

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 550

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Historic Centre of San Gimignano

Location : Tuscany

State Party : Italy

Date : 1 September, 1989

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That this cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria I, III and IV.

C) JUSTIFICATION

In the Val d'Elsa 56 kilometers south of Florence lies the town of San Gimignano, whose walls and fortified houses form an unforgettable skyline, in the heart of the Etruscan landscape.

San Gimignano was a relay point on the Via Francigena for pilgrims journeying to and from Rome. Originally under the jurisdiction of the bishops of Volterra, it became independent in 1199 when it acquired its first podestà. The free town, known as "San Gimignano delle belle Torri" (San Gimignano of the beautiful towers), entered into a long period of prosperity that lasted until 1353, when it fell under the sway of Florence. In 1262 an enceinte, later reinforced with five cylindrical towers, girdled the small town within its 2,177-meter perimeter. The town was controlled by two major rival families - the Ardinghelli, Guelph sympathizers, and the Salvucci, Ghibellines - and was the scene of incessant conflicts between the two clans. Seventy-two tower houses 50-meters high were built, symbols of their wealth and power. Of these, fourteen have survived, including the Cugnesi house on the former Via Francigena (Via San Giovanni); the Pesciolini house on the Via San Matteo, on the Via del Castello, in the town's oldest quarter, the Palazzo Franzesi-Ceccarelli house, whose unsymmetrical facade ingeniously circumvented the law of 1255 which stipulated that no new residence should be wider than 12 armspans for a linear depth of 24 armspans.

The town grew around two principal squares, the Piazza della Cisterna and the Piazza del Duomo. The triangular Piazza della Cisterna is ornamented with a lovely well (1273) that stands in the centre. The piazza is bordered by towerhouses: the twin towers of the Ardinghelli on the west, the tower of the Benuccis, the Casa Rodolfi and the Palazzo Razzi on the south, and the Palazzo dei Cortesi on the north.

The Piazza del Duomo has a more intricate layout that took form in the late 13th century. The majority of public and private monuments are found here. On the west, is the Collegiata of Santa Maria Assunta. On the east is the former palace of the podestà (1239), which was transformed into an inn (1358), then a theatre (1537) and today is unused; the Torre della Rognosa and the Torre Chigi are also on this side. The Palazzo del Popolo stands on the south along with the Torre Grossa (1288-1300) which rises to 54 meters and faces the twin towers of the Salvucci on the north.

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 podestà 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, Sienna or Bologna despite the quality of their monuments.

ICOMOS observations

Well aware of the exceptional quality of San Gimignano, ICOMOS should like to make three remarks regarding the future management of this cultural property:

- 1) The implementation of the 1983 town plan must not lead to the creation of reinforced protection zones intra muros, the full preservation of the whole constructed part of San Gimignano's architectural heritage is an absolute necessity which cannot accommodate any kind of selectivity.
- 2) The heavy tourist influx noted at San Gimignano every summer must not be taken to imply a need for additional infrastructures (nearby parking lots, hotels and restaurants, public restrooms) that may alter the beauty of the site.
- 3) Protection must be extended to include the Contado, which, even though isolated in the farmlands of the Val d'Elsa is an integral part of the fortified town's visual and historic aspects.

ICOMOS, April 1990



— LIMITE DEL COMPARTO DI INTERVENTO



ALLEGATO E - Elenco degli immobili sottoposti a vincolo storico/artistico.

Inmobili sottoposti a vincolo storico/artistico ai sensi della L.N. 1089/1939.



Inmobili assimilati ai precedenti ai sensi dell'art. 4 della L.R. 21.5.80 n. 59.



Inmobili inseriti nell'elenco degli edifici monumentali redatto dall'Ispettorato scavi di antichità e monumenti.



Vue d'ensemble de San Gimignano /
General view of San Gimignano



San Gimignano:
Vue depuis l'arrière du Palazzo
Pubblico /
San Gimignano:
View from the rear of the Palazzo
Pubblico