
The Maison Carrée in Nîmes (France) No 1569rev

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

The Maison Carrée in Nîmes

Location

Department of Gard

Occitanie

France

Brief description

The *Maison Carrée* erected in the 1st century CE in the Roman colony of *Nemausus* – today's Nîmes in France – is an early example of a Roman temple that can be associated with the imperial cult in the provinces of Rome. Dedicated to the prematurely deceased divinised heirs of Augustus, the Princes of Youth, this pseudoperipteral hexastyle edifice promulgated Rome's control over its conquered territory while symbolically announcing the allegiance of the population of the city of *Nemausus* to the dynastic line of Augustus. The architectural programme and the carefully elaborated decoration, which reproduced features known from edifices erected in Rome, additionally symbolically communicated the ideological programme of Augustus, who transitioned Ancient Rome from republic to empire, thus opening a new golden age known as *Pax Romana*.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *monument*.

Included in the Tentative List

4 April 2012 as "Nîmes, Antiquity in the Present"

Background

This is a new nomination.

The initial nomination of Nîmes was examined by ICOMOS in 2017. The World Heritage Committee examined the nomination of the Historic Urban Ensemble of Nîmes, France, at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018) and adopted the following decision 42 COM 8B.28:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/18/42.COM/8B and WHC/18/42.COM/INF.8B1,
2. Defers the examination of the nomination of the **Historic Urban Ensemble of Nîmes, France**, to the World Heritage List, in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to develop a thorough

comparative analysis on the Roman buildings of the city of Nîmes to bring into focus whether potential significance can be identified and, if a robust case can be made, reconsider the scope of the nomination on this basis;

3. Considers that any revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the site;
4. Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:
 1. Reconsidering the location of the Palais des Congrès and implementing a Heritage Impact Assessment before any development project into the historic core of the city,
 2. Giving pre-eminence to archaeological considerations in any new development proposal. The approval process should be rearranged for projects that will impact potential archaeological remains, archaeological investigations should be executed early in the planning process so that their findings can inform any decision to approve a development,
 3. Undertaking an active conservation programme to improve the condition and setting of the Porte d'Auguste and the Porte de France while reducing the factors that can affect them negatively, especially vehicular traffic,
 4. Preparing a tourism management plan to actively manage tourism and address the potential deleterious effects of tourism upon the proposed property,
 5. Improving the monitoring program in order to focus on preservation of the built heritage.

Following the decision of the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS provided advice to the State Party from January to June 2019. The current new nomination results from both of these processes.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 7 to 9 September 2022.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 3 October 2022 requesting further information about integrity, comparative analysis, important views/boundary of the buffer zone, protection and new developments.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 7 November 2022.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2022 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested regarding boundary of the property and involvement of communities.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 27 February 2023.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

10 March 2023

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

The *Maison Carrée*, as it is known since the Middle Ages, is a Roman temple erected between the 2nd and 5th year CE, during the reign of Augustus, in the Roman colony of *Nemausus* – today's Nîmes in France.

Designed on the plan of a rectangle, the *Maison Carrée* is a pseudoperipteral hexastyle building composed of a single *cella* preceded by a *pronaos* and surrounded by a colonnade. The Corinthian style temple, made of local limestone, stands on a podium and is accessible through a flight of fifteen steps. The twenty columns on the sides and at the back of the building are engaged, while ten columns in the *pronaos* are freestanding. All are fluted and adorned with Corinthian bell-shaped capitals, on which rests an entablature composed of a three-fascia architrave with rows of ovolo ornaments between them, a frieze with acanthus rinceaux, and an elaborately sculpted cornice. Decorative bands of heart-and-dart, dentils, and ovolo ornamental motifs are inserted between the frieze and the cornice. The dripstone is adorned with frets and lion muzzles. A gable roof on a wooden frame with *imbrex* and *tegula* Roman tiles completes the monument. Both pediments of the temple have been left undecorated.

Historically, the *Maison Carrée* stood in the forum of *Nemausus*, the central public space of the city located at the intersection of *cardo maximus* and *decumanus maximus*. With a single entrance in its northern façade, it occupied a strategic and symbolic position usually reserved for the Capitol in the Roman cities, facing probably a curia. The forum was delimited by porticoes. Today, the edifice stands in the middle of the *place de la Maison Carrée*, its entrance facing *rue Auguste* created in the 19th century.

