

# ITALY

## Historic Centre of Siena

### Brief description

Siena is the embodiment of a medieval city. Its inhabitants pursued their rivalry with Florence right into the area of urban planning. Throughout the centuries, they preserved their city's Gothic appearance, acquired between the 12th and 15th centuries. During this period the work of Duccio, the Lorenzetti brothers and Simone Martini was to influence the course of Italian and, more broadly, European art. The whole city of Siena, built around the Piazza del Campo, was devised as a work of art that blends into the surrounding landscape.

### 1. Introduction

**Year(s) of Inscription** **1995**

#### Agency responsible for site management

- Municipality of Siena  
Piazza del Campo 1  
53100, Siena  
Tuscany, Italy  
E-mail: [sindaco@comune.siena.it](mailto:sindaco@comune.siena.it)  
Website: [www.comune.siena.it](http://www.comune.siena.it)

### 2. Statement of Significance

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

#### Justification provided by the State Party

For its architectural and urban features, the historic centre of Siena is a testimony to the creativity of man, and a concrete expression of his artistic and aesthetic capacity. This strong and personal example of artistic civilization has had a great cultural influence throughout the territory of the Sienese Republic and also in Italy and Europe particularly in the 13th and 14th centuries.

In particular, architecture, painting, sculpture and town planning were exported culturally to neighbouring territories. The very structure of the city and its development, interrupted over the centuries but united in design, offers a rare example of the Italian city during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

#### As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

**Qualities:** The historic Centre of Siena has preserved its Gothic appearance over the centuries. This continuity of the Gothic style is explained by the wish of the Sienese to conserve this characteristic architecture as the cultural identity of the city. They have doubtless wished to distinguish Siena from Florence, where Renaissance architecture flowers. More recent interventions on certain monuments, such as the Palazzo Pubblico and the Palazzo Sansedoni, have respected the established criteria. In this Context, the 19th century restoration movement is more related to the renewal of arts and traditions than pure restoration. The restoration work of Giuseppe Partini in the 1870s in the Piazza Salimbeni fits well into the continuity of the "Gothic Dream" that Siena represents.

Siena is a characteristic urban space whose origins lie in the evolution of the town in the 12th and 13th centuries. The city in its entirety is treated like a monument.

**Recommendation:** That this property be inscribed on the world Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), and (iv):

Siena is an outstanding medieval city that has preserved its character and quality to a remarkable degree. Its influence on art, architecture, and town planning in the Middle Ages, both in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, was great. The city is a work of dedication and imagination, in which the buildings have been designed to fit into the overall planned urban fabric, and also to form a whole with the surrounding cultural landscape.

#### Committee Decision

**Bureau (July 1995):** 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 as a medieval city having preserved its character and quality to a remarkable degree. Its influence on art, architecture, and town planning in the Middle Ages, both in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, was great. The city is a work of dedication and imagination, in which the buildings have been designed to fit into the overall planned urban fabric, and also to form a whole with the surrounding cultural landscape.

**Session (1995):** The Committee decided to inscribe the property on the basis of criteria (i), (ii) and (iv), considering that Siena is an outstanding medieval city that has preserved its character and quality.

The city is a work of dedication and imagination in which the buildings have been designed to fit into the overall planned urban fabric, and also to form a whole with the surrounding cultural landscape.

- Statement of significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- No change required by State Party

#### **Boundaries and Buffer Zone**

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- No buffer zone has been defined; further work needed
- Town planning instruments and restrictions for the conservation of the historic, architectural, and landscape heritage, conceived according to aims and purposes analogous to those recommended by UNESCO. The Structural Plan, the other town planning instruments currently in effect (Town Planning Regulations, Functions Plan, Color Plan) and the combined whole of all these regulations represent an effective instrument for the protection, conservation, and compatible development of the territory:
  - The Structural Plan constitutes the overall strategic design which forms the base for the operative urban planning projects. The preparation of a preliminary general informational picture is close to conclusion; it furnishes, among other things, a system of indicators for the evaluation and control of the environmental variables, predisposed according to the DPSIR method adopted by the European Environment Agency. The plan is constructed favouring economic and functional criteria over traditional bureaucratic criteria. Furthermore, the adoption of a participatory approach, along with attention to the processes of cooperation between public and private subjects, has led to the consideration of innovative solutions, for example, for the planning and management of green space. Imitating the concept of a buffer zone, the Plan also aims to extend the status of historic centre to certain areas adjacent to but outside the city walls.
  - The Town Planning Regulations (governed by art. 55, L.R. 1-2005) control town planning and building activities for the entire municipal territory. This represents the normative aspect of the General Urban Plan

