

# The Attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Property:

The case of the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama\*

Katti Osorio Ugarte

Architect, specialist in World Heritage Studies,

*kat.osorio.u@gmail.com*

**Keywords:** World Heritage, Outstanding Universal Value, attributes criteria.

## Summary

All the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List hold Outstanding Universal Value and are irreplaceable pieces of the cultural and natural legacy of Humanity. The Outstanding Universal Value may be apprehended by means of the justification of the criterion of outstanding universal value assured to be present in a given World Heritage property. These criteria contain the attributes of outstanding universal value whose definitive loss supposes delisting from the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Even though the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is only part of the proposal for inscription forms since 2005, each nomination is based upon the justification of the criteria of outstanding universal value from the beginning. The World Heritage property Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and the Historic District of Panama was inscribed in 1997 and extended in 2003. This paper analyzes and outlines the attributes of outstanding universal value of the property according to documents concerning the statement, which are available at the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO.

---

\* Submitted: March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – Approved: May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

**Palabras clave:** Patrimonio Mundial, Valor Universal Excepcional, atributos, criterios.

## Resumen

Todas las propiedades inscritas en la Lista del Patrimonio Mundial poseen Valor Universal Excepcional y constituyen piezas irreemplazables del legado cultural y natural de la humanidad. El Valor Universal Excepcional puede apreciarse mediante la justificación de los criterios de valor universal excepcional que el bien asegura poseer. Estos criterios contienen los atributos de valor universal excepcional, cuya pérdida definitiva supone la salida de la Lista del Patrimonio Mundial de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO, por sus siglas en inglés). Aunque la Declaración de Valor Universal Excepcional solo es parte de los formularios de propuesta de inscripción desde el año 2005, cada nominación está basada en la justificación de los criterios del valor universal excepcional desde el principio. La propiedad del Patrimonio Mundial, Sitio Arqueológico de Panamá Viejo y Distrito Histórico de Panamá, fue inscrita en el año 1997 y extendida en el 2003. Este escrito analiza y delinea los atributos del valor universal excepcional de la propiedad según la documentación relativa a la misma, disponible en el Centro del Patrimonio Mundial de UNESCO.

The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, also known as the World Heritage Convention, was established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1972. From 1931 with the Athens Charter<sup>1</sup>, and especially since the end of the World War II, events on a global scale led to a special interest in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage as a unique treasure that is the inheritance of all human beings. The Constitution of the United Nations (UN) was created after the end of World War II in 1945 and it was implemented in October of that same year (UN 2012), with Panama as one of its State Parties. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was created on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1945. Its primary mission as reflected in its Constitution is:

“... to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations” (UNESCO 2012a: 8).

In 1948, the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the equality of all human beings without distinction. These efforts to leave behind the horrors of war and discrimination laid a foundation on which to build peace, based on the assumption that all men and women in their condition of equality have equal rights and duties as citizens of the world and that no culture is superior to another.

A number of international charters and policy documents were the next step aimed at preserving the testimony of the passage of man through the world. The Venice Charter (1964), the creation of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the standard-setting instruments<sup>2</sup> developed by UNESCO, among which are:

---

<sup>1</sup> The Athens Charter, adopted at the First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments gathered in the city of Athens in 1931, recommended that, “in the construction of buildings, the character and external aspect of the cities in which they are to be erected should be respected, especially in the neighbourhood of ancient monuments, where the surroundings should be given special consideration. Even certain groupings and certain particularly picturesque perspective treatment should be preserved. A study should also be made of the ornamental vegetation most suited to certain monuments or groups of monuments from the point of view of preserving their ancient character.” (Athens Charter 1931: 183).

<sup>2</sup> The Standard-Setting Instruments are recommendations by means of which, “the General Conference formulates principles and norms for the international regulation of any particular question and invites Member States to take whatever legislative or other steps may be required in conformity with the constitutional practice of each State and the nature of the question under consideration to apply the

Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding of Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites (1962); Recommendation concerning the Preservation of Cultural Property Endangered by Public or Private works (1968); Recommendation concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), which was the direct predecessor of the World Heritage Convention that same year, and the Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas (1976). The influence of these standard-setting instruments is shown in the wording of Law 91 of December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1976, which defined the following Panamanian legal terms: historic monuments group, historic monument, and national park. It [this law] also created and regulated the historic monuments groups of Panama Viejo, of Portobelo, and of the Historic District [Casco Antiguo] of Panama, as well as Portobelo National Park.

