

ITALY

Historic Centre of the City of Pienza

Brief description

It was in this Tuscan town that Renaissance town-planning concepts were first put into practice after Pope Pius II decided, in 1459, to transform the look of his birthplace. He chose the architect Bernardo Rossellino, who applied the principles of his mentor, Leon Battista Alberti. This new vision of urban space was realized in the superb square known as Piazza Pio II and the buildings around it: the Piccolomini Palace, the Borgia Palace and the cathedral with its pure Renaissance exterior and an interior in the late Gothic style of south German churches.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1996

Agency responsible for site management

- Municipality of Pienza
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2. Statement of Significance

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

Justification provided by the State Party

Pienza is a unique and original example, with its architectural and city-planning characteristics, of a city designed and constructed according to the canons of the purest Italian Renaissance. Its urban structure, exemplified in particular in the extraordinary creation of the Pius II Piazza, and its architectural monuments represent an unsurpassable achievement of the creative genius of Bernardo Rossellino who put into practice the teachings of his master, Leon Battista Alberti (supreme theorist and architect of the Humanistic culture with Classical antecedents). Even though these buildings were inspired by the common denominator of Renaissance architecture, they appear very different in relation to the principal functions for which they were intended (see: the

Duomo, Piccolomini Palace, Town Hall, New Houses “Case Nuove”, etc.).

One of the most singular characteristics is the constant presence of the graffito decorations of the facades, which gives certain uniformity to the urban fabric of Pienza and which indicates the desire to confer a new dignity on a city which gave birth to a pope.

Pienza, like projected city, can find comparison with other Italian towns like Mantova, Ferrara, Urbino, which during fifteenth century were object of deep transformation.

The result reached in Pienza by the creative genius of Rossellino, in particular in the disposition of the buildings around the Square, has similitude in other projects: we can find some references to specific architectonic experiences, in particular with the German culture that the same Pius II recalled in his “COMMENTARI”.

In fact it is known the community of ideas between the Pope and the Cardinal - Philosopher Nicola Cusano (1401 - 1464) that can be considered as the German pedant of Enea Silvio Piccolomini.

Cusano founded in 1458 in his birth place, Cues sulla Mosella, the Hospital of S. Nicola that the Pope Pius II put under the protection of the Holy See, with the bull of the 2nd of January, 1459.

Yet nowadays the Institute exists, it gives hospitality to elderly men and it keeps the library of the founder. The architectonic complex, of cloistral type, is yet included in the mediaeval tradition and it does not reveal anything of the conceptions which found expression in Pienza.

Nevertheless the tie with the German gothic tradition is present in the conception of the cathedral of Pienza that the Pope wanted expressly like the Hallenkirchen of the late gothic period in Southern Germany that he admired during his travels.

The students, in this case, have recognized stylistic recalls with the buildings of Hans Stethaimer at Landshut, at Neuotting and at Straubing, with the Hallenkirchen of Norimberga and Vienna, with the church of Otmar at Modling and with the parish church of Gumpelskirchen. Perhaps the ideal city, to which the Pope is inspired in his project of Pienza, is Augusta that yet in fifteenth century it was one of the wealthiest of the Germany and which the Pope praises in his “COMMENTARI” especially for the comfort of the houses.

This city of mediaeval plant like Pienza was remarkably transformed in the first decennia of

sixteenth century by Jacob Fugger, banker of Carlo V and of Leone X that exercised in Augusta a primacy like the Medici's one they have in Florence.

In the church of S. Anna he made the building of the family's chapel, in 1511 he made the building of the Fugger's palace along the Business Street of the old city and near the town walls he made the building of a grandiose "Villa" with a garden.

In 1514 Jacob Fugger promoted the last amplification of the mediaeval city in the suburb of S. Giacomo where he made the realization of the Feggerei, a quarter of 106 popular houses in group, surrounded by a wall and supplied with same services, a fountain, a school and a church.

This complex, like the Dutch Beguinages, was done for working class families; it finds an unusual comparison with the initiative of the Pope Piccolomini who wanted the building of 12 popular houses in Pienza.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Qualities: Pienza is an excellent example of the small Tuscan hill town, whose roots go back to antiquity. Its special significance lies in the fact that it was the first material realization of the Renaissance "ideal city," as conceived by Alberti and the Humanist circles around the court of Pope Pius II in the mid 15th century. As such it had a profound influence on subsequent developments in Italy and beyond. It also preserves its relationship with its surrounding traditional agricultural landscape to a very high degree.