#### **Status of Authenticity/Integrity**

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

- The city has remained outside the large development areas designated in Italy. The number of inhabitants has remained relatively low and corresponds to that of the medieval period; it has not led to large-scale urban extensions. The environs of the city have been subjected to only small-scale interventions, among them the planning of a residential area, a hospital, and a small railway station. These projects have been planned in such a way as not to disturb the relationship with the landscape to be found in famous 14th century paintings. The authenticity of the urban fabric of the historic city with its main architectural groups is undeniable

### **3. Protection**

#### **Legislative and Administrative Arrangements**

- Siena has adopted "modern" urban planning tools since 1931. The Structural Plan for the municipal territory and relative town planning regulations are in preparation in order to adapt existing norms and conservation restrictions, outdated by now, to current needs. The entire historic centre is subjected to national conservation restrictions under law no. 1497/39 by ministerial decree of 25/03/1965 and is largely subject also to the restrictions on monuments formerly governed by Law 1089/39 (now Legislative Decree no. 42/04). Also in force in the historic centre are a series of more specific regulations and preservation plans to answer to particular aims:
  - General Urban Plan: regulates building activity in the municipal territory, identifies new buildable sites, areas where no building is allowed, and the existing buildings to be protected, preserved, and maintained
  - Plan for the distribution and localization of functions
  - Color plan
  - Plan for the installation of prefabricated kiosks;
  - Plans for the rationalization of commerce both in shops and sidewalk vendors
  - Plan for the management of structures for publicity and advertising
  - Regulation of limited-traffic zone
  - Regulation of solid waste management
  - Regulations for the installation of antennas
  - Acoustic classification plan
  - Electromagnetic monitoring
- Special law for Siena: this is a special law that allows the City to grant financial contributions or tax breaks for the rehabilitation and restoration

of buildings and the facades and roofs of buildings located in the historic centre

- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

Actions taken/proposed:

- Gathering together into one law all the regulations and restrictions governing the historic centre would enable anyone to operate smoothly on the site, respecting the conservation criteria imposed by any level of the public administration; using the services of professionally qualified personnel, the aim is to gather together all the rules, regulations, and specific plans that govern all the activities carried out in the historic centre of Siena, to analyze all these texts in order to identify possible areas of contradiction, overlap, or lacunae, and to rewrite new regulations taking into account existing rules, adding to or correcting these on the basis of the findings

#### 4. Management

##### Use of site/property

- Urban centre

##### Management /Administrative Body

- Management by the State Party, under protective legislation, in accordance with laws concerning conservation
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national, regional, local. The Contradas: these are 17 associations of free citizens with their own hierarchical structure, which have divided the historic centre into districts since the Middle Ages; they organize the social life of the Sienese people and the PALIO, the city's most ancient traditional festivity
- The current management system is sufficiently effective

#### 5. Management Plan

- Management plan under preparation
- Implementation commence: 12/2006
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: City of Siena

#### 6. Financial Resources

##### Financial situation

- State Budget; Province of Siena
- European DOCUP funds

- University, local banks, the Monte dei Paschi di Siena Foundation; private financing
- Some of the unsatisfied needs concern the maintenance of public and private buildings and streets, and the management of museums, theatres, and cultural activities in general, due to insufficient financing. This lack of money limits activities in these sectors
- The municipal administration commits itself to finding the necessary funds through sources of public financing, forms of private financing, co-projects, and public-private financing at a local level
- Insufficient

#### 7. Staffing Levels

- Since the site is an inhabited and vital historic city centre, numerous activities are supported in whole or in part by volunteer work, including social, recreational, and cultural initiatives, all important and worthy of note, but the form of volunteer work par excellence, which has enabled Siena to hand down its own special historical and cultural identity for centuries, is unquestionably the work done for the Palio