The World Heritage Convention recognizes mankind in a unitary and universal manner, accepting that the cultural and natural heritage of every people belongs to all mankind as a whole and therefore their damage or loss negatively affects all their heirs, which are all mankind. The World Heritage Convention introduces the term *outstanding universal value* (OUV), referring to the outstanding interest in certain irreplaceable heritage assets. Each one is part of a collective treasure of universal influence over human beings and their environment, as pieces that help to articulate places and events that constitute World Heritage.

The World Heritage Convention established the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the Cultural and Natural Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value, also called, *World Heritage Committee*. This Committee establishes the World Heritage List, and the List of World Heritage in Danger. Its secretariat is the *World Heritage Centre*, based in Paris, France. The advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee are: the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972 was approved by Panama in its full text by Law 9 of October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1977 and was ratified by Panama to UNESCO on March 3, 1978.

---

principles and norms aforesaid within their respective territories” (UNESCO 2012b: 117). These are norms which are not subject to ratification but which Member States are invited to apply. The recommendations are intended to influence the development of national laws and practices.

## Outstanding Universal Value today: What it is about

The OUV has no precise definition in the text of the 1972 Convention. The manual for the application of the Convention of 1972, namely *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* of UNESCO (2008)<sup>3</sup>, presents the following description in paragraph No.49:

### “Outstanding Universal Value

Outstanding universal value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all Humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole. The Committee defines the criteria for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List” (WHC 2008:16).

## The quality of OUV

The quality of OUV is an essential prerequisite for inscription on the World Heritage List of UNESCO. It is required to this end that the nominated property meets at least one of the ten criteria of OUV described on the *Operational Guidelines*. The cultural properties contemplate criterion (i) to criterion (vi), and natural properties, criterion (vii) to criterion (x). Likewise, the property must meet the conditions of authenticity and/or integrity (WHC 2008:23, 24).

Based on the requirements set by the World Heritage Committee, the OUV is reflected in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. This instrument has five key points in paragraph No. 155 of the *Operational Guidelines*: first, a summary of the Committee's decision certifying the property's OUV; second, statement of the criteria that justify inclusion on the World Heritage List; third, assessment of the conditions of integrity; fourth, assessment of the conditions of authenticity; and fifth, protection and management measures in force for the property (WHC 2008:42).

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is extremely important because it is the basis for the protection and management of the property in the future. It indicates

---

<sup>3</sup> We make reference to the most recent version in Spanish of the description of *outstanding universal value*, because our interest is to make known its current interpretation in regard to World Heritage properties which were registered on the World Heritage list before the statement of outstanding universal value was required to have the degree of detail nowadays requested by the World Heritage Committee, specifically regarding the Panamanian World Heritage property subject of this paper.

that which existed at the time of registration, and in what state it was, as well as its significance for Humanity. It also indicates the management plan proposed by the State Party responsible, to maintain over time the outstanding universal value that the State party assures the world that the property possesses, and whose existence and permanence is endorsed by the World Heritage Committee.

The summary of the Committee's decision summarizes the criteria expressed in OUV interpreted for the property, and it includes the decision of the World Heritage Committee that accredits the property as World Heritage, based on the justification of the criteria, the assessment of integrity and / or the assessment of authenticity.

The *justification of the criteria* will tell us what the property is, and why it is important to Humanity; the justification of the criteria showcases the attributes of OUV. *The assessment of the conditions of integrity* points out the unitary and intact character of those described attributes of the property; it lets us know if there are enough pieces of the puzzle to understand its whole. *The assessment of the conditions of authenticity* informs us whether we can trust what is presented. It refers to the credibility of the property, if the rationale for its OUV criteria is true and if their attributes are authentic. Complementary to the above are the measures in place for the protection and management of the property, which must respond to the specific needs of the particular property and its attributes.

In short, the *justification of the criteria* points out the attributes to be protected; the statement of *integrity* points out how much of the property existed from a unitary standpoint at the time of its inscription, and the statement of *authenticity* establishes its veracity. These main points constitute the reference and baseline for any future assessment. The summary outlines them, and the measures for protection and management should be adequate to preserve what is showcased. Here is the crux of the matter: the State Party proves to the World Heritage Committee that the nominated property is of outstanding interest and therefore needs to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole (UNESCO 1972:1). The statement of outstanding universal value is a snapshot of the property at the time of its inscription on the World Heritage List, introducing the elements of its value. Thereafter, the State party should preserve it for the world without diminishing or damaging it. This is the commitment made by Panama.

