

# GERMANY

## Cologne Cathedral

### Brief description

Begun in 1248, the construction of this Gothic masterpiece took place in several stages and was not completed until 1880. Over seven centuries, successive builders were inspired by the same faith and a spirit of absolute fidelity to the original plans. Apart from its exceptional intrinsic value and the artistic masterpieces it contains, Cologne Cathedral testifies to the enduring strength of European Christianity.

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription** 1996

**Years of inscription on List in Danger** 2004-2006

### Agency responsible for site management

- Cathedral Construction Administration (Dombauverwaltung)  
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Fürstenwall 25  
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### 2. Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** C (i), (ii), (iv)

- Change to criteria proposed: (vi)

### Justification provided by the State Party

In the course of its five thousand years of history, the European culture has been produced a variety of types of buildings. Yet two are without doubt of highest rank: in antiquity it was the Greek temple; in the Middle Ages and in modern times it was the Gothic Cathedral as developed in the 12th and 13th centuries in France. Relatively quickly the cathedral developed out of the Romanesque basilicas. Beginning with its first manifestation in Chartres (begun 1194), the form of the cathedral resulted in commanding buildings at Reims (1212) and Amiens (1220). Yet not until Cologne (begun in 1248) was

the height of architectonic expression of this form achieved.

No other cathedral is so perfectly conceived, no other is so uniformly and so uncompromisingly executed in all its parts, and no other is fully completed.

Therefore, the Cologne Cathedral marks the zenith of cathedral architecture and simultaneously its culmination. Thereafter the line of development ceased and no further attempt at enhancement was ever made. Therefore this building without any doubt belongs on the list of those monuments which represent the milestones of cultural achievement of mankind.

### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

In his Comparative Study of Gothic cathedrals, carried out for ICOMOS in 1988, the distinguished Swiss expert Professor Peter Kurmann identified four Gothic cathedrals in France, four in Germany, four in England, two in Italy, and two in Spain as being priorities for inscription on the World Heritage List. Of these, four are already inscribed on the List (Bourges, Reims, Canterbury, Seville) and three (Strasbourg, Siena, Lübeck) are also there as part of historic towns inscribed on the List. Cologne Cathedral heads his list for Germany. Of it he writes that "... it is not only, after the cathedrals of Seville and Milan, the third largest Gothic cathedral in the world, it is also in its way the most perfect Gothic cathedral. Begun in 1248, it was built in several stages in a spirit of complete faithfulness to the initial plan. As a result it exhibits perfect homogeneity."

### ICOMOS observations

The nomination dossier gave no indication of any buffer zone around the Cathedral, nor of town planning regulations in the city of Cologne. In its report, the ICOMOS expert mission made a specific proposal for a buffer zone. The State Party has accepted this proposal, and has also supplied information about planning protection.

### Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria i, ii, and iv:

Cologne Cathedral is an outstanding work of human creative genius, constructed over more than six centuries and powerful testimony to the strength and persistence of Christian belief in medieval and modern Europe.

**Committee Decision**

Bureau (June 1996): ICOMOS informed the Bureau that, since preparing the written evaluation of this nomination, it had received the exact delineation of the buffer zone and that it now recommended the inscription of this property. The Bureau recommended the Committee to inscribe the nominated property on the basis of criteria (i) (ii) and (iv) considering that the site is of outstanding universal value being an exceptional work of human creative genius, constructed over more than six centuries and powerful testimony to the strength and persistence of Christian belief in medieval and modern Europe.

Session (1996): the Committee decided to inscribe the nominated property on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii) and (iv) considering that the monument is of outstanding universal value being an exceptional work of human creative genius, constructed over more than six centuries and a powerful testimony to the strength and persistence of Christian belief in medieval and modern Europe. The Committee suggested that protective legislation should be set up which would ensure that new constructions around the property would be in conformity with the architectural significance of the Cathedral. The French Delegation emphasized the importance of the inscription of Cologne Cathedral which is justified not only for its medieval architecture but also for the restoration and completion of the work begun early in the 19th century. This recognition reflects the significance of present-day research on historicism.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- No change require

**Boundaries and Buffer Zone**

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: no buffer zone has been defined
- A buffer zone is being defined

**Status of Authenticity/Integrity**

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- The urban development of Cologne is planning some high rise buildings in Cologne-Deutz, which would impair the view of the Cathedral

**3. Protection****Legislative and Administrative Arrangements**

- No agreements, laws mentioned

Actions proposed:

- Establishing a buffer zone. Timeframe: February 2006. Action to be taken at regional and local level

**4. Management****Use of site/property**

- Religious use, unpaid visitor attraction

**Management /Administrative Body**

- Steering group: Cathedral Construction Commission - coordinating proper maintenance, establishing fundamental principles for dealings with the World Heritage site
- Legally constituted
- Management under protective legislation; management under contractual agreement between the State Party and a third party
- Site manager on full-time basis
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: regional, local
- The current management system is highly effective

