

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

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Charenton-le-Pont, 17 December 2020

H. E. Mr Massimo Riccardo
Permanent Delegation of Italy to UNESCO
50, rue de Varenne
75007 Paris

World Heritage List 2021 – Interim Report and Additional Information The Porticoes of Bologna (Italy)

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 Porticoes of Bologna” was carried out by Olivier Poisson (France) between 23 and 25 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 29 September 2020, a letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the description of the nominated property, the overall justification for inscription, the justification for criteria, the proposed boundaries and the comparative analysis. 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 the 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. During the final part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting that followed, the ICOMOS Panel has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed.

While the ICOMOS Panel considered that “The Porticoes of Bologna” might have the potential to meet the requirements for Outstanding Universal Value, this has not yet been demonstrated.

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

Scope of the nomination and selection of the component parts

The ICOMOS Panel appreciates the fact that the porticoes have become an expression and element of Bologna’s urban identity and understands from the nomination dossier that the definition of the portico as private property for public use is essential to the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, which has allowed their spread as urban elements that benefit the city as a whole.

As mentioned in its letter requesting additional information sent on 29 September 2020, ICOMOS expressed its difficulty to clearly understand the nature of what is being nominated: a series of porticoes; or the historic city of Bologna.

In the supplementary information provided, the State Party explained that the focus of the nomination is on the porticoes.

The ICOMOS Panel also notes that, in the same supplementary information submitted in November 2020, the State Party refers to the porticoes as a system, which make up a full-scale urban infrastructure. However, ICOMOS considers that the idea of the porticoes as an urban system is not reflected through the 12 component parts as currently presented. ICOMOS notes that the porticoes are nominated as single elements of the buildings to which they are attached. It is understood that the porticoes have public use as passageways, being sidewalks, and that the buildings are privately owned, but it appears quite unusual to only pick one element of a façade as a major attribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The porticoes have not been conceived as individual features of the city, but as being integrated into the urban context, by belonging to the buildings on which they are situated.

ICOMOS considers that the current approach of selecting only porticoes without their building context is not appropriate, and in doing so does not provide the full picture of their creation, use and place in the urban context.

In addition, since the focus is put on the porticoes themselves as individual elements, it appears difficult to apprehend the urban system to which the State Party is referring to. In fact, it appears that the city has developed a real urban system with the porticoes as specific architectural elements. The issue is that currently the whole system is not reflected in the current selection. For example, the component 6 of San Luca as currently delineated does not consider the urban and devotional reality of this portico, which was connected with the Sanctuary and in this way be used as shelter for the pilgrimages. It is not possible to understand the significance of the portico and its use without including the associated elements that make up the whole ensemble. ICOMOS considers that the understanding of the porticoes cannot rely only on the elements themselves, but should be considered within their related urban and cultural context.

ICOMOS appreciates the additional information provided by the State Party, but considers still difficult to understand the rationale that was used to define the different typological categories of porticoes. In addition, the ICOMOS Panel is also concerned by the logic that was followed for the selection of the component parts: the 12 component parts are presented as a 'catalogue' of different types of porticoes, which is acknowledged several times in the nomination dossier. However, as expressed in the *Operational Guidelines*, paragraph 137 "Each component part should contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property as a whole in a substantial, scientific, readily defined and discernible way". As currently put forward, it is not demonstrated in which way each component part would contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and how, as a whole, the entire series would reflect the justification for inscription.

Therefore, the ICOMOS Panel questions why another approach, focused on a broader urban context -the wider city or key parts of it-, was not proposed in order to explicitly contextualize the distinctive urban character of Bologna, as a city of porticoes. In this regard, ICOMOS also considers it necessary that the links between the porticoes themselves be explained and expressed. This would help in considering the porticoes system as an ensemble, in terms of their location in the town of Bologna and the hierarchy between the different spaces in the city.

Reconstruction after the Second World War

The ICOMOS Panel also notes that according to the nomination dossier, due to the bombardments during the Second World War, "43.2% of the available spaces needed reconstruction intervention" (page 134). However, there is no clear information on the areas that were damaged or destroyed, the extent of post-war reconstructions,