Thus, in order to understand the outstanding universal value of the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama, it is crucial to understand the criteria justifying that value to the World Heritage Committee, as Panama interpreted them for this property at the time of nomination. The criteria of OUV are defined in the

Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and as the operational guidelines have been improved and expanded, the definition of the criteria has also been refined over time.

This paper discusses the rationale for criteria of OUV for the World Heritage property known as Archeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama (790bis) in their inscription on the World Heritage List and subsequent extension to its current status.

## The case of Panama

Panama City is located on the narrowest part of the Isthmus of Panama, on the Pacific coast. Once the Spanish conquistadors reached this ocean, which they called *Mar del Sur* (Southern Sea), they founded a city whose strategic position would allow them to fully develop terrestrial and maritime exchange for commercial and military ends, in order to expand the Spanish rule over the *Nuevo Mundo* (the New World). This was Panama City, founded in 1519, connected by land and river trails with its counterpart terminal city, *Nombre de Dios* first, then *Portobelo*, where the famous Portobelo Fairs flourished on its bay guarded by military fortifications on the Atlantic coast. Numerous international trade routes were interconnected in Panama, including the routes of the spices, silver bullion, silk, porcelain, and gold bullion (Castillero Calvo 2006:495-547 and 1014). Panama City, devoid of fortified walls, was destroyed by pirates in 1671 and officially moved to a new site in 1673, which was equipped with fortified walls and a dry moat. The *Plaza de Panamá*, the fortifications of Portobelo and the Fort of San Lorenzo were the three vertices of the Strategic Triangle, thus named because of its capital importance for the transportation of people and goods for the Spanish Empire (Zapatero 1985:11 and 12). Today these sites are World Heritage properties. The former site of the city is the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo, in the *Parque Lefevre* borough of Panama City; and the present site of the historic city is the *Casco Antiguo* (Historic District), in the *San Felipe* borough of Panama City. Both places are separated by a distance of approximately eight kilometers (ICOMOS 1997 and 2003:145), (Figure 1).





Figure 1. Components of the World Heritage property, Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá, in Panamá City. (Source: Google 2012, with information added by the Author)

## Two Components of a single property

The Historic District of Panamá was nominated to the World Heritage List by the Panamanian Government in the year 1995. The nomination file was submitted to the World Heritage Centre on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1995. The World Heritage Committee inscribed the property on the World Heritage List under number 790 two years later, in 1997. The inscription was made under the criteria of OUV (ii), (iv) and (vi). At that time, the property was inscribed under the official name, *Historic District of Panamá with the Salon Bolívar*, and it had the same area as the Historic Monuments Group of the Casco Antiguo of Panamá City, as defined by Law 91 of December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1976. That same year of 1997, Panamá modified said Law 91 of 1976 by means of Decree Law 9 of August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1997 (Article 2<sup>nd</sup>), expanding the limits of Casco Antiguo to its present extension.



Having been nominated two years before, the area inscribed on the World Heritage List corresponded to the area prior to the amendment of the mentioned Law. The Executive Decree 51 of April 22, 2004 reiterated that the limits established by Decree Law 9 of 1997 form the boundaries of the Historic Monuments Group discussed (Articles 3 and 4) and said that everything contained within it shall be covered by the inscription of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO in the World Heritage List (Article 5).

The World Heritage Committee approved in 2003 (during Session 27 and in its Decision 27 COM 8.C.40) the extension of the property 790 of the World Heritage List, *Historic District of Panama with the Salon Bolivar*, to include *the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo*. The nomination dossier was received at the World Heritage Centre on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002 (ICOMOS 1997 and 2003:145). That Decision justified the inclusion under the same criteria of OUV accepted in 1997, (ii), (iv) and (vi), and changed the title of the entry to, *Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama*. This inscription on the World Heritage List hosted both sites – Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama (*Casco Antiguo*) – as components of a single property of the World Heritage by UNESCO (WHC 2003:120).