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

The historic centre of Pienza represents the first application of the Renaissance Humanist concept of urban design, and as such occupies a seminal position in the development of the concept of the planned "ideal town" which was to play a significant role in subsequent urban development in Italy and beyond. The application of this principle in Pienza, and in particular in the group of buildings around the Central Square, resulted in a masterpiece of human creative genius.

Committee Decision

Bureau (June 1996): 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 it represents the first application of the Renaissance Humanist concept of urban design, and as such

occupies a seminal position in the development of the concept of the planned "ideal town" which was to play a significant role in subsequent urban development in Italy and beyond. The application of this principle in Pienza, and in particular in the group of buildings around the central square, resulted in a masterpiece of human creative genius.

Session (1996): The Committee decided to inscribe the nominated property on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii) and (iv) considering that the site is of outstanding universal value as it represents the first application of the Renaissance Humanist concept of urban design, and as such occupies a seminal position in the development of the concept of the planned "ideal town" which was to play a significant role in subsequent urban development in Italy and beyond. The application of this principle in Pienza, and in particular in the group of buildings around the central square, resulted in a masterpiece of human creative genius. The Committee also congratulated Italy for having chosen rather than a selective lecture of the Convention, a global and diversified approach reflected by nominations illustrating all heritage categories and bearing witness to the link and interaction of cultures over a long period.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- No buffer zone has been defined
- A ministerial decree defends a 593 hectares large zone since 1970. The protected sites are signed by specific lists of notification and by land plans maps. These policies preserved the scenic qualities of landscape around the historical centre. Pienza is part of the Val d'Orcia Natural and Cultural Park. The park is a World Heritage site too, since 2004. The principal goals of the park management are natural and cultural protection, so the same park is a buffer zone around the site of Pienza

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained
- The site had no strong change which might have an impact in the future on the authenticity and/or the integrity of the site

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The municipal territory of Pienza has been planned by the coordinating land plan of the Siena Provincial Authority. The plan has policies about the landscape and historical sites conservation and the local communities' development. The Pienza Municipality is planning the local land plan. A program for the development of the local commercial network with connections to the touristic opportunities is active. The main actions are two, both in the historical centre of Pienza: the natural commercial centre and the biological alimentary products of the Val d'Orcia. The Municipality promulgated some urban regulations for the historical centre conservation: about the pedestrian zone, the radio and TV antennas, the commercial sign-boards, the goods exposition along the streets, the buildings with historical graffiti
- The protection arrangements are considered sufficiently effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Urban centre

Management /Administrative Body

- The municipality of Pienza has been signed as management subject in the plan of the site (study in progress). So a steering group may be an expression of the management policies
- Site manager with responsibilities added to an existing job
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national; regional; local
- The current management system is sufficiently effective
- Management under protective legislation

Actions proposed:

- Coordinating; strategies and actions coordinating between the most important subjects of site management

5. Management Plan

- Management plan under preparation; timeframe: 12/2005
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and

monitoring its effectiveness: Municipality of Pienza Technical Office

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- State Budget; Municipality
- Monte dei Paschi Foundation; cultural associations
- European Union
- Insufficient

7. Staffing Levels

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

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

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

- It is possible to use specialized competences in the museum exhibitions, cultural and tourist services, and, besides, of links with University of Florence Research Institutes
- Training needs: Is worth to note the necessity of a more accurate training of the local tourism personnel direct towards the improvement of the reception ability of the place. For that it would be helpful to promote activities and skill development courses geared in that sense, even by choosing a place to arrange for these activities

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 22.333 (Data from the Provincial Tourism Agency on Local Tourist System of Val di Chiana Senese. Were assumed the arrivals as indicator instead of the number of presences because the scarce possibility of night reception in the ancient core), 2003
- Visitor facilities: tourist office, a restricted number of reception structure for sleeping, organized tours, internet point
- Visitor needs: it would be necessary to improve extra urban transport, to ease the trips of the visitors that are accommodate in the country outside Pienza