**5. Management Plan**

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: January 1946
- Very effective
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Rhineland Regional Council (Landschaftsverband Rheinland), Rheinisch Office for the Conservation of Monuments (Rheinisches Amt für Denkmalpflege); the City of Cologne, Lower Authority for the Conservation of Monuments (Untere Denkmalbehörde); Cologne Regional Government Authority (Bezirksregierung Köln), Higher Authority for the Conservation of Monuments (Obere Denkmalbehörde); Ministry for Building and Transport of the Land North Rhine-Westphalia (Ministerium für Bauen und Verkehr NRW), Supreme Authority for the Conservation of Monuments (Oberste Denkmalbehörde); Cathedral Construction Administration
- By North Rhine-Westphalian law, it is the duty of the Rhineland Regional Council to support and advise the municipalities, districts, religious communities and private owners in the protection and care for historic and archaeological monuments. This task is taken over by two individual offices which are responsible for the maintenance of the many significant monuments, memorials and archaeological sites in the Rhineland

## 6. Financial Resources

### Financial situation

- State of North Rhine-Westphalia; Archbishopric Cologne; Metropolitan Chapter of Cologne Cathedral (Metropolitankapitel der Hohen Domkirche zu Köln); City of Cologne; Central Cathedral Construction Association (Zentral-Dombau-Verein); lotteries; donations; foundations and sponsors
- Extra funding has not been drawn from World Heritage status
- Resources from the Federal Environment Foundation (Bundesumweltstiftung); European Union
- Funding available for the adequate management of the site: sufficient

## 7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 83

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Very good: conservation, management, promotion, interpretation, education, visitor management

## 8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- The Cathedral Masons (Dombauhütte) serve as a centre for basic and further training in sculpture, stonemasonry, joinery and metalwork; internships are offered in the sphere of glass restoration. Furthermore in North Rhine-Westphalia and elsewhere in Germany there are training courses in restoration, archaeology, monument conservation, building research, art history and other disciplines. The Rheinisch Office for the Conservation of Monuments also has its own research and restoration workshop. In addition to the work carried out in its own workshops, the Cathedral Masons can also commission public and private services (restorers and specialist firms) for many specialist tasks

## 9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 9,000,000 in 2003 - tendency increasing
- Visitor facilities: Domforum visitor centre, Cathedral treasury, specialized tours in a number of languages
- Tourism/Visitor management plan ([www.koelnerdom.de](http://www.koelnerdom.de))

## 10. Scientific Studies

- Studies related to the value of the site, condition surveys, archaeological surveys, visitor management
- Scientific studies and surveys are the basis for or at least support all construction and restoration work, as research and pilot projects they often point the way forward for other monuments and World Heritage sites. This is particularly true of the conservation and restoration of historical glass paintings and medieval carved altars

## 11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses
- Need for establishment of bufferzone
- Special facilities for schools and young people
- No special events/exhibitions concerning the site's World Heritage status

### Education, information and awareness building activities

- Cologne Cathedral was part of the teaching and research project "UNESCO World Heritage sites as a way of communicating culture" in the Art Faculty of Paderborn University. As a result teaching materials were made available for use in lessons

## 12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

### Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Committee sessions: 27<sup>th</sup> (2003); 28<sup>th</sup> (2004); 29<sup>th</sup> (2005); 30<sup>th</sup> (2006)

### Conservation interventions

- Since 1998 work restoration to damaged statues and the decorations, glass paintings, altars and tombs. Access to the Cathedral was improved to avoid potential damage by visitors. Extensive reports on all the conservation and restoration work can be found in the annual cathedral construction report. The archaeological excavations under the Cathedral were secured by adding concrete ceilings thus making them accessible to visitors. Below the north-eastern section of the choir a new Cathedral Treasury was set up
- Present state of conservation: good

**Threats and Risks to site**

- Development pressure, environmental pressure, visitor/tourism pressure
- Specific issues if mentioned: the serious damage to the stonework and painted glass caused by 150 years of air pollution still require many years of restoration and conservation work. War damage, for example to the stained glass and the stonework finish has not been entirely repaired. The problems of wear and dust caused by the high number of visitors require more sophisticated solutions. Furthermore the visual integrity is threatened by the construction of high-rise buildings and the planning of further high-rise sites on the left and the right bank of the Rhine

**Actions taken:**

- Far-reaching conservation steps under supervision of the Cathedral architect and according to the management plan the Cathedral workshops are maintaining and monitoring continuously stonework, stained glass and works of art inside
- Establishment of a system of buffer zones
- Evaluation of the visual impact study

**13. Monitoring**

- Formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: regular reviews and tours of the site, regular maintenance of the fire and lightening protection and alarm systems
- EU research project: determination of conditions to prevent weathering due to condensation, particle deposition and micro-organism growth on ancient stained glass windows with protective glazing (Acronym: "VIDRIO")

**14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions**

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, economic, management
- Strength: the authenticity of Cologne Cathedral and its treasures has been entirely protected. The general level of conservation has improved and the level of research knowledge has increased. The Cathedral Treasury has been renovated. Public relations and awareness have been stepped up. Business and tourism have benefited from the positive image
- Weaknesses of management: lack of sensitivity on the part of local authorities concerning the surrounding area and the visual integrity of the Cathedral

**Future actions:**

- Safeguarding the surrounding and the visual integrity: establishment of a system of buffer zones, limiting use of the Cathedral square, reviewing the visual impact, increased consideration of Cologne Cathedral in urban planning
- Timeframe: 2008
- Activity does not require funding from World Heritage Fund