
Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro (Spain) No 1618

1 Basic information

State Party

Spain

Name of property

Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro, a landscape of Arts and Sciences

Location

Municipality of Madrid

Inscription

2021

Brief description

The Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro is a cultural landscape that evolved since the creation of the tree-lined Paseo del Prado avenue, a prototype of the Hispanic alameda, in the 16th century. The avenue features major fountains and is surrounded by prestigious buildings. The site embodies a new idea of urban space and development from the enlightened absolutist period of the 18th century. Buildings dedicated to the arts and sciences join others in the site that are devoted to industry, healthcare and research. Collectively, they illustrate the aspiration for a utopian society during the height of the Spanish Empire, linked to the enlightened idea of democratisation of knowledge, and exercised major influence in Latin America. The Jardines del Buen Retiro (Garden of Pleasant Retreat), a remnant of a 17th century palace, constitutes the largest part of the property. The site also houses the terraced Royal Botanical Garden and the largely residential neighbourhood of Barrio Jerónimos with its rich variety of 19th and 20th century buildings that include cultural and scientific venues.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background

The Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2021 on the basis of criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi), without a buffer zone. This proposal relates to establishing a buffer zone for the property.

At the time of inscription of the property, the World Heritage Committee requested the establishment of “an adequate buffer zone according to the option provided by

the State Party on the basis of the Historical Centre in the Madrid General Urban Development Plan (PGOUM)” (Decision 44COM 8B.21).

The State Party submitted a state of conservation report to the World Heritage Centre in November 2022 indicating progress towards defining a buffer zone.

Modification

The area proposed by the State Party for the buffer zone of Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro is of 2.255 ha.

The proposed buffer zone is mostly achieved through the Special Protection Area APE 00.01 under the Madrid General Urban Development Plan. A smaller area in the south of the proposed buffer zone is part of the Historic Quarter of the City of Madrid, registered as a Site of Cultural Interest (BIC) in the category of Historic Site, declared under Decree 42/1995 of 27 April 1995. The Site of Cultural Interest is larger than the area included in the proposed buffer zone to the south, and overlaps the Special Protection Area.

The Special Protection Area surrounds the property to the north, east, part of the south, and to the west. The Site of Cultural Interest, which completes the proposed buffer zone to the south, is roughly a triangular area.

The boundaries of the proposed buffer zone follow a series of roads, the Manzanares river to the west and south and go along Parque del Oeste to the north west. The large railway complex of the Atocha train station is included to the south.

Protection for the proposed buffer zone is achieved through urban planning and Historic Heritage laws. The Special Protection Area is included within the Madrid General Urban Development Plan, an urban planning document with legal status. The Special Protection Area addresses the overlap of heritage and urban development protection. This protection includes visual points from and towards the property within the city. While some tall buildings pre-date the Madrid General Urban Development Plan of 1997, such developments are no longer allowed.

As the smaller area in the south of the proposed buffer zone is part of the Site of Cultural Interest area, it benefits from the highest possible level of heritage protection. The Historic Quarter of the City of Madrid and its protected environment are also included in the provisions of the Madrid General Urban Development Plan under the Special Protection Area APE 00.01, as the two areas overlap.

The proposed buffer zone is within the management of the City of Madrid and will be managed through similar mechanisms as applied to the property itself.

The proposed buffer zone adequately responds to the request of the World Heritage Committee to establish a buffer zone on the basis of the Historical Centre in the

Madrid General Urban Development Plan. The buffer zone extends in all directions around the property to include urban areas, parks and transport infrastructure. The extent of the proposed buffer zone around the property varies, and is relatively large to the north and west.

The western part of the proposed buffer zone might have been further extended to include the Parque de la Virgen de Puerto and Parque del Oeste. However, the considerable size of the proposed buffer zone to the west, about two kilometres to the nearest relevant point, and the park character of the adjacent areas, suggest that the current proposal is adequate. It is also understood that some of these park areas are not covered by Special Protection Area APE 00.01.

ICOMOS considers that the protection provided by the proposed buffer zone is adequate, being based on urban planning for the Historic Quarter of the City of Madrid and its protected environment, and Historic Heritage laws. For instance, tall building developments are no longer allowed.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed buffer zone for the Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro will contribute to add an additional layer of protection to the property and strengthen its management.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro, Spain, be **approved**.