

ITALY

Historic Centre of San Gimignano

Brief description

'San Gimignano delle belle Torri' is in Tuscany, 56 km south of Florence. It served as an important relay point for pilgrims travelling to or from Rome on the Via Francigena. The patrician families who controlled the town built around 72 tower-houses (some as high as 50 m) as symbols of their wealth and power. Although only 14 have survived, San Gimignano has retained its feudal atmosphere and appearance. The town also has several masterpieces of 14th- and 15th-century Italian art.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription

1990

Agency responsible for site management

- Municipality of San Gimignano
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

Le Centre historique de San Gimignano est un bien culturel d'importance exceptionnelle, car il a gardé un caractère homogène sur le plan architectural et urbaniste. Il s'agit en outre d'un exemple remarquable d'architecture médiévale, dans les différents styles florentin, siennois et pisan pour période comprise entre le XII^e et le XIV^e siècle.

As provided in ICOMOS/IUCN evaluation

ICOMOS recommends the inclusion of the historic centre of San Gimignano on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria I, III and IV.

- Criterion (i). The historic centre of San Gimignano contains a series of masterpieces of 14th- and 15th-century Italian art in their original architectural settings, including: in the Cathedral, the fresco of the Last Judgment, Heaven and Hell by Taddeo di Bartolo (1393), the Martyrdom of St. Sebastian by

Benozzo Gozzoli (1465), and above all the magnificent frescoes by Domenico Ghirlandaio - the cycle of Santa Fina (1475), the Annunciation in the St. John baptistry (1482). Other works of the same outstanding beauty include the huge frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli depicting St. Sebastian (1464) and St. Augustine (1465).

- Criterion (iii). San Gimignano bears exceptional testimony to medieval civilization in that it groups together within a small area all the structures typical of urban life: squares and streets, houses and palaces, wells and fountains. The frescoes by Memmo di Filipuccio which the township commissioned in 1303 to decorate the chambers of the podesti in the Palazzo del Popolo are among the most frequently reproduced documents used to illustrate daily life, down to its most domestic details, of the early 14th century.

- Criterion (iv). Whereas the urban landscape of Florence, dominated by the towers of its public palazzos (Palazzo del Podestà and Palazzo della Signoria), shows that its public institutions prevailed over personal power - the height of family towerhouses was periodically reduced after 1250, in San Gimignano, whose incastellamento goes back to 998, the 14 towers proudly rising above its palaces preserve the look of a feudal Tuscan town controlled by rival factions ever ready for conflict. It illustrates a significant moment in history which is not found to the same extent in Florence, Siena or Bologna despite the quality of their monuments.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1990): The Bureau recommended that this property be included in the List and requested the Italian authorities to provide, before the next session of the Committee, assurances concerning the global conservation plan of the city and the safeguarding of the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, the Bureau recommended that the Italian authorities continue to combat the effects of increased tourism.

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: inadequate; the boundaries of the site are inadequate because loses the relation between the civilization of the towers with the tracks of the occupation of the territory. The new structural plan will enlarge the boundaries including the landscape related to the historic territory of the settlement
- Buffer zone: no buffer zone has been defined; further work needed; exist a local, provincial and regional planning of urbanistic and

landscape protection. A structural plan is under construction. This Plan extends the landscape protection to the areas around the historical centre

- Change to buffer zone proposed by State Party: The local, provincial and regional planning of urbanistic and landscape protection has developed until today the role of completion to the function of the buffer zone. Therefore it would be necessary to establish formally the boundaries of the buffer zone considering what appears from the regulations of safeguard. It is confirmed and enlarged the landscape restraint introduced with the town planning in the 50's which will include all the open territory around the city either the one that spreads from the historic centre until the new ring road or the one that has a significant relation with the ancient city. Take special measures for the acknowledgement of the cultural landscape through the town planning especially for what considers the typologies of the ground and its historic use, viability and the definition of the environmental systems and sub systems

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- Authenticity and/or integrity re-assessed: within the drafting of the town planning and the definition of the guiding lines of the direction planning of the site there are analyzed the values of authenticity and integrity still present in the site and the ways for their conservation. In particular it must be evaluated the impact of the flow of tourism and its repercussions on the use of the historic buildings in terms of hotel accommodations and commercial activities
- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The City of San Gimignano is part of the coordination Territorial Plan of the Province of Siena with measures of programming, safeguard and development on different scales. It is almost ready the new Town planning concerning the entire territory of the Municipality and the related building regulations and also a management plan for the historic centre with the possibility to enlarge the buffer zone. The historic centre is subjected to the protection national restraints to the senses of the L. 149/39 with D.M. 25.03.1965 G.U. n.97 of 17.04.1965. Furthermore the following regulations are operative: Regulation of the

limited traffic area (regulating the vehicular traffic in the historic centre); Detailed Plan of the historic Centre; Regulation of the Urban Signs; Regulation of the inside and outside tourist, commercial signs; Regulation of the Urban Waste Materials; Regulation of the Tax on the occupation of public properties and public areas; Regulation of the Antenna installation; Plan of acoustic classification; Electro Magnetic Monitoring; Structural monitoring of the towers. The city is also part of the project Survey of the dirt roads register

- The ancient medieval monastery of San Domenico constructed on the ruins of the Bishop's Castle; in 1787 it terminated its function as a monastery and first became a hospice, a firm and then a prison. The building today is not utilized at all since in the list of the state properties to be sold by the Ministry of the Economy. The complex occupies a tenth of the urban extension inside the historical centre and it is a very important element for the conservation of its identity and authenticity. The attention of the Administration is focused to define politics capable to invert this trend and to encourage the return of the residential use in the historic centre
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken/proposed:

- Dialog between the local Authority and the Ministry of the Economy to define the criteria of conservation, re-using and management of the former prison of San Gimignano

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Urban centre

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: As historical centre, the role of steering group is carried on by the City Administration that fully takes the responsibilities of the management together, for what concerns the protection, with the Siena Soprintendenza. The redaction of the management planning should also identify a specific body although being a historic urban centre the leading role will be reserved to the city Administration
- Management under protective legislation, under traditional protective measures of the public administration

- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; regional; local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

Actions proposed:

- Management and verification; Local management or arrangements with other local authorities to handle the things that are present on the territory. Periodical verification of the synergies between the resources and activities present on the territory

5. Management Plan

- Management plan under preparation. Timeframe: 12/2006

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State Budget at the local level; Province of Siena; Tuscany Region
- Funds of banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena
- European funds as DOCUP
- Sponsorships; private financing
- Insufficient

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 12

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

- Very good: conservation, management, promotion; interpretation; visitor management
- Average: education
- The administration has activated cooperation and consultancy to define the guiding lines to the management plan of the historic centre; University for the static monitoring of the towers; The tourist Board, APT and the provincial Administration for politics of tourist marketing; The Tuscany Region for the resolution of the problem connected to the former convent of San Domenico
- There are many associations that are very active on the territory and cooperate to the valorisation of the site

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

- Public Museum structures (Archaeological museum, museum of the Spezieria di Santa Fina, City palace, Picture Gallery, Great Tower, Ornithological Museum, Gallery of modern and Contemporary Art), private Museum structures (Medieval criminal Museum, Museum of the Witches, Historical museum of the Armour), libraries, research centres, formative centres, cultural services centres, tourist service centres; Museum of the wine
- Training needs : necessity for better formation for the local tourist guides, to treat more specifically the problems of the territory; to establish a new subject and a formation centre dedicated to these activities
- Training available to stakeholders

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 137.171 (arrivals and presences in the different structures of hospitality), 2003; 1.515.000 (analysis of the number of the cars registered in the parking lots), 2003
- Visitor facilities: The office of the tourist Board welcomes all the visitors in central piazza del Duomo. Centre of promotion of cultural activities, Tourist guides in the museums, guides tourist tracks inside and outside the historic centre, organization of cultural and folkloristic events

10. Scientific Studies

- Studies related to the value of the site; Monitoring exercises; Condition Surveys; Archaeological surveys; Visitor management; Transportation studies; Analysis of the tourist and commercial offer and demand; City Administration trade and tourism observatory
- Several studies on the value of the site, on monitoring the conservation status of the towers, on the electro-magnetic pollution, on the viability, on the analysis of the tourist and commercial, monitoring of the tourist flows, analysis of the tendencies of the tourism offer and demand
- Contest of ideas about the reuse of the former convent of San Domenico. Many studies have been advanced on the role of San Gimignano as a World Heritage site and on the danger caused by the selling to private investors the

building of the San Domenico thus endangering the authenticity of all the historic centre

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, local authorities
- Need for awareness raising: the designation as a World heritage site has been utilized as instrument of promotion and marketing but actually it doesn't have a role of sensitisation
- Special event concerning World heritage status: a day of studies or a meeting for the presentation of the management plan
- Web site available
- Local participation: set up concertation tables with the local economic categories, with the cultural associations and public meeting organized to discuss important choices for the city and therefore directly connected with the management of the site

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Interventions of restoration and maintenance, interventions of conservation on the main structures, Archaeological digging in the territory, urban park "Selva delle Torri", requalification of historical buildings, monitoring of the towers, promotion of cultural activities connected to the criteria acknowledgement in the WHL of the site to protect and to revive the anthropologic aspects connected to the culture of the city of the towers
- Present state of conservation: Needs more resources

Threats and Risks to site

- Environmental pressure, visitor/tourism pressure. The site could be affected by the building activity and the transformation of the use of the building to exploit the tourist flow. The protected area of the former prison and convent of San Domenico (about a tenth of the surface of the historical centre). Natural causes

connected to seismic phenomenon and the danger of the cliff which is in the risk of a sliding situation

- Specific issues: necessity of continuous monitoring of the tourist flow especially for what concerns the accommodation facilities. The entrepreneurial impulse must undergo to exact criteria of compatibility in terms of both quantity and quality through the protection of the rural and agricultural landscapes. The former prison should be included in the list of the properties to be sold on the free market due to the impossibility, because of the enormous costs, for the City Administration, to buy such a large area or even to influence the possible destinations of use or management of the former prison that could produce negative effects on all the historic centre of San Gimignano such as the conservation of the urban authenticity and social and economic effects
- Emergency measures taken: Coordination; trying to overcome the problems of the coordination between the management of the site by the State property and the management by the local authorities to be able to define what will be the future destination of use of the former prison of San Domenico or to acquire the area for a destination of public using with commercial and cultural activities connected to the traditional craftsmanship of the territory. The new management Plan foresees a future destination of use concentrated between the new owner and City Administration

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: In the new management plan it will be necessary the elaboration and the development of key indicators for monitoring the degree preservation of universal value of the site

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: there haven't been particular benefits
- Strength/Weaknesses of management: the inclusion of the former prison and convent of San Domenico in the list of the properties to be sold therefore evaluated following a market esteem and sold through a public action to find economical resources for the central Government with the great risk that such a

procedure favour parameters of profits instead of those of cultural fruition

Future actions:

- The acquisition of the former convent of San Domenico by the City of San Gimignano