

ITALY

Historic Centre of Naples

Brief description

From the Neapolis founded by Greek settlers in 470 B.C. to the city of today, Naples has retained the imprint of the successive cultures that emerged in Europe and the Mediterranean basin. This makes it a unique site, with a wealth of outstanding monuments such as the Church of Santa Chiara and the Castel Nuovo.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1995

Agency responsible for site management

- Municipality of Naples
Manager of the Service Valorisation of the historical city
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (ii), (iv)

Justification provided by the State Party

Within Naples, Historic centre, S. Chiara conventual complex's cloister summarizes the characteristics of numerous other cloisters in town, proposing a regular square space, enclosed and autonomous. It is a space opened up inside a built insula that is separated from the rest of the urban space outside, but easily connectable through internal links. It is, then, an architectural space which affects the urban texture and cannot be extrapolated from the Historic centre area without changing its identity. Said space presents characters of exceptionality for the invention of the majolica tile decorations with naturalistic motifs placed on the octagonal pillars and on the seats, among the cloister's flowerbeds from which it results a particular mixture among elements of architecture, of Nature and two-dimensional decorations which compose an "unicum" where is it hard to define what is real and what is fake.

Even Alfonso of Aragon's Arch in Castelnuovo can be considered an exceptional masterpiece, for its

peculiar position between two towers in piperno at the entrance of the castle, for its dimensions, for the quality of the relief which compose it and for their artistic perfection, for the extraordinary synthesis of a unique gigantic palimpsest composed with the contribution of different artistic schools, styles and cultures, each individual with its specific characteristics. The arch merges sculpture and architecture in an urban dimension. The precious relief which, at a close view tell the story of Alfonso's triumphal entrance to Naples, with the details of the central area, the personages, their costumes, seen at distance become a surface with light and shade effects, permeable to the light, filter between the town and the castle's courtyard, and it recalls the Classic tradition of Roman Triumph Arches for its celebrative role. In the same complex, the Barons' Hall, by Guillermo Sagrera, is an almost cubic space with a ribbed wedged octagonal vault, whose ribs is directly linked to the sheer walls of the room and converges to a central "eye". This space is exceptional, too for the intermingling of two cultures - Gothic and Classic ones - which cohabit keeping their own peculiarities, merging in one single masterpiece. The Barons' Hall is a sort of "resonance box" for the echoes and for those suggestions given by all the classic examples of Roman architecture, like the Therms of Baia of the Pantheon, and by the plains structures of the Gothic-Catalan architecture. Moreover, if the Hall constitutes a part of Castelnuovo Complex, it is an "urban" fact of outstanding nature, no wonder that it gets used, nowadays, as Town Council Briefing-room.

The particular position of those two masterpieces, within said monumental complex, rich of many other elements, makes the Castle as a whole a unique element in the History of the town and an emblematic symbol synthesis of the past centuries, meeting place of different cultures, politic and representative knot to be considered beyond its identity itself and its geographic position, on an absolute level of importance.

The quoted examples may be considered meaningful of a series of situations very common in the Historic centre of Naples, where subsequent interventions, without cancelling the characteristics of pre-existing elements, create spatial situations absolutely unique and unrepeatable which transcend their physical dimension to merge indissolubly with the town. That is to say that without them the town would loose some essential traits of its identity. For those unrepeatable characteristics, easy to found at different registers, the considered area falls within criterion (i).

The oldest part of the town, corresponding to the what so called Neapolis, founded in the 5th century B.C. by Cumaean colonizers, is still evidenced by the grid composed by plateiali and steopoi, (renamed by the Romans decumani and cardines) which creates perpendicular rectangular blocks.

Naples is a highly stratified town that often shows ruins of different periods standing close each other, as underneath the church of S.Aniello a Caponapoli, where Greek walls stand next to "opus reticulatum" walls of a Roman house.

Other elements evidencing the various cultures occurred in Naples are the walls and the towers along via Cesare Rossarol and via Marina, the surviving town doors, belonging to Angevin and Aragonese urban organisation, later widened by the Spanish. Lastly, a situation which still persists, evidencing a precise historic moment is the Spanish Quarters layout.