## **Criteria of Outstanding Universal Value accepted for the component Historic District (Casco Antiguo) of the World Heritage property, Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama, year 1997**

In order to understand the reasons behind the Decision 21 COM 8.C of the World Heritage Committee, by which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List of UNESCO, we shall review the criteria of OUV according to the version of the Operational Guidelines that was in force at the time when Panama submitted the nomination of Casco Antiguo to be part of said List. Then we shall proceed to review the justification of each of the corresponding criteria presented by Panama to the World Heritage Centre<sup>4</sup>.

Criterion (ii) as in the Operational Guidelines of 1994: *“Have exerted great influence,*

---

<sup>4</sup> Some of the texts utilized for the analysis presented on this paper were translated by the author to the Spanish language in the corresponding footnotes. The reader is presented with the official version, then the most exact translation possible, utilizing terminology of conservation of cultural properties. Even though the official languages of UNESCO are French, English and Spanish, the official languages of the World Heritage Committee and its advisory bodies are only English and French; documentation from those sources was utilized in the English language. (Translator Note: This footnote corresponds to the original text of this paper in Spanish language. This translated text will keep the Spanish translations in the footnotes, as they were in the original version).

over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental arts or town-planning and landscape design” (WHC 1994:10).

Justification of criterion (ii) submitted by Panama in 1995:

*“The layout, allocation of ground plots, fortifications, and buildings of the Historic District of Panama City reflect the importance, interchange, adaptation and persistence of human values which for centuries have been oriented towards further inter-oceanic communications at this strategic site on the Central American isthmus”<sup>5</sup> (ICOMOS 1997 y 2003:91).*

The Panamanian justification for criterion (ii) describes which attributes reflected "the importance, interchange, adaptation and persistence of human values" for the Historic District of Panama (1997 ICOMOS 2003:91). The strategic position of the city played a key role in European expansion in Latin America and the flowering of Spanish colonial trade routes, at both the original seat of the city (in the current borough of Parque Lefevre), and in its present location in the historic centre, in the borough of San Felipe and part of the boroughs of Santa Ana and El Chorrillo. This position as a maritime city that bound and still binds together maritime and land routes of great importance is a major highlight in the history of Humanity, not only in Panamanian history. Indivisible from the site are the transformations that humans carried out in order to enhance the strategic site and use it as a node of global exchange, that is, the city and the elements that distinguish their function. Specifically in the Historic District of the city, at the time of its nomination to be listed as a World Heritage Site, were preserved "the layout, allocation of ground plots, fortifications and buildings" (ICOMOS 1997 and 2003:91). To this we must add the land and sea environment and the strategic position of the city as terminal of land and sea routes, furthering inter-oceanic communications.

Therefore, the attributes found in the text of the justification of criterion (ii) are: the urban layout, the allocation of ground plots, the buildings, the fortifications (by design, including their land and maritime environment); and the strategic position of the city as terminal city for maritime and land routes. All these attributes arose in response to the interchange of human values as a result of the geopolitical importance of Panama City; this interchange of human values is reflected in the types of architecture and ornamentation, the adaptive reuse of buildings and remains of buildings over the

---

<sup>5</sup> La traza, distribución de los lotes, fortificaciones y edificios del Distrito Histórico de la Ciudad de Panamá reflejan la importancia, intercambio, adaptación y permanencia de los valores humanos que durante siglos han estado orientados a impulsar las comunicaciones interoceánicas en este sitio estratégico del istmo centroamericano (traducción de la autora).

centuries, and the technology used in the adaptation processes.

Criterion (iv) as per the Operational Guidelines of 1994: “[To] be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history” (WHC 1994:10).

Justification of criterion (iv) submitted by Panama in 1995:

*“Panamanian house-types from the 16th to 18th centuries in the Historic District are exceptional owing to their narrow lots and internal disposition, which are only to be found in this part of the Americas. Surviving multiple-family houses from the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century are original examples of how society has reacted to new requirements, changes, and influences brought about by modern world-wide communications”*<sup>6</sup> (ICOMOS 1997 y 2003:91)

The quote refers both to the archaeological remains of the old colonial buildings in Panama Viejo that illustrate Panamanian architecture of the period between 1519 and 1671<sup>7</sup>, as well as to the colonial houses (1673-1821), whose internal spatial distribution responded to the available space per ground plot to accommodate the housing needs of the masters and servants, orchards, wells or reservoirs, and animals. It also refers to the multiple-family houses in the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century that, due to increased demand for housing in Panama City boosted by the arrival on the Isthmus of successive waves of travellers and foreign workers (due to the Gold Rush, the Panama Railroad, the French Canal, the United States Canal), transformed the colonial architecture started in 1673.