The *Maison Carrée* was dedicated to Caius and Lucius Caesar, the grandchildren, adopted sons, and the crown princes of Augustus, his presumptive heirs who died prematurely. A two-line dedicatory inscription in bronze letters, of which only the fitting holes survived, was originally affixed to the front of the temple. It read (translated from Latin): '*To Gaius Caesar, son of Augustus, consul, and Lucius Caesar, son of Augustus,*

consul designate; to the Princes of Youth'. The original text has been reproduced on a boundary wall delimiting the square, opposite the edifice. The dedication consecrates the temple to the members of Augustus' family. It constitutes a pledge of allegiance of the people of *Nemausus* to Rome represented by Augustus' dynastic line (*domus Augusta*). The use of the title Princes of Youth (*principes juventutis*) in reference to the two deceased heirs sanctified the entire dynasty, thus turning the *Maison Carrée* into a manifestation of the imperial cult. This religious practice was used by Augustus' system of imperial propaganda as a tool to foster loyalty of the provinces to the ruler and thus politically unify the Empire.

The *Maison Carrée* reproduces architectural and decorative features known from Augustus' edifices erected in Rome – the temple of Apollon in *Circo*, of *Mars Ultor*, and *Ara Pacis Augustae*.

The nominated property has an area of 0.0474483 ha, and a buffer zone of 72.746167 ha. The boundary of the property corresponds to the base of the edifice. The buffer zone includes the area of the medieval centre of Nîmes (*écusson*) and, following the street grid, extends west to encompass the *Jardins de la Fontaine*, with the vestiges of the temple of Diana and the *Tour Magne*. The boundary reaches on the south the *Porte de France*, and at the southeastern end includes the area along *avenue Feuchères*.

Volcae Arecomici, a Gallic people of the Languedoc, arrived to the territory of today's Nîmes around 6th-4th century BCE, settling in a number of *oppida*, one of which gave birth to the city of *Nemausus*. The construction of Via Domitia that linked Italy and Hispania through *Gallia Narbonensis* in 118 BCE helped *Nemausus*, positioned strategically along this road, to grow in importance. The Roman colonisation of the region in the late 1st century BCE led to the organisation of the city as a *colonia latina*, with Latin rights being conferred by Julius Caesar. Under his successor, *Colonia nemausensis* became *colonia augusta*. At that time, the *Augusteum* with a theatre and the so-called temple of Diana were constructed, together with the city walls and gates. The works on a *forum civitas* were initiated concurrently. At some point, however, the original design of the forum was modified and a pseudoperipteral temple (later called *Maison Carrée*) and possibly a curia were added at the opposing ends. In the 5th century CE the Visigoths ended the rule of Rome in *Gallia Narbonensis*, and the Roman vestiges in Nîmes fell victim to structural and functional transformations. The *Maison Carrée* was continuously adapted and reused throughout the ages. In the 14th century, the temple was incorporated into the defensive walls of the city and had openings made in its eastern façade. Its interior was divided into floors and a court added. From the 17th century, the *Maison Carrée* served as a church for the Augustinian convent until the French Revolution, when it became a national property. After several restoration interventions in the 17th and 18th centuries, the edifice was partly refurbished to its original form in the 19th century, with the purpose of serving as the first museum of the city.

Concurrently, the area in front of the temple was opened up and the newly created *rue Auguste* brought into line with the monument, offering a new panorama towards the temple. A public square was recreated around the monument. In the last decade of the 20th century, the place has been turned into pedestrian-only space, with the temple in its centre. Nowadays, neoclassical façades of buildings face the monument on the north, east and south while to the west the building of *Carré d'Art* (Museum of Contemporary Art) with its glass façade closes off the space.

State of conservation

The process of bringing the ancient temple back to its original form started in the 17th century. The *cella* of the temple was then emptied and the gothic windows resealed. Many original stones had been restored, modern elements being fastened with plaster to make them distinguishable from the original ones. Further stone replacements were made during the second major restoration campaign in 1778-1781. The third phase of restorations, completed in 1817-1821, included archaeological surveys around the building, which helped locate the porticoes that flanked the ancient forum. At that time also a glass roof was installed in the *cella* and the ceiling of the *pronaos* replaced. Further archaeological works have been carried out west and north of the temple on the occasion of opening up the space to create *rue Auguste*. Some vestiges of a building facing the *Maison Carrée* have been documented. In the 20th century, the *Maison Carrée* underwent maintenance and conservation works to reinforce its structure. Salvage archaeological excavations around the monument in 1984-1985, 1987 and in 1990-1991 uncovered vestiges of the original forum, planned before the construction of the *Maison Carrée*, as well as bases of columns from the porticoes. In 1992, the roofing of the monument was replaced to resemble the original, and tiles imitating the Roman ones used for the new roof. Final restoration, accompanied by some archaeological works, was done in 2006-2010. The limestone was then reinforced and cleaned, and the traces of windows resealed in the 17th century were concealed. The space of the *cella* was refurbished in 2021-2022 to serve as an exhibition and interpretation space. Today, no original elements of the *cella* are preserved. An inventory of repairs to the *Maison Carrée* has been completed in 2020 and an inspection of the state of the building done in 2021.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is very good.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are pollution, physical wear, natural erosion and floods. Pollution, including visual and noise pollution, results from traffic along the borders of the *place de la Maison-Carrée*. Mixed-mode