10. Scientific Studies

- Studies related to the site, monitoring exercises, condition surveys, archaeological surveys, visitor management, transportation studies
- Studies and research activities on the historic centre conducted by University of Florence. Raphael project for the graffito facades recovery. Studies on the monument and figurative arts. Geological studies about monitoring of the steadiness of the slope in collaboration with University institutes. Anthropological researches on the long period identity and on the belonging sense of the inhabitants in relation to the tourist flows. Retail revitalization plan, and of local products promotion. Tourist demand and retail supply analysis; monitoring of the situation about the tourist flows and of the tourist demand flows
- It is not still defined a coordination program between the different aspects of the various studies and researches, nevertheless from the researches and studies results achieved until now is emerging an resources lack for the start up of preservation and protection of the site processes (the graffito facades recovery, the consolidation of the slope), in joint with the appreciation of the peculiar features of the site (revitalization of the retail and tourist supply of the site, and identity recovery of the historic centre inhabitants)
- Up to now the studies has scarce relationship with the acknowledgment of the good as exceptional world value. The activation of peculiar skills specialized on the restoration works and protection of the historic centre goods through formation courses in agreement with University structures, govern department responsible for monuments and artistic treasures and specialized agencies –BASS- (as Raphael project) Is in close relationship with the concept of preservation of the recognized values of world heritage of the good

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
- The World heritage designation has been utilized as promotion and marketing tool, but up

to now it hasn't played a peculiar role in this sense

- Meetings between the local administration, stakeholders associations and citizens for the presentation of the managing plan during the definition period, according with the leading principle of participation to the process of construction of the plan itself
- Local participation: Some forums of agreement with the local stakeholders associations and with cultural, environmental and youth associations had been set up, and public meetings had been organized in occasion of important choices for the town and therefore straight related with the site management

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Structural and decoration restoration of the historical centre main buildings
- Present state of conservation: Good

Threats and Risks to site

- Visitor/tourism pressure; geological evolution
- Specific issues: Under the point of view of natural risks there is the menace of landslide in the slope hill area. About the risks related to the human presence, the high pressure due to tourist flows needs of a continuous monitoring about the reception caring capacity and on the relation with the local population, especially to preserve the original social cohesion and characteristics of the site. About the local area economic development is important to underlie the risks related to modern agricultural assets and soil treatment, insect, although the presence of the Orcia valley park, there aren't specific compulsory rules to preserve the peculiar tissue and arrangement of the historical landscape. The entrepreneurial impulse has to respect specific criteria of compatibility both in quantitative and qualitative terms, through the protection of the rural landscape features
- Emergency measures taken: Site plan; Planning of the policies and the action for the site management

13. Monitoring

- No formal monitoring programme
- Measures taken/planned: In the construction of the site management plan is foreseen the elaboration and the development of some strategic project for the development and promotion of the site. Inside such projects there will define key indicators aimed to the monitoring of the level of the universal value of the good and of the effectiveness of the protection and promotion policies adopted

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: it is not possible at the moment to appreciate the benefits, because the site was yet well known for its historical, artistic excellence
- Strengths/Weaknesses of management: the ancient core structures need of continuous maintenance and control for keeping integrity. The geological problem of the zone, in particular for the apse cathedral zone, need of strengthening structural works. The tourist management system needs of the improvement both for the reception system and for the transport network. An improvement of the reception system and of planning and organization of cultural events has to be addressed to the make longer the stay time of the tourists. The trendy rise of the estate value, with a commercial tourist specialization of the ancient core, could lead to a drastic reduction of inhabitants of the centre itself

Future actions:

- Protection of the site: Promoting the preservation of historical architectonic goods, of the typological features, of the materials and details quality of the buildings in the ancient centre (graffito facades). Organisation responsible: Municipality of Pienza. Timeframe: 2010
- Research and development of the humanistic values: Promoting the creation of a cultural cluster for the development of the aspects related to the humanistic-renaissance conception of the town and to the World Heritage sites; Organisation responsible: Municipality of Pienza. Timeframe: 2010
- Development of the liveability and of the social dimension for the historical core: Promoting the creation of a tourist system that could join the site to the surrounding territory. (revitalization of

the retail system, of the reception system and development of cultural activities related to the territory) Organisation responsible: Municipality of Pienza. Timeframe: 2010

- Recovery of the architectural and landscape features typical of the site: Starting up of initiatives for the best characterization of the urban fringe of the historical centre and for the improvement of the relationships of squares and streets through the utilization of materials and finishments according with the urban characters of the historical core. Organisation responsible: Municipality of Pienza. Timeframe: 2010
- Tourist development and promotion for socio-economic activities compatible to the site: Promoting sustainable forms of tourism respectful of the fragility of the site, through the protection of the historical, landscape, cultural values related to the historical local tradition. Organisation responsible: Municipality of Pienza. Timeframe: 2010