# ICOMOS

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

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Charenton-le-Pont, 25 January 2021

H. E. Mr Juan José Bremer Permanent Delegation of Mexico to UNESCO Maison de l'UNESCO 1, rue Miollis 75732 PARIS Cedex 15

## 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 shot 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

programme will be valid and applicable in the long-term or can be changed in the short-term because of planning processes?

### Management

ICOMOS notes the concerns expressed by the technical evaluation mission on the risk of potential fire from an outdated electrical system. Therefore, ICOMOS would appreciate further information on the concrete actions planned (including the timeframe for their implementation) to address these concerns. In addition, ICOMOS would also welcome further information on other existing measures or risk-management plans to address other risks (e.g. earthquakes, floods, etc.).

ICOMOS would also be grateful to receive further information about the management arrangements in place to facilitate collaboration between the different actors with management responsibilities (e.g. Federal Government, State, Municipality, Dioceses) and what are the resources (human, technical, financial) that contribute to the management of the nominated property.

Finally, since this is an extension to a serial property, it would be helpful to have more information on how the management of this component will be included in the overall management of the inscribed property. Could the State Party explain what management arrangements are already in place or are envisaged to facilitate the management of the property as a whole?

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,

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Gwenaëlle Bourdin Director ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

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