commuting programme is being implemented by the city to reduce the negative effects. To clear the visual axis towards the northern façade of the temple, the State Party plans to turn *rue Auguste* into a pedestrian boardwalk in 2023. A similar intervention is planned in the vicinity of *Porte de France* (projected for 2022-2025), in the southern end of the buffer zone, where the project of *Palais des Congrès* is being currently developed as part of the revitalisation of the area. Constructed in the place that is considered of little heritage value, the *Palais des Congrès* will host conventions and exhibitions.

With the rising numbers of visitors, the nominated property faces the risk of physical wear and damage to its elements. The monument is open to the public without restrictions but the inflow of visitors is controlled through a tourist management system (Flux Vision).

Among the environmental factors, floods have gravely affected the nominated property in previous years. The city has a flood prevention plan (*Plan de Prévention du Risque Inondation* (PPRI)) in place and has been implementing a programme of preventive actions (*Programme d'Actions de Prévention des Inondations* (PAPI)), which include construction of dissipation basins and flood control reservoirs. Fire risks are managed through controls and regular maintenance of installations.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party explained that pedestrianisation of *rue Auguste* should have no major impact on the existing traffic near the monument but would help reduce noise and visual pollution. Redirection of traffic from *boulevard Alphonse-Daudet* and *boulevard Victor-Hugo* may be envisaged in the future as a way of further reducing pressure on the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that independent Heritage Impact Assessment needs to be implemented systematically as part of any development proposal to evaluate possible impacts of the interventions on the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is very good and that factors affecting the nominated property are satisfactorily managed.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Erected in the forum of the colony of *Nemausus* between the 2nd and the 5th year CE, the *Maison Carrée* is an outstanding example of a Roman temple of Corinthian order, modelled on the monuments erected in Rome under Augustus' administration, which testifies to an important period in the history of Ancient Rome when its

territories were consolidated in the hands of Augustus into an empire.

- Dedicated to Gaius and Lucius Caesar, the quasi-divinised Princes of Youth and prematurely deceased heirs of Augustus, the edifice represents one of the earliest examples of a Roman temple of imperial cult, which has survived to our times in an almost complete form.
- The *Maison Carrée* is an outstanding testimony to a complex relationship between the Roman regime and the colony of *Nemausus*, revealing the role the imperial cult played as an ideological tool in the process of romanisation of the vast territory conquered by Rome. By its strategic location, architectural programme and the carefully elaborated symbolic decoration, the edifice metaphorically communicated the authority of Rome over *Nemausus* and the loyalty of the city to *domus Augusta*. Through the imperial cult, Augustus managed to politically unify the provinces into an empire, and ensure a period of peace, political stability, and harmony among its inhabitants, known as *Pax Romana*.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of the nominated property are the structural and decorative elements of the *Maison Carrée*, the strategic location of the temple in the forum, and the cultic importance of the edifice as the monument dedicated posthumously to the divinised imperial lineage.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed around two typological categories: ancient temples in which imperial cult was practiced, and structures that symbolically represent central power in an occupied land. Three parameters were used as a basis for comparisons: quality of the architectural programme, significance of the monument as historical testimony, and symbolic meaning. The comparators within the first typological category were mainly selected within the geo-cultural context of the territory of the Roman Empire and within the period of its existence. The comparators under the second typological category were selected without regard to a historical period or geographical context, based on the quality of properties as testimonies to imperial power. Within these frames, the comparative analysis has examined properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, as well as other properties. No potential comparators among the properties inserted in the Tentative Lists of States Parties have been considered. All of the properties have been analysed using qualitative approach.

Under ancient temples in which imperial cult was practiced, temples dedicated to Augustus or later, erected outside the city of Rome, were considered. The key comparators inscribed on the World Heritage List include the temples of Augustus located within Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna (Libya, 1982, criteria (i), (ii), (iii)); Historic Centre of Cordoba (Spain, 1984, criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)); Historic Centre of Évora (Portugal, 1986, criteria (ii), (iv)); and Archaeological Ensemble of Merida (Spain,

1993, criteria (iii), (iv)). The analysis also includes a great number of temples erected for subsequent Roman emperors in varied places of the Empire. All of these Augustan temples form part of larger historical/archaeological ensembles that have been recognised for different sets of values. Later temples testify to a different political reality.

