

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, 25 January 2021

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World Heritage List 2021

Franciscan Ensemble of the Monastery and Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption of Tlaxcala (Mexico) – Interim Report and Additional Information request

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 “Franciscan Ensemble of the Monastery and Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption of Tlaxcala” was carried out by Mr. Juan Luis Isaza (Colombia) in December 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 25 September 2020, a letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the justification for inscription, comparative analysis, restoration works, buffer zone, ownership, management and local communities’ awareness and involvement. 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.

In mid-January 2021, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel held an extraordinary session, as per request of the World Heritage Committee, that evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2021, for which technical evaluation missions were organised in December 2020. 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 13 January 2021 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:

Comparative analysis

The nomination dossier and in particular the additional information already provided, explain why the Franciscan ensemble was not part of the first nomination and that out of the first five monasteries, founded by Franciscan missionaries the ones still standing are the one now being nominated (in Tlaxcala), along with Huejotzingo’s (in Puebla) and Cuernavaca’s (in Morelos), which are already part of the inscribed property.

However, ICOMOS recalls that in the case of serial properties, it is important that the comparative analysis sets out the rationale for choosing the components. In the particular case of extensions, specific attention needs to be paid to how the proposed extension compares with the original nomination, and how the values of the original nomination are articulated in the proposed extension.

Therefore, ICOMOS would appreciate if the State Party could explain, in a more precise and detailed way than what was presented in the additional information, how this ensemble compares with, and complements, the other 14 monasteries already inscribed, and contributes to a better understanding of the Outstanding Universal Value of the inscribed property, including direct comparisons monastery by monastery.

ICOMOS notes that, as described in the Manual on *Preparing World Heritage Nominations*, where a component is proposed for addition to an existing inscribed serial property, the existing Statement of Outstanding Universal Value can be revised to encompass minor changes to reflect the extension but that no new values can be added, as this would require a re-nomination of the whole property. Therefore, on the basis of the outcomes of the comparison between the nominated monastery and those comprised in the inscribed series, the State Party would have the elements and information necessary to complement the existing Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value adopted in 2013 for the inscribed series in order to take into account the proposed extension.

In addition, ICOMOS would like also to know if State Party could confirm that, with this extension, the series is considered as complete or if it is possible that other monasteries could be nominated in the future.

Boundaries of the nominated property

ICOMOS acknowledges that the boundaries for the nominated property were defined in accordance with the present extension of the ensemble. However, ICOMOS considers that it would be important for the boundaries of the nominated property to reflect the importance of other spaces with functional relevance, or that existed in the past. In this perspective, ICOMOS considers it would be important to include in the nominated property, and not in the buffer zone, the area of the former Lower Atrium, as the founding site of the early church and its role as a graveyard but also the space of the *Calle De La Capilla Abierta* (from *Avenida Independencia* to the Open Chapel), which is a processional path with a remarkable viewpoint to the Open Chapel. While ICOMOS is aware of the challenges of revising the boundaries of the nominated property within such a short period of time, it is hopeful that this is feasible and that new maps reflecting these changes can be provided accordingly. On the same note, but at a different level of importance, the space of the orchard could also be considered for inclusion in the boundaries.

Buffer zone

The nomination dossier emphasizes the importance of the location of the monastery on a hill, with a water source, and its relation with its surroundings. In this perspective, ICOMOS considers that it is essential to ensure the protection of the view sheds from the Franciscan ensemble. ICOMOS acknowledges the information provided in the supplementary information on the "Partial Urban Development program" but still considers that the buffer zone should be further extended in order to provide an adequate added layer of protection to the property, as requested by the *Operational Guidelines*. It would be therefore very helpful for ICOMOS to have more information on how the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone integrate the features presented as decisive in the choice of the location for the settlement of the Franciscan, such as the 7 hills and the water source.

Furthermore, ICOMOS would also appreciate if the State Party could explain in more detail to what extent the current legal and planning provisions are able to efficiently protect both the views to the monastery but also from the monastery to its surroundings, in a broader landscape approach?

ICOMOS also takes note that the "Partial Urban Development program" still awaits its publication to the official journal to come into effect. Hence, ICOMOS would appreciate if a time frame of this publication and its full implementation could be provided and if the State Party could also clarify if the measures included in this