For such a complex of elements, the Historic centre of Naples falls under criterion (iii) (specifically for the area of Neapolis relative to Greek and Roman civilization) and under criterion (iv). It falls under criterion (iv) also for the quarters area, for the town walls and doors. Moreover, for the numerous examples of 18th-century domestic architecture, that is those "open stairs" which constitute a very original solution of space, playing, from one side, the role of stenographic filter between the narrow urban space of the alleys and the backyards, seen from the palaces entrance and the courtyard. From the other side they are evidence of an artisan tradition and of a taste which present a synthesis of decorative and spatial aspects through the realization of very high quality products.

Both the Greek-Roman structure and the whole urban stratification with all the copious remains lying under present buildings constitute an exceptional example of organism, jeopardized by an irreversible debasement, and illustrate a significant step in the History of "Magna Grecia" where same urban patterns are recorded. For those characters, evident both in the central part of the oldest nucleus (Neapolis) and along the coast of Posillipo through the presence of Roman villas ruins, Naples Historic centre falls under criterion (v).

Naples Historic centre, moreover, is studded by religious presences which link the whole urban texture to Catholic world. In such a context particular relevance enjoy S.Januarius's Catacombs, extra moenia, of the second century A.D. and S.Gaudio's ones. The former rich of suggestions for the presence of Pre-Christian painted decorations. They date back to the second

century A.D. and probably were originated by the presence of a previous gentile tomb which was later donated to the Christian community of the town and turned into the official cemetery and worshipping centre after the depositions of S.Agrippino, famous bishop of Naples (3rd-century.), on whose tomb a basilica was erected, and later (5th-century.) of S. Januarius. The Catacomb became object of pilgrimage and hosted the remains of Duke/Bishop Stephanus (decease. 830 A.D.), of Duke Stephanus III (decease. 832 A.D.), and of Cesario Console (decease. 878 A.D.). Between 762 and 764, during the iconoclastic fighting, it was the seat of Bishop Paulus II, impeded to enter the town where the Byzantine party was in majority. His splendours decreased when in 831 Sicone, Prince of Benevento, stole S.Januarius' relics and moved them to Benevento. Toward the first half of the 9th-century Bishop S.Johannes IV moved into the cathedral the remains of his predecessors, but he was, as his successor S.Attanasius (877), deposed in the catacomb which, for the while, was not abandoned. Evidence of that is supported by the painting executed during the 9th and probably even during the 11th century; but, starting from the 13th to the 18th-century the catacomb saw only devastations and pillages.

The latter, more recent, developed around S.Gaudio's tomb, which deceased between 451 and 452 A.D. At present it survives only a little portion of the complex.

For the elements indicated above Naples Historic Centre falls under criterion (vi).

Considering the nature of the property, let alone its dimensional characteristics, it is not possible to compare it with other similar properties, confirming in this way its unique character.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Qualities

Naples is a city of great antiquity with an historical trajectory that has seen it exposed to a very wide range of cultural influences, all of which have left their traces in the city's urban fabric and its architecture.

Comparative analysis

It is difficult to identify a city or cities with which Naples might be compared. Its cultural roots are so completely different from those of any other Italian city that comparison would be worthless. It is equally difficult to equate Naples with other major Mediterranean cities such as Barcelona or Marseilles. Uniqueness is a quality that is hard to

define, but Naples seems to come very close to having it, however defined.

Recommendation

That this Property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv).

Naples is one of the most ancient cities in Europe, whose contemporary urban fabric preserves the elements of its long and eventful history. Its street pattern, its wealth of historic buildings from many periods, and its setting on the Bay of Naples give it an outstanding universal value without parallel, and one that has had a profound influence in many parts of Europe and beyond.

Committee Decision

Bureau (July 1995): The Bureau recommended the Committee to inscribe the nominated property on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv), considering that the site is of outstanding universal value being one of the most ancient cities in Europe, whose contemporary urban fabric preserves the elements of its long and eventful history. Its street pattern, its wealth of historic buildings from many periods, and its setting on the Bay of Naples give it an outstanding universal value without parallel, and one that has had a profound influence in many parts of Europe and beyond.