These types of architecture, generated in response to the interchange of human values, constitute outstanding examples representing domestic architecture as an expression of society to new requirements, changes and influences which determined its shape, use and function, brought about by the geopolitical importance of the city .

This can be seen in the extraordinary population densification from the second half of the nineteenth century, which dramatically increased the area of urban land cover, mostly with timber construction within courtyards, and on ground plots sold by the State in spaces not used previously for construction, such as the Esplanade and the city fortified walls. Arguably this domestic architecture illustrates significant periods of

<sup>6</sup>“Los tipos de casas panameñas desde el siglo dieciseis al siglo dieciocho en el Distrito Histórico son excepcionales debido a sus lotes estrechos y a su disposición interna, las cuales sólo se hallan en esta parte de América. Las casas multifamiliares que sobreviven desde la segunda mitad del siglo diecinueve y primera mitad del siglo veinte son ejemplos originales de cómo la sociedad ha reaccionado a los nuevos requerimientos, cambios e influencias provocadas por las modernas comunicaciones a nivel mundial” (traducción de la autora).

<sup>7</sup> It's interesting that, although Panama Viejo was not nominated in 1995 as a part of the property, it was mentioned in the justification of the property's criteria of OUV.

human history. The increase in housing demand and consequent densification of the capital city is reflected in the transformation of the houses to multiple-family houses, where spaces were subdivided and reorganized to accommodate that demand for housing, transforming its architecture and adding various layers of typological influences on design and decoration of buildings.

According to the rationale presented by Panama and evaluated by ICOMOS (1997 and 2003:91), the attributes present in the justification of the criterion (iv) would be: first, the domestic architecture of Panama City from the sixteenth century (1519 to 1671) to the eighteenth century (1673-1700): their narrow lots and internal disposition. Secondly, domestic architecture, especially houses that were adapted to accommodate several families, from the second half of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century.

Criterion (vi) as in the Operational Guidelines of 1994:

*[To] “be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)”*(WHC 1994:10).

Justification of criterion (vi) submitted by Panama in 1995:

*“Panama City is closely linked with the discovery by Europeans of the Pacific Ocean, the history of Spanish expansion in South America, the bullion lifeline and commercial network between the Americas and Europe, and the history of piracy in the region. The Salón Bolívar is associated with Simón Bolívar’s visionary attempt in 1826 to establish a multinational congress in the Americas, preceding both the Organization of American States and the United Nations”*<sup>8</sup> (ICOMOS 1997 y 2003:91).

Criterion (vi) relates directly to the geopolitical importance of the strategic position of Panama City, from its foundation and relocation, to the present day. The criterion is thus justified, based on the Bolivarian idea of making Panama the venue for the

---

<sup>8</sup>“Ciudad de Panamá está íntimamente relacionada con el descubrimiento del océano Pacífico por los europeos, la historia de la expansión española en América del sur, la ruta del oro, la red comercial entre el continente americano y Europa y la historia de la piratería en la región. El Salón Bolívar está asociado con el intento visionario de Simón Bolívar, en 1826, por establecer un congreso multinacional continental (anfictiónico), que antecede tanto a la OEA como a la ONU” (traducción de la autora).

Congress of Panama, considering Panama to be the logical place from the standpoint of strategy and geopolitics, in the vision of a free America, in a position to discuss as equals with European powers and the new nations in the North American continent, to achieve global balance. Even the idea and the Congress itself are precursors of international organizations with similar goals (the United Nations and the Organization of American States, among others). Without the geopolitical importance attributed to Panama City by El Libertador Simon Bolivar, the Congress of Panama would not have taken place there. Thus, criterion (vi) is more based on the idea of a congress of nations seeking a world balance, than on the ruins of Salon Bolivar itself, which is credited with being the room that hosted the Congress. The ruins are the physical attribute of the space that hosted the idea.

The attributes present in the justification of criterion (vi) are: the Salon Bolivar (at Bolivar Palace, headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the maritime character of the city of Panama, main part of its geopolitical importance as a strategic point for inter-oceanic communications, and terminal of international trade routes.

