

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/AS/EG/1656/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 20 December 2021

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

World Heritage List 2022

Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt (Germany) – 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 2022. 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 “Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt” was carried out by Mr. Adam Blitz (UK) from 7 to 10 September 2021. 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 24 September 2021, a letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the description and wider historic context of the nominated property, serial approach and integrity, authenticity and restoration / reconstruction works, development projects, protection, management, and presentation and interpretation of the site. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 28 October 2021 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2021, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2022. 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 2022.

We thank you for the availability of your Delegation to the meeting held on 26 November 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.

While the ICOMOS Panel considered that the “Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt” 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:

Expansion of the historic cultural context

The property has been nominated for it is considered as an exceptional testimony to the Jewish community in Erfurt from the period between the end of the 11th century and the mid-14th century. The distinguishing characteristics of the Erfurt nomination would be the relative intactness of the Synagogue, the non-typical design of both the Synagogue and the mikveh and the separation from one another of the Jewish religious monuments, which would be indicative of the integration of the Jewish community within the Christian majority. The Stone House – a residential building owned by a Jew and not differing from other residential buildings – would be an additional element supporting this integration and distinctiveness.

The ICOMOS Panel has found this justification too general and not sufficiently explained or grounded on the historic context of the emergence and development of the Jewish community in Erfurt. Hence, further detailed information on this aspect would be welcomed to supplement the nomination dossier and the additional information provided in October 2021.

ICOMOS would need to understand the conditions under which the Jewish community in Erfurt emerged and developed, and how the specificities of the Erfurt socio-historic and cultural context might have supported the distinctiveness of the life of the Jewish community in Erfurt, its integration within the Christian majority, and the way in which this could be reflected through the monuments that survive.

For instance, the nomination dossier holds that the mikveh is unique in its layout, but what makes it so distinctive has not been clarified nor what factors contributed to this distinctiveness. Was it the choice of the location near the River Gera? What made it possible to choose this location instead of one closer to the Synagogue? How has this choice influenced the whole layout of the monument? At this stage, this is not fully explained and illustrated.

The nomination dossier mentions that Erfurt was under the rule of the Archbishop of Mainz: this seems an important factor in relation to the emergence of the Jewish community in Erfurt and to its probable contacts and exchanges with the one in Mainz. The links between, and specificities of, the Erfurt Jewish community and the ShUM sites' communities, whose property has been inscribed on the World Heritage List in July 2021, would need to be further elucidated also regarding the use of (or choice not to use) the architectural language and models.

In relation to this, understanding why, for instance, there is no mention of persecutions related to the first crusade, which was one of the most disruptive events in the ShUM sites, would be important.

In the ShUM sites, particularly in Speyer and Worms, where architectural structures and archaeological remains survive and have been studied, the religious complexes included the Synagogue, a community space and a yeshiva, in addition to the mikveh, whilst the cemeteries were located outside the city walls. The nomination dossier of Erfurt mentions a cemetery, no longer existing, whilst the mikveh – atypically located – survives. However, there is no reference to the possible existence (or non-existence) of a yeshiva and of a community space in Erfurt: some clarifications would be needed on this aspect, for they may shed light on socio-historic factors that might have determined possible specificities, to understand better the situation of the Jews in Erfurt and the tangible outcomes in terms of spatial distribution in comparison with those in other cities with Ashkenazi presence in the same period.

In other words, it is important for ICOMOS to understand the specificities of Erfurt in comparison to the recently inscribed ShUM sites of Speyer, Worms and Mainz, as they belong to the same theme, in the same period and geo-cultural region, as well as their connections.

ICOMOS would also appreciate to receive further information on the Stone House, the history of its ownership, as to elucidate better the contribution of this component to the series. Further information would be needed on the decorated ceiling and on other similar examples of residential buildings that survive from the same period. Additional information on the building where the Erfurt treasure was found would also be useful for the ICOMOS Panel to further its deliberations.

On the basis of the nomination dossier and the received additional information last October, the ICOMOS Panel finds it difficult to understand in what way the three isolated monuments would reflect the everyday life of the Jewish community and its coexistence with the Christian community. In this regard, ICOMOS would like to ask further information on the evolution of the Jewish Quarter and on what features still survive in that area of the town that reflect that period of history. Finally, the Panel would be pleased to receive a specific clarification concerning the reconstructed plans of the Jewish Quarter that were sent with the additional information in October: these plans indicate names in different colours but it is not clearly explained what the different colours (blue and red) would mean.

Graphic documentation

In order to have a better understanding of the characteristics of the three nominated monuments, ICOMOS would be grateful if the State Party could provide further graphic technical documentation of the three monuments – plans, sections and elevations – at a more detailed scale (minimum 1:100) in order to understand the typological specificities of these three monuments in comparison with other ones of the same period.

Boundaries

ICOMOS would appreciate if the State Party could provide more detailed maps of the nominated component parts and of their boundaries – as it is not clear how the boundaries have been delineated and what they include or exclude.

The ICOMOS Panel has noted that the boundaries of the nominated component parts coincide with the footprint of the buildings: this poses issues in term of integrity. With regard to the Synagogue for instance, the nomination dossier mentions that it was accessed through a courtyard secluded from the street. It would be important then to include it within the boundaries of the nominated component part. Similarly, a better understanding of the situation of the mikveh at the time it was used would be helpful to understand whether there were (and still are) non-built-up areas around it that would have had functional links with the mikveh that can be included within the boundaries of the nominated component part.

In the case of the Stone House, which is part of a built-up block that includes other units, a clarification about how the perimeter has been delineated not only in the plan but also in the elevation would be needed, as well as a better understanding of the ownership of adjacent buildings.

The ICOMOS Panel finds that the extensive buffer zone is not justified for such a small series of monuments, although it is understood that the proposed buffer zone is fully protected. On the other hands ICOMOS notes that the additional information provides an idea of the extension of a 'Jewish Quarter' that would reflect functional relationships with the three nominated monuments.

It would be very important for the ICOMOS Panel deliberations that the State Party clarify the reasoning behind the rationale for the buffer zone and whether and how the Jewish Quarter can have a place in reflecting the coexistence of the Jewish community within a largely majoritarian Christian society.

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 2022 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 kindly ask to keep your 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 initial 'G'.

Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to State Capital Erfurt, Department of Culture and Urban Development
 UNESCO World Heritage Centre