Among the temples not on the World Heritage List, the analysis includes the edifice dedicated to Augustus and Livia in Vienne (France), the temples of Augustus and Roma in Pula (Croatia) and Ancyra/Ankara (Türkiye), *Augusteum* in Antioch of Pisidia (Türkiye), and a temple of Augustus in Barcelona (Spain). While some of these temples are comparatively well preserved or represent the same moment of establishing the imperial cult by Augustus, none of them has reached the level of architectural mastery and ornamental quality comparable to the *Maison Carrée*.

The comparative analysis also considered structures of similar purpose located outside the Roman Empire, erected in different times, which share the way their architectural structure expressed symbolic meanings, but the rationale behind their construction was dissimilar and they functioned under different historical circumstances.

Within the category of structures that symbolically represent central power in an occupied land, the State Party analysed properties on the World Heritage List that (1) testify to either the beginnings or a renewal of an empire, and (2) demonstrate cultural attachment or claim to a central power. None of these properties, located in varied geo-cultural regions, demonstrate both of these aspects together in a way that the *Maison Carrée* does.

ICOMOS notes that the State Party did not consider in the analysis the potential comparators inserted on the Tentative Lists of State Parties, such as the Hadrianic City of Italica (Spain, Tentative List), Archaeological Site of Sbeitla (Tunisia, Tentative List) or Ancient City of Stratonikeia (Türkiye, Tentative List).

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis within the frameworks established by the State Party has demonstrated that the nominated property's combination of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and attributes is not yet represented on the World Heritage List. However, evidence of the cult of the ruler before Augustus has not been considered, which seems to suggest that the cult of the emperor or divinised ruler (or any other symbolical representation of the central power in an occupied territory) was not known anywhere before Augustus. Meanwhile, the much earlier evidence of cults that developed, for e.g., in Pharaonic Egypt and Nubia, including the veneration of Alexander the Great and the cult of the Ptolemies, seems to suggest otherwise.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party explained that the Ancient Egyptian temples did not provide enough evidence to the adhesion of the local populations of the conquered territory to the

imperial ideology, or their integrity and authenticity have not been sufficient to convey the proposed values. However, no detailed analysis has been provided to back these statements.

ICOMOS further considers that the comparative analysis does not include examples of the imperial cult that the Roman emperors received in Egypt and Nubia. Portrayed on temple reliefs in line with the local iconographic standards, they became integrated into the Egyptian pantheon, thus continuing the tradition of the Ptolemies. Augustus himself funded an extensive temple building program throughout this part of the Roman Empire. His buildings which predate the construction of the *Maison Carrée* have not been considered in the analysis. In this light, the claim that the *Maison Carrée* was one of the earliest and the best-preserved Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult in the Roman Empire is inconclusive.

ICOMOS considers that the *Maison Carrée* is an early example, and one of the best preserved, of a Roman temple constructed in the Roman provinces that demonstrates the beginnings of transition of Ancient Rome from republic to empire and testifies to the associated process of romanisation of the conquered territory through the means of an imperial cult to ensure political stability and harmony in the consolidated dominion.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criterion (iv).

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the *Maison Carrée* represents one of the earliest and best-preserved examples of a Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult, which testifies to the important period of political unification of the territories conquered by the Romans, and consolidated in the hands of Augustus into an empire. Through the historical circumstances of its construction in the Roman colony of *Nemausus*, its ideological significance as a place of cult of the divinised imperial lineage, as well as the symbolic architectural and decorative programme, which recalls Augustan monumental architecture in Rome, the edifice represents the values of peace, stability and prosperity promised to the people of the Roman Empire by *Pax Romana* in the 1st century CE.

ICOMOS considers that the claim that the *Maison Carrée* is one of the earliest and best-preserved examples of a Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult cannot be confirmed based on the presented comparative analysis.

ICOMOS, however, considers that the *Maison Carrée* can be said to be an early and one of the best-preserved examples of a Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult in the Roman provinces that testifies to the beginnings of Rome's transition from republic to empire, and reflects the political system and the imperial ideology that underpinned the process of romanisation of this territory. ICOMOS also considers that *Pax Romana*, which can be seen as a period of relative peace, stability and a golden age of Ancient Rome, rested on the loyalty Rome inspired among its peripheries, including the colonies it established during the time of the Republic, rather than the military power it exercised. Thus, even though it signified a period of sustained Roman imperialism, the culture it created was based on a gradually realised consensus forged and refined in the furnace of conversations between the central authority and the local administration.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iv).