Based on the nomination file submitted by Panama in 1995 and the assessment of it made by ICOMOS, the Committee issued Decision 21 COM 8.C as follows:

*“The Committee decided to inscribe this property on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi), considering that Panama was the first European settlement on the Pacific coast of the Americas, in 1519, and the Historic District preserves intact a street pattern, together with a substantial number of early domestic buildings, which are exceptional testimony to the nature of this early settlement. The Salón Bolívar is of outstanding historical importance, as the venue for Simón Bolívar’s visionary attempt in 1826 to create a Pan-American congress, more than a century before such institutions became a reality. The Delegate of Thailand expressed his reservations on the application of criterion (vi)”<sup>9</sup> (WHC 1997:47).*

The Committee Decision (21 COM 8.C) reaffirmed the presence of a street pattern and

<sup>9</sup> “El Comité decidió inscribir esta propiedad sobre la base de los criterios culturales (ii), (iv) y (vi), considerando que Panamá fue el primer asentamiento europeo en la costa del Pacífico americano, en 1519, y que el Distrito Histórico conserva intacta su traza urbana, junto con un número sustancial de edificios domésticos tempranos, los cuales son testimonio excepcional de la naturaleza de este asentamiento temprano. El Salón Bolívar es de extraordinaria importancia histórica, como el lugar de reunión para el intento visionario de Simón Bolívar en 1826 de crear un congreso Panamericano, más de un siglo antes que tales instituciones se convirtieran en una realidad. El delegado de Tailandia expresó sus reservas sobre la aplicación del criterio (vi)” (traducción de la autora).



domestic architecture which are exceptional testimony to the nature of the settlement as terminal city for land and sea routes. This is the first European city in the American Pacific coast whose geopolitical importance brought about a unique development throughout its colonial and early republican history.

In the same manner, let us see the justification of the criteria of OUV presented by Panama for the inscription of the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo on the World Heritage List, as an extension of the property Historic District of Panama with the Salón Bolívar.



Figure 2. Aerial view of the Historic District of Panama, 2010 (Casco Antiguo). (Photo: Alvaro Uribe)

### **Criteria of Outstanding Universal Value accepted for the component Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo of the World Heritage property, Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama, year 2003**

In order to understand the rationale behind Decision 27 COM 8.C.40 of the World Heritage Committee, by means of which the extension of the property, *Historic District of Panama with Salon Bolivar* was approved to include the *Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo* on the World Heritage List, let us see the criteria of OUV according to the



version of the Operational Guidelines in force at the time when Panama nominated the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo to be included in the aforementioned property. Then we shall review the justification of each criterion, as submitted by Panama to the World Heritage Centre on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002:

Criterion (ii) as per the Operational Guidelines of 1999:

*“[To] exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design” (WHC 1999:6).*

Justification of criterion (ii) submitted by Panama in 2002: *“The layout of the town represents important interchange of human values”<sup>10</sup>* (ICOMOS 1997 y 2003:145).

The urban layout of the original seat of the city exerted great influence in later works of Spanish colonial urban planning in America. As one of the oldest urban layouts, the first on the shore of the Pacific, it is an outstanding example of urban planning of its time, adapted to a new and relatively hostile environment. The abandonment it suffered from the fire of 1671 that led to its transfer to its current seat in the Historic District indirectly contributed to the preservation of the site as an example of city planning of Spanish colonial America. Therefore, the attribute present in the justification of the criterion (ii) is the urban layout of Panama City in its original location (ICOMOS 1997 and 2003:145).

Criterion (iv) as in the Operational Guidelines of 1999:

*“[To] be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates significant stage[s] in human history” (WHC 1999:6).*

Justification of criterion (iv) submitted by Panama in 2002: *“[The] buildings represent a significant stage in the development of Colonial Spanish society”<sup>11</sup>* (ICOMOS 1997 y 2003:145).

In the same way as the rationale described for criterion (ii), in this case large traces

---

<sup>10</sup> “La traza urbana de la ciudad representa un intercambio considerable de valores humanos” (traducción de la autora).

