
Historic Centre of Rome

(Holy See, Italy)

No 91quater

1 Basic information

States Parties

Holy See

Italy

(each according to its jurisdiction)

Name of property

Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in that City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura

Locations

City of Rome

Holy See

Inscription

1980, 1990

Brief description

Founded, according to legend, by Romulus and Remus in 753 BC, Rome was first the centre of the Roman Republic, then of the Roman Empire, and it became the capital of the Christian world in the 4th century. The World Heritage site, extended in 1990 to the walls of Urban VIII, includes some of the major monuments of antiquity such as the Forums, the Mausoleum of Augustus, the Mausoleum of Hadrian, the Pantheon, Trajan's Column and the Column of Marcus Aurelius, as well as the religious and public buildings of papal Rome.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

10 March 2023

2 Issues raised

Background

The Historic Centre of Rome was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980 on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi) and extended in 1990 to include extraterritorial properties of the Holy See in the area west of the Tiber River as far as St Peter's Square including the area up to the walls of Urban VIII.

The property has been inscribed on the World Heritage List without buffer zone.

Following discrepancies in the perimeter of the property resulting from this extension in 1990, the World Heritage Committee (Decision 39 COM 8B.43) approved a minor modification to the boundary of the

property in 2015, and requested the States Parties to submit an amended cadastral map showing the inclusion of the bridge Regina Margherita within the property boundary and the boundary of the area protected by the New Town Planning Scheme. It was also requested to clarify the total area of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. Following the submission of the requested documents by the State Party in 2015, the approved boundary of the inscribed property is 1,468.17 ha of which 1,430.80 referring to the Historic Centre of Rome and 38.90 ha to the Holy See.

The Periodic Reporting exercise of 2014 – section II mentioned the need for the establishment of a buffer zone.

The States Parties have taken steps to define a buffer zone around the property with the establishment of a Technical Scientific Committee pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between the Municipality of Rome, the Lazio Region, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, the Vicariate of Rome, and representatives of the Holy See in 2009. The Technical Scientific Committee was mandated to prepare the management plan for the property and engaged in preliminary studies to define a buffer zone as part of this assignment.

In 2015, the Transboundary Coordination Group was created after the signature of a memorandum of understanding between Italy and the Holy See, consolidated with a second memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, the Lazio Region and the Municipality of Rome approved by Rome's Government in 2017. The Transboundary Coordination Group initiated the process of validation of the proposed delineation for the buffer zone, and this was approved by the Technical Scientific Committee in 2015.

In 2020, a buffer zone proposed by the Transboundary Coordination Group was submitted as a minor boundary modification, together with a Technical Report which detailed the extensive background studies that had been carried out.

This proposal covered an area of 5,893.83 ha including 5,887.09 ha under the jurisdiction of Italy and 6.74 ha under the authority of the Holy See.

The World Heritage Committee referred back the proposal to the States Parties in its decision 44 COM 8B.55:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/21/44.COM/8B and WHC/21/44.COM/INF.8B1,
2. Refers the proposed buffer zone of the **Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in that City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura, Holy See and Italy**, back to the States Parties in order to allow them to:

1. Consider extension of the proposed boundary of the buffer zone based on further examination of the conceptual and physical interconnections between the property and its immediate setting,
 2. Provide further details on the mechanisms in place in the proposed buffer zone to assess the impact of development projects on the World Heritage property,
 3. Indicate how and when the delimitations of the proposed buffer zone will be transcribed into existing local and national regulations in order to provide a statutory status to its boundaries;
3. **Recommends** that the States Parties complete the Management Plan of the World Heritage property urgently.

Modification

The revised minor boundary modification that has been submitted seems to cover an area of 7,158.933 ha including 7,152.193 ha under the jurisdiction of Italy and 6.74 ha under the authority of the Holy See. These figures will have to be confirmed because it seems that there is an error in the determination of the area in hectares of the buffer zone in the minor boundary modification request.

This revised boundary has been delineated as a response to the requests for an expansion of the perimeter in certain key areas, in particular in the areas of Ponte Milvio, the Garden City, Tuscolano, and the Appia Antica Park. It has been drawn to reflect the following criteria: archaeological and visual intervisibility continuity; main access roads, visual cones and panoramic points; railway belt; villas and historic parks; Tiber River; fabrics of the General Urban Plan (GUP); main areas of urban transformation; and areas necessary to service the property.

It has also adopted an Historic Urban Landscape approach; used existing protection measures which are considered adequate; acknowledged regeneration projects in "Transformation areas" defined under the General Urban Plan (GUP); and respected the principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), Goal no.11.

The proposed buffer zone boundary has been extended to the north, north-east, south-west, west and south-west as follows:

To the north around the Ponte Milvio

The boundary has been extended beyond Piazzale Ponte Milvio to an area which represents the historic entrance to Rome from the north, demonstrating a direct cultural interconnection with the property. It now includes:

- The Olympic Village and the Flaminio district, an important area of urban transformation as well as a new cultural district;

- The Park of Tor di Quinto to the north of the Tiber, and the Villa Glori, Villa Ada and Villa Borghese to the south of the Tiber;
- The area around the Acqua Acetosa sports facilities and the Islamic Mosque in Rome;
- The districts of Pinciano and Parioli to the east of Viale Tiziano (between Villa Glori, Villa Ada and Villa Borghese);
- The catacombs of Via Salaria and Via Nomentana.

