised Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies have been requested to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2021. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation process.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to “The ShUM Sites of Speyer, Worms and Mainz” was carried out by Petr Justa (Czech Republic) from 15 to 18 September 2020. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organization and implementation of the mission.

On 22 September 2020, a letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information and documentation regarding the reconstruction works carried out at the component parts of the nominated serial property after World War II, clarifications with regard to the delineation of the buffer zones of the component parts 001-Speyer Jewry Court and 003- Old Cemetery Worms and to the protection measures envisaged by the Local Building Construction Plans, additional technical and visual documentation of development project proposals and finally whether a formalised commitment for the joint management of the nominated series is already in place. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 13 November 2020 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2020, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2021. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2021.

We thank you for the availability of your Delegation to the meeting held on Wednesday 25 November 2020 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting. During its last part meeting, the Panel has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

Description and wider historic context of the nominated serial property

The ICOMOS Panel notes that the nomination dossier includes only some hints of the wider background of the emergence of the Jewish communities in Speyer, Worms and Mainz: it would be important that an overall explanatory narrative of Jewish history in northern Europe is presented so as to provide a more robust context where to position the nominated property in relation to other Jewish sites inscribed or not in the World Heritage List. This contextualisation would need to include also an explanation of the different strands of Judaism, which would help understand the distinctiveness of Ashkenazic Judaism compared to others.

Explaining how Jewish communities coalesced in the wider region in the Early and High Middle Ages would also shed light on how they interacted with the Christian society in different situations, how this encounter resulted in an interchange of human values, expressed by emerging new sensitivity and specific architectural forms and how these forms could be seen as trend-setting. It would also help clarify better what could have been the role of Jewish communities in the medieval urbanisation process.

It would be very important to have more information on how the Jewish presence in Cologne, Regensburg, Erfurt or in the *Şarfat* differed from the emergence of ShUM communities and how different conditions are reflected by specific surviving tangible evidence.

This contextualisation would also contribute to support the claim of the ShUM communities and related sites being the cradle of Ashkenazim, would better explain the emergence of the Taqqanot Qehillot ShUM and of liturgical poetry and their influence on the consolidation of Ashkenazi identity and progressive diffusion worldwide. The diasporic context would need to be made more explicit. Two facets seem relevant in explaining the emergence of Ashkenazic Judaism and then its consolidation and diffusion throughout the world: the Jews' flee from their ancestral homeland and settlement in other regions, including western and northern Europe and then their movements and relocation in other parts of Europe and in the Americas.

In Mainz, only the Old Cemetery survives from the High Middle Ages: it would be useful to receive some information on the religious and community buildings that were built at that time around which the Jewish community gathered.

Authenticity and reconstruction

The ICOMOS Panel has discussed in length this topic during its November meeting and, whilst acknowledging the usefulness of the additional information provided on the matter by the State Party, would like to receive further explanations and documentation on the reconstruction of the Rashi House in Worms, which seems to have occurred in different circumstances than the reconstruction of the Synagogue and of the Women's shul. This clarification will assist the ICOMOS Panel to understand whether including the Rashi House within the boundary of the Worms Synagogue Compound is acceptable or it might undermine the conditions of authenticity and integrity of the whole and would then be preferable to include it in the buffer zone.

Boundaries

The ICOMOS Panel would be pleased to receive further clarifications on the delineation of the boundaries of the component part Speyer Jewry Court: it seems that some of the medieval walls of the Synagogue and of the Women's shul are shared with adjoining buildings and it would be important to understand whether these buildings are included within the nominated property or not or if at least the full section of these walls is. It would be equally important to understand whether arrangements/ agreements with the owners of these houses exist to ensure adequate protection of the medieval structures. If this clarification can be complemented by maps and drawings at a more detailed scale than that of the current maps of the component, it would be helpful.

Protection and management

The additional information provided by the State Party in November 2020 reports that new detailed local plans zones have been defined and regulations are being prepared for areas corresponding or encompassing the buffer zones of the components: it would be important to understand by when these revised local plans and associated regulations will be approved and applied.

The nominated series, and particularly the cemeteries, are located in highly dynamic urban contexts. Buffer zones have been established, but ICOMOS notes that these are rather small areas around the nominated component parts and development has already occurred immediately outside the buffer zones and other proposals are ongoing. The ICOMOS Panel would be pleased to receive further information on what are the regulations applying in areas outside the buffer zones and how they guarantee that potential development will not negatively impact on the components. This is particularly important in areas near or with open views towards the cemeteries, such as for instance across the railway in Worms.

The nomination dossier mentions that an interpretation centre is to be built south of the Rashi House, Worms: the ICOMOS Panel would welcome further information on whether these intentions have already taken shape in some preliminary design and, in such case, to receive more information and documentation before any decision is taken, given the highly sensitive context.

Involvement of residents in the nomination process

The nomination dossier reports about the involvement of the Jewish community in the nomination, but it is not fully clear how and to what extent the local residents in the buffer zones or in the three towns have been informed and involved in the process and how they will be involved in the management of the nominated serial property. If available, could further information on the involvement of local communities be provided?

Risk management

The ICOMOS Panel would be pleased to receive information on whether and what ad-hoc measures are meant to be in place to protect the nominated serial property from vandalism.

Interpretation and visitor management

The ICOMOS Panel has noted that a common interpretation strategy of the serial nominated property has yet to be developed: it would be important to understand whether progress has been made since the submission of the nomination dossier and whether interpretation also addresses the reconstruction process occurred after World War II at the Worms Synagogue Compound.

The ICOMOS Panel would welcome additional information on whether an assessment of the impact of visitors on the community using the synagogue, the women's shul, the community centre, their spaces and on the cemeteries has been carried out, possible issues identified, and solutions envisaged.

Maintenance and monitoring

The ICOMOS Panel would be pleased to receive further explanations on how maintenance is programmed and carried out and what is the periodicity and responsibility of monitoring at the component parts.

We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation process.

We would be grateful if you could provide **ICOMOS** and the **World Heritage Centre** with the above information **by 28 February 2021 at the latest**, the deadline set out in paragraph 148 of the Operational Guidelines for supplementary information on nominations to be received. Please note that any information submitted after this date will not be considered by ICOMOS in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted, however, that while ICOMOS will carefully consider any supplementary information submitted, it cannot properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or large amounts of new information submitted at the last minute. So we would be grateful if the State Party could keep its response concise and respond only to the above requests.

We thank you for your support of the World Heritage Convention and the evaluation process.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gwenaëlle Bourdin', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS World Heritage Evaluation Unit

Copy to Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Weiterbildung und Kultur
 UNESCO World Heritage Centre