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the wholeness and intactness of the structural and decorative elements of the monument, as well as the setting of the temple within the forum, which played a strategic role in the way the edifice was perceived in ancient times.

The *Maison Carrée* has been preserved in a very good condition and most of its key elements, including the elaborate decoration, have survived in their original form or have been restored with great attention to detail and respect for authenticity.

The boundary has been drawn to encompass solely the temple. Its original historic setting within the ancient forum has not been preserved due to the evolution of the urban fabric of Nîmes since the Middle Ages. The presumed extent of the forum together with the wider setting has been included in the buffer zone, which has a high level of protection.

Viewsheds are being controlled in order to ensure clear visual perspectives towards the monument and its surroundings. Pedestrianisation of *rue Auguste* is meant to accentuate the visual axis from the *place de la République* towards the entrance of the temple.

While the monument suffers from adverse impact of environmental factors and pollution related to road traffic, measures put in place to control these are adequate.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the nominated property has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on its ability to convincingly convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value through its attributes. The *Maison Carrée* can be said to be authentic in its form and design as well as materials, as reflected in the structural and decorative elements of the temple. The authenticity of the strategic setting of the *Maison Carrée* has been lost.

The monument has retained its authenticity despite numerous modifications linked to different functions assigned to it through the ages. Key structural elements have been preserved in good state, and the conservation campaigns the temple has undergone helped recover original form and decoration of the edifice. Later uses of the temple or the related additions to its structure have been discreetly marked in the body of the monument. The *cella* has been entirely reconstructed based on the studies of the temple's interior, similarly to the roofing of the monument, which has been re-covered with tiles modelled on the Roman originals. The materials used in the reconstructions resemble the original ones.

The temple stands in its original place but the urban fabric around it has changed substantially. Few underground remains of the original setting of the temple within the ancient forum have been preserved. The original context can be partly appreciated through the form and design of the *place de la Maison Carrée*, which imitates the ancient public square, also by its function as a space for public gatherings. The *in situ* location of the porticoes that flanked the forum, confirmed through archaeological investigations, is indicated in the stone paving.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the nominated property has been demonstrated, even though the historic setting has been lost beyond recovery.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been met.

Boundaries

The boundary of the nominated property includes solely the ancient temple, which is a public property with no inhabitants. In delimiting the buffer zone, the historic setting of the nominated property and the existing protective measures were considered. Accordingly, the buffer zone includes the extent of *écusson* and all key Roman monuments of Nîmes. Access points to the *Maison Carrée* and visual axes that highlight the connections between the temple and other Roman edifices were also taken into account. Hence, the *place de la République* and the area along *avenue Feuchères*, connecting the SNCF train station with *esplanade Charles-de-Gaulle*, have been added to the buffer zone. About 6,200 people reside in the buffer zone.

In the additional information provided in November 2022, the State Party clarified that all thus far identified viewsheds have been included in the buffer zone.

In the additional information sent in February 2023, the State Party explained that the extent of ancient forum was not included within the boundaries of the nominated property because the underground remains of this strategic setting of the temple have been disturbed to the point of loss of authenticity, and later changes to the fabric of the city make recovery, even symbolic, of the original forum impossible.

ICOMOS considers that the temple was not an individual monument but part of a set of buildings of public function constructed on or around the Roman forum, to which the archaeological vestiges testify. This strategic historic setting contributed to the cultural values associated with the edifice's political role. However, ICOMOS recognises that the historical reality of the ensemble of the forum has been lost due to later urban developments and considers inclusion of the presumed extent of this historic setting in the buffer zone as sufficient.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the proposed justification for inscription under criterion (iv) is appropriate. The comparative analysis has demonstrated that the nominated property represents best the combination of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and the attributes to be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. The conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

Documentation of the nominated property, including inventories, archival materials and historical files, is held by the *Archives Nationales* in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in Paris, the *Archives départementales du Gard* in Nîmes, the *Archives municipales* of Nîmes, the *Bibliothèque Carré d'Art* in Nîmes, the *Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine* in Charenton-le-Pont, the *Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées* in Montpellier, the *Service du Secteur Sauvigné* of Nîmes, and the *Service régional de l'Inventaire* in Toulouse. Archaeological materials are kept by the *Musée de la Romanité*. Archaeological documentation is kept by the City of Nîmes through partnership with the *Institut National de Recherches Archéologiques Préventives* (INRAP). Iconographic files are stored at the *Musée du Vieux Nîmes* and *Musée des Beaux-Arts*.