To the northeast around the Garden City

This boundary has been extended to reflect some of the main roads connecting the city with its hinterland, such as Via Salaria, Via Nomentana, Via Tiburtina, as well as two main railway junctions, Termini and Tiburtina Stations. It now includes:

- Trieste district with Villa Chigi, Parco Virgiliano, Villa Leopardi and Villa Blanc the mausoleum of Santa Costanza and the Basilica di Sant'Agnese fuori le Mura;
- The Garden City district, the Aniene Park and Nomentano Bridge;
- The Nomentano district with Villa Torlonia and Villa Paganini and the Macro Museum;
- The Tiburtino and San Lorenzo districts with the monumental complex of Verano (Monumental Cemetery) and the Sapienza University.

To the south-east around the Tuscolano quarter

This area encompasses Porta Maggiore, the first section of the consular roads (Via Casilina and Via Prenestina) and the historical-monumental route of Via Appia Antica, as well as two of the main road axes from the south-east that connect with Ciampino airport (Via Tuscolana and Via Appia Nuova). It now includes:

- The western part of the Pigneto district and the Appio Latino district;
- Torre del Fiscale Park;
- INA House buildings;
- Northern part of Appia Antica Regional Park and Appia Antica Archaeological Park, tombs of the Via Latina, Caffarella, Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella, Circus and Villa of Massenzio, and the Tenuta di Tor Marancia;
- Catacombs of San Callisto, Domitilla and San Sebastiano.

To the south-west

This area is crossed by the River Tiber and also by the important functional access routes from the south (Via Cristoforo Colombo and Via Ostiense, Viale Guglielmo Marconi) and includes the railway junctions of Rome-Lido, Ostiense and Trastevere Stations. It now includes:

- The Garbatella district;
- The Ostiense district, with its areas of urban transformation also linked to the presence of important buildings of industrial Rome on both sides of the Tiber (Centrale Montemartini, Gasometer, Teatro India ex Mira Lanza Factory) and the Roma Tre University, which has restored and re-used part of the industrial fabric;
- The Necropolis of San Paolo, Oratorio di San Paolo, Via Baldelli and Via Colossi buildings (Hospital Bambino Gesù).

To the west

This area includes the historical axes of Via Trionfale and Via Aurelia Antica and important axes of connection with the Large Ring Road (G.R.A. Grande Raccordo Anulare). It now includes:

- The districts of Monteverde Vecchio and Monte Mario;
- The area of Porta Portese and Viale Trastevere;
- Villa Doria Pamphilj Park and Pineto Urban Regional Park/Pineta Sacchetti;
- The Aurelio, Prati, Balduina, Trionfale and Vittoria districts;
- The area of the Foro Italico with the Central Tennis Stadium and the Olympic Park.

The States Parties acknowledges the constant anthropogenic pressure which the property faces. The identification of a buffer zone is seen as essential for the full protection, conservation and enhancement of the property and to allow control of development, particularly interventions likely to impact the skyline of the property and/or its integrity.

The elaboration of the buffer zone has offered the opportunity for a new reflection on how structural, visual and socio-economic aspects outside the property can be linked to it, and how the buffer can contribute to the protection of the integrity and authenticity of the urban setting, the protection of the urban skyline and the promotion of sustainable development of the property.

To achieve these objectives, it is considered that the existing protection, that includes the National Laws, Holy Law, Regional Laws, the Regional Landscape Territorial Plan (PTPR), and Rome General Urban Plan (GUP), is adequate.

What remains unclear is whether and how the proposed buffer zone will be transcribed into existing local and national regulations and thus how existing current instruments and tools will be used to ensure the buffer zone offers an effective additional layer of protection for the Outstanding Universal Value of the property in relation to new developments, and in particular in the

“Transformation areas” defined under the General Urban Plan (GUP).

Although it is stated that the establishment of the buffer zone is part of an organic and well-established platform for analysing and monitoring the conservation status of the property, what has not been clarified is how the overall management structure of the property relates to the buffer zone.

The Transboundary Coordination Group, which was set up to define the buffer zone, has now been tasked with monitoring the conservation status of the property and its buffer zone according to the provisions of the World Heritage Convention; evaluating conservation-related issues of the property; examining management methods according to the highest scientific standards; examining any action that could jeopardise the Outstanding Universal Value of the property; and issuing general recommendations on best practices.

The Transboundary Coordination Group is also mandated to identify and invite additional parties in order to develop, on a case by case basis, solutions that protect the property. The Group is thus a key instrument in monitoring the protection of the buffer zone, and includes representatives of all the authorities involved in the management of the property.

Quite how the Transboundary Coordination Group relates to the management of the property is unclear as no management plan has yet been finalised. The Group was mandated to draft the management plan and it is stated that the boundaries of the buffer zone will be included in the strategies identified in the plan, but no details have been provided on its progress or status.

Overall, ICOMOS welcome the detailed and analytical response of the States Parties to the request of the World Heritage Committee to extend the proposed buffer zone, and considers that what is now proposed is of suitable size to reflect both the complexity and substance of the immediate setting of the property and the interrelationship between the two. The criteria defined and used to inform the boundaries have set out clearly how the buffer zone supports the property.

While ICOMOS welcomes the extended mandate of the Transboundary Coordination Group to include a monitoring role for the buffer zone, it considers that the management structure for the buffer zone should be linked to that for the property in order that the buffer zone can be managed for how it supports the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

The absence of a finalised management plan still remains an important issue as it should supply the link between the property and its buffer zone. ICOMOS reiterates its view that the management plan, which has been under preparation since 2006, need to be completed as a matter of urgency.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone of the Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in that City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura, Holy See, Italy, be **approved**.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the States Parties give consideration to the following:

- a) Completing the management plan of the property as a matter of utmost urgency, and submitting it to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS,
- b) Submitting details of how and when the delimitations of the proposed buffer zone will be transcribed into existing local and national regulations in order to provide a statutory status for its boundaries,
- c) Integrating into the management mechanisms, a systematic application of Heritage Impact Assessment for any plan and project that may impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.