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- No change required

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: adequate
- The buffer zone protects moreover the site integrity, already preserved by the rules of the town-Planning and by the national legislation of protection, as the new General town-planning 2004 extends the historical centre to a wide surrounding city portion, extending therefore the protection rule of the fabric of the city and of the historical-architectonic heritage to all the constructions built before the second post-war period

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- The town plan has a high level of authenticity: evidence of the Graeco-Roman city and the checkerboard layout of the 16th century Spanish Quarters is clearly visible at the present time. Many public and private buildings also retain absolute authenticity in terms of their function in the plan and their relationships with one another, as well as authenticity in their spatial, volumetric and decorative features. There is also remarkable authenticity in the use of materials
- The main cause – possible more than expectable – that could affect authenticity, but above all integrity of the site it's of course the taking place of an anomalous earthquake event regarding the historical series

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The protection of a huge historical centre like that one of Naples derives above all from the translation of protection in norms and rules and from the exercise of the control of their observance. Substantially the entire normative apparatus of protection can be subdivided in two macro categories:
 - a) instruments of protection for the whole historical center
 - b) instruments of protection of single monuments
 - a) The main specific norms for the protection of the entire historical center are: 1. Piano regolatore General (town planning) approved in 2004; 2. Urban Plan of the transports) approved of in 1997; 3. General Plan of city traffic in 1997 update in 2000-2004; 4. Street Rules approved by The City Council in 2001; 5. Main Street Plan approved by the City Council in the 2000; 6. Commercial plan approved in the 2002; 7. Relocation of the systems of distribution of fuels, petrol pump.
 - b) The protection of single monuments (united to the fight to the unauthorized buildings) is done from the State and specifically from a decentralized organ of the Ministry for the Assets and the Cultural Activities. For the protection of architectonic assets legally bound and for projects of restoration of assets of historical-artistic interests, considering that the entire territory of municipality of Naples is classified between the

seismic zones, are used the following instruments:

1) Circular n.1841 of the 12/3/1991 of M. BB.CC.AA.: "Directives for the writing and the execution of plans of restoration include anticipations of a seismic improvement and maintenance of the architectonic complexes of historical value - artistic in seismic zone"

2) Min.LL.PP Circular. 10/4/1997 n.65/AA.GG.: "Instructions for the application of the technical Norms for the constructions in the seismic zones of which to D.M. 16/1/96, C.9.1.2. Point participations of improvement for the buildings of monumental character"

3) Technical Norms for the writing of the relative plans of restoration you to the architectonic assets of historical value - artistic in seismic zone. Through the authorizations emitted to the senses of articles 21 and 22 of the D. lgs. 42/2004, Code of the Cultural Assets and the Landscape, it is possible to value the coherence of the restoration projects with the scientific and methodological criteria of the Superintendence. Actually just in the historical centre of Naples were bound 798 private and public buildings and ope legis local authorities' buildings

- Enforced town planning (PRG/2004) extends the protection to all the building until according to post-war period, disciplining the participations with performance norms that preview for the historical centre the integral conservation
- The protection arrangements are considered highly effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Urban centre

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group: the initiatives will be able to come out from the work group created for the writing of the report during preparation of the Plan of Management
- The management of the city in its complexity involves all the institutions in charge of the protection with some subjects more specifically engaged
- 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: Plans and integrated activities predisposition finalized to the development and the valorisation of the hole site

5. Management Plan

- Management plan under preparation; timeframe: 12/2006

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State Budget
- State Funds from the Ministry for Cultural heritage and activities assigned to the competent superintendence; European Union Funds, Cassa depositi e Prestiti loans; regional funds; funds assigned to the Regional Operative Programs; budget allocation of each Local Authority
- Sufficient
- Considering the huge heritage widespread in the historical centre of Naples, it's important to increase the funds assigned to the protection and to the conservation, which currently derives only by budgets of the subjects institutionally interested

7. Staffing Levels

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

- Average: conservation, management, promotion, interpretation, education, visitor management
- The site extension and its articulated composition would demand the availability of many qualified human resources, actually insufficient. However it has to be considered that the city of Naples offers great professional scientific and technical competences, many of which specialized in the disciplines and the activities linked to the protection, valorisation and promotion of the site
- During past years, with the introduction of the voluntary civil service in place of the military service, many institutions participated to the volunteers assignment call for tenders