The *Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles* (DRAC) is currently assembling documentation related to the conservation and restoration of the temple, as well as historical and archaeological records. Once complete (planned for 2023-2024), this dossier will be deposited at the *Musée de la Romanité* to form the basis for future management and conservation interventions.

Conservation measures

The *Charte de protection et d'utilisation de la Maison Carrée et de ses abords* (Protection and Use Charter for the Maison Carrée and its surroundings), due to be completed in 2023, will define the conservation requirements and determine standards for maintenance of the monument. It will outline the limits and requirements of occasional events organised in the perimeter of the nominated property, including the measures of managing the inflow of visitors to the monument (in line with the tourism management plan). A management/protection plan for the viewsheds is being developed since 2021 with the purpose of enhancing perspectives towards/from the *Maison Carrée*.

The City of Nîmes is responsible for maintenance and restoration of the *Maison Carrée* under the technical and scientific control of the Ministry of Culture; the latter being represented at the local level by the DRAC working under the authority of the Prefect of Occitanie. The Ministry provides funds for restorations, which are also partly funded from the budgets of the Region, Department and the City itself.

Monitoring

The monitoring system has been developed in relation to the State Party's management objectives, which include preservation of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property, ensuring appropriate governance, and developing public awareness and sense of ownership of the universal values represented by the *Maison Carrée*. Change in the urban fabric and development of sustainable tourism are considered within the buffer zone. The City of Nîmes and the Ministry of Culture are in charge of monitoring, with varied institutions responsible for aspects thereof. The *Comité de Bien Maison Carrée Patrimoine Mondial de l'Unesco* (Maison Carrée Unesco World Heritage Property Commission) is to develop relevant indicators and establish baseline data for reference.

ICOMOS considers that the information regarding the monitoring system is very rudimentary. No details have been provided on the physical elements of the monument, the state of which will be monitored, especially in relation to the identified threats. ICOMOS further considers that it is unclear how the proposed indicators, the majority of which are quantitative, will inform concrete actions.

ICOMOS considers that the *Charte de protection et d'utilisation de la Maison Carrée et de ses abords* should be promptly adopted once finalised to ensure relevant level of conservation and maintenance of the property.

ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system is further developed to encompass all the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and is conceived for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The *Maison Carrée* is a public property protected as a national historic monument since 1840 (*Code du Patrimoine*, art. L.621-1 to 33). Any modifications to its features or any restoration works need to be authorised by the Minister of Culture or its representative from the *Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles*. Prior authorisation from the *Architecte des Bâtiments de France* is required for changes to buildings situated within 500m from the monument and in its visibility zone.

Two regulatory protective mechanisms are in place for the buffer zone: *Site Patrimonial Remarquable* (SPR, under the *Code du Patrimoine*) with the related *Plan de Sauvegarde et de Mise en Valeur* (PSMV, under the *Code de l'Urbanisme*), and *Plan Local d'Urbanisme* (PLU) with its IIIUBb protection zone (under the *Code de l'Urbanisme* and the *Code de l'Environnement*).

The SPR, which covers the *écusson*, the *esplanade Charles-de-Gaulle* and the *square de la Couronne*, regulates land use. Any works inside this zone require the *Architecte des Bâtiments de France* authorisation in line with the PSMV that prescribes conditions of restoration of the existing buildings as well as construction of new ones. The same area further falls under the archaeological presumption zone of Nîmes, established by a zoning by-law, where any planned works must be consulted with the archaeological services of the City and an archaeological survey or excavations may need to be conducted before a new development can proceed.

The PLU, developed by the municipality, defines the rules of local governance, regulates land use and the architectural character of the place, while addressing the matters of heritage and landscaping. Zone IIIUBb created around the SPR reinforces the integration of the historic centre of Nîmes with the heritage of other epochs and the contemporary urban fabric. The IIIUBb zone foreshadows the planned extension of the SPR approved by the Municipal Council of the City of Nîmes in 2022.

In the additional information sent in November 2022, the State Party confirmed that the expanded SPR would cover the buffer zone of the nominated property and the zone IIIUBb, strengthening the existing protection of the monument.

Additionally, within the buffer zone, there are two areas protected as Sites under the *Code de l'Environnement* (art. L.341-1 to 22) – *Jardin de la Fontaine* with *quai de la Fontaine* and *Mont-d'Haussez*, and Historic Centre of Nîmes with *avenue Feuchères*. They cannot be destroyed or modified without the Minister of Culture authorisation. The historic monuments located inside the buffer zone are protected through the *Code du Patrimoine*.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated property is adequate.