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

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

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

- Available to the personnel working in the site are museums, libraries, research centres, training centres, cultural service centres, tourist service centres, schools, and universities. These structures fall within the sphere of the City of Siena, the University, and the Superintendent of Monuments of the Provinces of Siena and Grosseto
- Training available for stakeholders

#### 9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 372,000 (statistics by the Provincial Office of Tourism and the Chamber of Commerce), 2002
- Visitor facilities: visitor welcome centres; tourist offices; hospitality structures of various levels and categories; food providers of various levels

and categories; characteristic artisan workshops; centres for the promotion of cultural activities; tour guides for general city tours and individual museums, guided tourist itineraries; organization of cultural and folklore events; easy-to-use Internet systems and digital media points providing useful information

### 10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment, studies related to the value of the site, monitoring exercises, archaeological surveys, visitor management, transportation studies, verification of the state of conservation
- Numerous studies have been made on the value of the site (historical, artistic, archaeological, sociological, and anthropological); studies exist on the monitoring of the state of conservation, on the underground cavities, the water system, the measurement of electromagnetic pollution, and on roads and traffic patterns; other studies concern the analysis of tourist demand and commercial offerings, monitoring of tourist influx, and analyses of the trends in tourist demand)
- Widespread awareness of the value of the site has led to greater respect for it and for its most characteristic elements. Evaluation of the flow of tourists has conditioned the system of traffic, parking, and public transport; this same analysis has evidenced the need to spread the tourist influx over all the seasons of the year by attempting to arrange the calendar of events to differentiate the offerings during the course of the year

### 11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem is not used on publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: local authorities
- Need for awareness raising: greater use of the logo on locally produced articles and souvenirs; direct or indirect concession of grants to increase and improve protection of the site
- Web site available
- Local participation: many steps have been taken to involve local people in the management of the site which should produce results in the future

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

#### Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

#### Conservation interventions

- Major conservation interventions at the site are:
  - Cleaning and restoration of the facade of Town Hall
  - Restoration of the Cappella di Piazza
  - Restoration of the Logge del Papa
  - Restoration of the Siena Cathedral
  - Restoration of historic fountains
  - Restoration of the Logge della Mercanzia
- New and sustainable uses for historic buildings Archaeological sites; Maintenance and conservation of facades; Fibre-optic cables under the streets of the city center to eliminate roof antennas
- Present state of conservation: Good

#### Threats and Risks to site

- Natural disasters; visitor/tourism impact;
- Specific issues: the Siene territory was designated an earthquake-prone area in 1983; the national classification system assigns to this area a risk of medium- to low-intensity seismic events. Italian legislation, in line with European legislation, provides for a number of sufficiently effective actions and structural verifications to be adopted in every instance of construction work involving the load-bearing structures of buildings. As for the risk resulting from the human presence, the intense pressure of tourists requires constant monitoring, especially in terms of hospitality structures. The entrepreneurial spirit must be subordinated to precise criteria of compatibility both in terms of quantity and quality through a policy of protection of the city's characteristic traits
- Emergency measures taken: Risk of earthquakes: a specific law is in force requiring all the buildings on which structural work has been done to meet standards of protection and safety

### 13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: in the Management Plan currently being drawn up, it will be necessary to work out and develop key indicators for the monitoring of the gradient of conservation of the universal value of the property

#### ***14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions***

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation; social
- Strengths/Weaknesses of management: essentially two weak points have been identified which most affect the site: 1) the intense pressure caused by the influx of tourists concentrated in just a few months of the year; 2) the progressive abandonment of the historic centre by the resident population

#### **Future actions:**

- Tourist flow: a policy has been enacted aimed at spreading the phenomenon over the entire year by offering different cultural events throughout the year. Organisation responsible: City of Siena. Timeframe: 1 year
- Depopulation of the historic centre; with regard to the depopulation of the historic centre, political programs are being studied to maintain the residential destination of the buildings and to lower the price of housing. Organisation responsible: City of Siena. Timeframe: 3-5 years