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

- The requirement of a more and more specific education in the field of cultural heritage conservation, management and communication is also perceived by the increasing of university course offer specialized in these fields, by Universities of studies of Naples Federico II, "Parthenope", "l'Orientale" and "Suor Orsola Benincasa"
- Training available to stakeholders

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 2.271.842 (data supplied by the Tourist Provincial Authority of Naples that monitored the presences in hotel exercises and extra hotel), 2004
- Visitor facilities: The historical centre of the city of Naples has numerous information point distributed on the territory and managed by different authorities. Moreover the Municipality has been equipped of mobile info-point which assists the tourists. Services paper Naples Artec card supplies to the tourist and the citizen a preferential access to rate reduced to museums, city transports and cultural services of the city. The Site can be moreover visited with City Sightseeing Naples. By the information point and the museums information centres is available free literature in more languages. By the main museums is present book-shop, buffet service and tourist assistance only in the largest museums

10. Scientific Studies

- Risk assessment; Studies related to the value of the site; Monitoring exercises; Conditioning surveys; Archaeological surveys; visitor management; transportation studies
- On the site is concentrated the attention of all the universities and cultural institutions both on high level and school one. The quality and the deepening on the different thematic concerning the Site are therefore very high and it's also important to highlight the scientific contributions of other institutions and national and international scientists. Studies on seismic risk and volcanism. From monitoring of the atmosphere and consequent studies on the problem of the atmospheric pollution, have been programmed specific participations in the field traffic and practicability, like the creation of

pedestrian areas, zones to traffic and limited pause etc. Great part of the studies of the architectonic and artistic field concerns the topics of the analysis, safeguard, recovery and conservation of the historical heritage of the site

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 authorities
- Need for awareness raising: more information and publicity
- It has been found, as a result of interviews carried out by the operating information point, that the designation of World Heritage site has surely influenced the choice of the destination from the foreign tourists. In opposition such information has resulted not so much famous to the Italian tourists and the same residents
- Web site available

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Committee sessions: 25th (2001)

Conservation interventions

The interventions realized had conservative character not only of the city and the monumental complexes, but also of the single pieces of real estate

- Present state of conservation: Patchy

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure; environmental pressure; natural disasters
- Specific issues: The main risk of natural origin are the seismic and the geologic one, deriving from the presence of Vesuvio, and from its activity condition, as well as the tufa formation of the hills that encircle the historical centre of Naples. In addition to these it has to be considered the problems linked to the atmospheric pollution and the strong density of population in the historical centre. It's remarkable also problems of social economical nature caused by the high rate unemployment that determine micro crime phenomena and lack of confidence in the institutions. An ulterior factor of risk is due to the difficulty to take part

on the programming of the necessary maintenance operations of the private building heritage; to this it has to be added the problem of the ancientness of the under services (sewer system, net of adduction of the gas, etc.) that sometimes, as a result of strong alluviums or other exceptional events, causes damage to the street net and infrastructures

- Drawing up a specific management plan for the Site; organisation responsible: All bodies and administrations currently involved in management of the Site; co-ordinator of the action: Municipality of Naples; timeframe: by the end of 2006

Emergency measures taken:

- Geologic seismic risk; continuous monitoring of the Vulcan activity of the Vesuvio
- Geologic seismic risk; monitoring of the cavities and tufa ridge of Naples
- Environmental risk; dispositions for traffic regulation
- Social economic Risks; C.U.O.R.E. project (Operative City Centres of Economic Redevelopment)
- Social economic risks; incentives for handicraft activities' financing and allocation of lending facilitated or without security for the opening of new enterprises
- Impoverishment risk of private planning heritage SIRENA project

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring program: it is carrying out studies finalized to the location of the specific indicators which express the peculiarities of the city of Naples

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation; management; more care for the protection and valorisation of the site
- Strength/Weaknesses of management: besides the weakness already indicates like risks between which those of natural origin (seismic and geologic), the problems linked to the atmospheric pollution, to the strong density of population in the historical centre or the problems of socioeconomic nature, a factor of weakness for the management of the site is represented from the lack of adapted economic resources

Future actions:

- Fund raising activities; organisation responsible: Municipality of Naples, Province of Naples; Regional Authority of Campania. Timeframe: ongoing