Management system

The nominated property management remains at the local level, residing in the municipality of Nîmes and executed in collaboration with the *Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles*; *Direction Régionale de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement*; and the *Direction Départementale des Territoires*. The *Comité de Bien Maison Carrée Patrimoine Mondial de l'Unesco* has been established as a decision-making organ, chaired jointly by the Mayor of Nîmes and the Prefect of the Gard Department, accountable to the Minister of Culture. A Technical Committee, relying on the competences of municipal divisions responsible for sectoral policies, acts as an operational body to the Commission. The Committee of Scientific and Technical Experts – a multidisciplinary consultative group – gives advice to the Commission and the Committee.

In the additional information provided in February 2023, the State Party clarified that a community representative sits in the *Comité de Bien Maison Carrée Patrimoine Mondial de l'Unesco*, while members of cultural associations, local businesses and education bodies support the official management structure as part of the *Club Maison Carrée-Patrimoine mondial (Maison Carrée World Heritage Club)*, which includes the Mayor of Nîmes and representatives of the Nîmes Tourist Office. The Club members are seen as mediators, who can provide first-hand information on the quality of life and levels of hospitality around the property and in the city more broadly.

The management plan has been developed with a vision of preserving authenticity and integrity of the nominated property as well as expanding knowledge base and raising awareness about the *Maison Carrée* and its values. A twenty-one-point action plan, which is being implemented (to be completed by 2026), includes development of a research programme for the nominated property, drafting of the *Charte de protection et d'utilisation de la Maison Carrée et de ses abords*, and a review of the *Plan de Sauvegarde et de Mise en Valeur*. Tourism master plan (*Schéma directeur du Tourisme*) for the City of Nîmes is linked to the management plan and currently under review. An integrated risk management plan is in place, addressing key natural and technological threats to the property. Communal Safety Plan (*Plan Communal de Sauvegarde (PCS)*) was revised in 2021 to ensure that the safety procedures are relevant to the risks that the monument faces.

Financial resources for the management of the nominated property are jointly provided by the City of Nîmes and the relevant divisions of the local government (*Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles*).

ICOMOS considers that the management structure based on a cooperation of city services and local and regional partners is functional. The management plan considers the heritage values represented by the nominated property and the socio-economic urban context within which it is located. The risk preparedness strategy for the nominated

property is in place, supported by the PCS. A disaster/crisis management plan could further enhance protection of the integrity of the *Maison Carrée*.

Visitor management

The tourism master plan for the City of Nîmes is currently under review. It shall include measures to monitor the influx of visitors, put in place procedures to assess, manage and control visitor pressure on the monument, and create tours that would enable movement of tourists between the historic sites of the city.

The Tourism Office in Nîmes offers a number of programmes and thematic tours to raise awareness of the city's history. Architecture and Heritage Interpretation Centre assists visitors in learning about the history and the urban development, while the archaeological collections on show at the *Musée de la Romanité* enable visitors to appreciate the city's past. The museum plays the role of a liaison between the Roman monuments of Nîmes. In the *Maison Carrée* itself, the *cella* has been recently reorganised into an exhibition space.

ICOMOS considers that visitor management is well thought through. It takes into consideration the historical connections between the nominated property and other Roman monuments in Nîmes. A tourism strategy that is being prepared will integrate the principles of responsible tourism with the premises of sustainability.

Community involvement

The nomination has been widely discussed with local residents, education institutions, grassroots organisations, businesses and other stakeholders in a number of initiatives that aimed to raise awareness about the property. A continuous training plan to raise awareness among the municipal officials, such as enforcement officers, community service providers and all those who are in contact with the visitors, is being developed.

Representatives of the city residents, cultural associations and business-owners have a chance to share their opinions and discuss matters related to the protection of the nominated property and its future, including in relation to the development of tourism, in the frame of the *Club Maison Carrée-Patrimoine mondial*. The views elicited through the Club are considered in the preparation of development projects and the decision-making as part of the joint management process.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated property is adequate and the management structure is functional. The management plan has been developed around protection of heritage values of the nominated property while considering the socio-economic urban context within which it is located. A disaster/crisis management plan could further enhance protection of the nominated property.

6 Conclusion

ICOMOS considers that the most remarkable aspect of the *Maison Carrée* in Nîmes is the outstanding state of preservation of its structure and decoration, despite multiple reuses of the temple in the past. The commitment to the conservation of this property, which has undergone regular restorations since the 17th century to regain its original form, is particularly noteworthy.

ICOMOS acknowledges the effort made by the State Party in elaborating the nomination dossier. The analysis of the circumstances that brought the *Maison Carrée* to life is particularly meticulous.

ICOMOS considers that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated, according to criterion (iv), and the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met. ICOMOS recognises that the subterranean remains of the ancient forum which constituted the strategic setting of the *Maison Carrée* have been severely disturbed by urban developments over the years, hence the recovery of some of the authenticity of the original setting of the temple, which bestowed meaning on the edifice in relation to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, is no longer possible.

ICOMOS further considers that protection and management of the nominated property are adequate, and recommends adoption of the *Charte de protection et d'utilisation de la Maison Carrée et de ses abords* as soon as it is finalised.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the *Maison Carrée* in Nîmes, France, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criterion (iv)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The *Maison Carrée* is a pseudoperipteral hexastyle Corinthian-style temple erected in the 1st century CE in the forum of the Roman colony of *Nemausus*. It was dedicated to the prematurely deceased presumptive heirs of Augustus – Gaius and Lucius Caesar – who were accorded the title Princes of Youth (*principes juventutis*), through which the dynastic line of Augustus was sanctified and the edifice turned into a temple of imperial cult.

The strategic and symbolic position of the *Maison Carrée* in the forum in conjunction with other buildings that in the past hosted key political and religious institutions testify to the significance of the monument as a representation of the imperial authority of Rome in *Nemausus* and the protection of *domus Augusta* over the city and its citizens.

Through its architectural design that recalls key edifices from the Augustan period in Rome, and its symbolic decorative programme, the temple testifies to the moment of unification of the territory of Ancient Rome and the transition from republic to empire, which carried the promise of peace, prosperity and stability brought by *Pax Romana*.

Criterion (iv): The *Maison Carrée* is an early and one of the best-preserved examples of a Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult in the Roman provinces that testifies to the period of Rome's transition from republic to empire, reflecting the political system and the imperial ideology that underlay the process of consolidation of the territory conquered by Ancient Rome in the hands of Augustus. Through the historical circumstances of its construction in the Roman colony of *Nemausus*, its ideological significance as a place of imperial cult, as well as the symbolic architectural and decorative programme, the edifice manifests the values brought to the Roman Empire by *Pax Romana*.

Integrity

The key elements necessary to express the property's Outstanding Universal Value are included within its boundary. The structural and decorative elements of the temple have survived in their original form or have been restored with great attention to detail. The *cella* of the temple has no original elements preserved. The historic setting of the property within the ensemble of the forum has changed due to the evolution of the urban fabric of Nîmes over the years.

Authenticity

Restorations that the temple has undergone since the 17th century helped the *Maison Carrée* to recover its original form without major structural changes and to preserve its decorative elements. All structural elements of the edifice are original, with the exception of the roofing, the ceiling of the *pronaos*, and the *cella*. The materials are still largely original or closely resemble the original local ones. The authenticity of the strategic setting of the *Maison Carrée* within the space of the ancient forum has been lost. It can be partly appreciated through the form and design of the *place de la Maison Carrée*, which was created with a view of imitating the historical context.

Protection and management requirements

The property is legally protected as a national historic monument through the *Code du Patrimoine* (art. L.621-1 to 33). Regulatory protective measures apply to the buffer zone through *Site Patrimonial Remarquable* mechanism under the *Code du Patrimoine*, and the relevant planning documents and special zoning restrictions developed under *Code de l'Urbanisme* and the *Code de l'Environnement*.

The management structure is based on a cooperation of city services and local and regional partners. Management

of the property remains at the local level, in the hands of the municipality of Nîmes, and is executed in collaboration with the *Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles*; *Direction Régionale de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement*; and the *Direction Départementale des Territoires*. The *Comité de Bien Maison Carrée Patrimoine Mondial de l'Unesco* has been established as a decision-making organ, and a Technical Committee that relies on the competences of municipal divisions acts as its operational body.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Developing and implementing a Heritage Impact Assessment for development proposals, such as the project of pedestrianisation of *rue Auguste* or the redirection of traffic from *boulevard Alphonse-Daudet* and *boulevard Victor-Hugo*, if envisaged in the future, to evaluate their impacts on the property,
- b) Adopting promptly the *Charte de protection et d'utilisation de la Maison Carrée et de ses abords* once finalised,
- c) Developing further the monitoring system to encompass all the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value,
- d) Preparing a disaster/crisis management plan to enhance protection of the integrity of the property;