<sup>11</sup> “Los edificios representan una etapa significativa en el desarrollo de la sociedad colonial española” (traducción de la autora).

of architecture remain together with their adaptations to the environment, including construction technology (ICOMOS 1997 and 2003). The buildings whose remains are preserved in the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo, such as Casa Alarcón from the mid seventeenth century, the monastic ensembles of the The Society of Jesus, La Concepción [Daughters of Mary of the Immaculate Conception] and Santo Domingo, the Dominican Order, and the Cathedral Church, among others (Davis 2007:188 Tejeira -195), are witness to a significant stage in city planning in the Americas.

Therefore we may see that the architecture developed in the original seat of Panama City (domestic and religious architecture) is the attribute present in the justification of the criterion (iv) (ICOMOS 1997 and 2003:145).

Criterion (vi) as in the Operational Guidelines of 1999:

*“[To] be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works or outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances and in conjunction with other criteria cultural or natural)”* (WHC 1999:6).

Justification of criterion (vi) submitted by Panama in 2002: *“[It is] closely linked to the discovery of the Pacific Ocean, Spanish expansion, history of piracy, and to the bullion lifeline to Europe”*<sup>12</sup> (ICOMOS 1997 y 2003:145).

The foundation of the city of Panama in 1519 was a milestone in the history of Spanish expansion. It was the starting point for military expeditions and exploration, which gave origin to important trade routes that transported great wealth from America and Asia to Europe. The city played an important role in the expansion of Spanish culture. In short, its geopolitical importance remained before and after the city was moved and it continues today, as the city is a terminal and connection for trade routes. The attribute present in the justification of the criterion (vi) is the strategic position of the city as a terminal node of land and sea routes taking riches to Europe through multiple trade routes. The city was also the starting point for military expeditions, which cemented its geopolitical importance and character as a maritime city.

Based on the nomination file submitted by Panama in 2002 and on the assessment of that nomination file by ICOMOS, the Committee issued Decision 27 COM 8.C.40 as follows:

---

<sup>12</sup> “Está íntimamente relacionada con el descubrimiento del océano Pacífico, la expansión española, la historia de la piratería y la ruta del oro hacia Europa” (traducción de la autora).

*“The World Heritage Committee*

*1. Approves the extension of the **Historic District of Panama, with the Salón Bolívar, Panama**, on the World Heritage List to include de Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo under the existing cultural criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi);*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date Inscribed</i>	<i>Area (ha)</i>	<i>Buffer (ha)</i>
<i>Historic District of Panama, with the Salon Bolívar</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>29.4</i>	<i>not given</i>
<i>Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo</i>	<i>proposed</i>	<i>28.0</i>	<i>85.0</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>		<i>57.4</i>	

*2. Approves the proposed name change to the **Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and the Historic District of Panamá**, with the agreement of the State Party”<sup>13</sup> (ICOMOS 1997 y 2003:120).*

<sup>13</sup> “El Comité del Patrimonio Mundial,

1. Aprueba la extensión del **Distrito Histórico de Panamá, con el Salón Bolívar, Panamá**, en la Lista del Patrimonio Mundial para incluir al Sitio Arqueológico de Panamá Viejo bajo los criterios culturales existentes (ii), (iv) y (vi).
2. Aprueba el cambio de nombre propuesto a **Sitio Arqueológico de Panamá Viejo y el Distrito Histórico de Panamá**, con el consentimiento del Estado Parte” (traducción de la autora. Negrillas en el original).



Figure 3. Cathedral of Panama Viejo, plaza Mayor and Terrin Houses, 2006 (Photo: the author)

It was reaffirmed on Decision 27 COM 8.C.40 by the Committee, that the same criteria of OUV (ii), (iv) and (vi) according to the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* ( those that justified the inscription of property Historic District of Panama with the Salon Bolivar in the year 1997) were valid as justification for extension of the property that included the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo, thus unified as the World Heritage property now called Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama (Panama) (790bis).

In summary, the attributes of OUV for the World Heritage property, Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama, are as follows for each of its two components:

Historic District of Panama: according to criterion (ii) the urban layout, the allocation of ground plots, buildings, fortifications in their environment, the strategic position of the city as terminal of land and sea routes; according to the criterion (iv) domestic architecture (sixteenth to eighteenth century), their narrow lots and internal disposition,

domestic architecture from the second half of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, especially multiple-family homes; according to the criterion (vi) the Bolivar Hall and the geopolitical importance of the city.

Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo: according to criterion (ii), its urban layout; according to the criterion (iv), its domestic and religious architecture; according to the criterion (vi), its strategic position as a city terminal for sea and land routes that cemented its geopolitical importance.

## Protection for the attributes of OUV: a comprehensive view

According to the rationale previously expressed, to maintain the validity of Criterion (ii) it would be necessary: to maintain the alignment and form of the streets, city squares and other open spaces<sup>14</sup> in the Historic District and in the Archaeological Site. Especially in the Historic District, and it would be necessary to keep the dimensions (width, depth and height) of the urban façade, and its relationship to said open spaces. It is necessary to preserve the distribution (location, size and quantity) of ground plots, fortified structures<sup>15</sup> (walls, watchtowers, bastions), ruins and buildings.

The maintenance of the direct relationship of the city at both its seats with its maritime and terrestrial environment is a key point to be considered. In the Historic District, the enclosing walls should be preserved as a border between the built area and the sea. In the case of traditional roads, they should be kept as connectors between the peninsula and the new developments in the city.

Moreover, to maintain the validity of Criterion (iv) it would be necessary to preserve the integrity of all the ruins of the archaeological site through works of consolidation and cleaning.

Similarly, the street façades and the façades of existing buildings must be maintained and preserved. For those buildings registered under the Fourth Order of Conservation (which allows the street façade to be demolished and / or replaced), architectural designs should be proposed to the National Directorate of Historic Heritage of the National Institute of Culture, that keep the rhythm, scale and geometry of the surrounding historic street façades, avoiding new construction from portraying a historical fake, in order to preserve the continuity of the city landscape of the Historic

<sup>14</sup> The Executive Decree 51 of April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004 declared in article 57 that, shall be considered as part of the road network protected as historic heritage all the streets, alleys and avenues of the historic centre (and lists their names).

<sup>15</sup> Please refer to Section II Conservation of the Old City Walls, in Executive Decree 51 of April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004 (articles 122 to 124).

District.

Also, the internal façade towards courtyards in buildings of First, Second and Third Order of Conservation<sup>16</sup> should be kept, to preserve the space of these courtyards. They reflect, and are original examples, of how society reacted to the new requirements, changes and influences brought about by modern world-wide communications. The original *cañones* (one or two storied additions built within the courtyards) and added building wings of masonry, wood or mixed construction built in these courtyards are integral part of their outstanding value; their French and/or American influences convey changes and influences on technology and building typology (shape of doors and windows, balconies, walls, load-bearing walls and galleries). The materials of street facades and the facades around historic courtyards must also be maintained, especially concerning their building typologies, as they reflect the requirements, changes and influences that global communications brought to Panama in different periods.

To maintain the validity of Criterion (vi), the preservation of the elements that outline the strategic position of Panama City should be taken into account: its marine environment, access and communication with the sea (being a maritime city since 1519, and remaining as such during its second stage from 1673), and its access and communication by land. It is essential to preserve the land routes to and from the city (Camino Real and Camino de Cruces) and Central Avenue within its buffer zone and at documentary level. It is important to make known to the public the alignment of the colonial roads that communicate the colonial fortifications on the Caribbean side of Panama with the two seats that the city has had. Law 16 of May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 provides in this regard, Article 10:

“The institutions of the State shall ensure that the Historic Monuments Groups of Panamá Viejo and the Casco Antiguo of the City of Panamá shall maintain their historic relationship, their visual contact and immediate access to the Pacific Ocean, and accordingly, shall preserve their marine environment, which is part of the integral value of both Groups.” (Translation by the author for effects of the translation of this paper from Spanish into English.)<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> They are detailed on Chapter II Principles of Restoration, of Decree Law 9 of August 27th, 1997, and they are reiterated on the Executive Decree 51 of 2004.

<sup>17</sup> “*Las entidades del Estado garantizarán que los Conjuntos Monumentales de Panamá Viejo y del Casco Antiguo de la Ciudad de Panamá mantengan su vinculación histórica, su contacto visual y el acceso inmediato al Océano Pacífico y, por tanto, preservarán su entorno marítimo, el cual es parte del valor integral de ambos Conjuntos*”.



The site of the Salón Bolívar<sup>18</sup> should be maintained, as well as its historical context and documents (the Proceedings of the Congress of Panama in 1826); and the pioneering character of the Congress of 1826, as precursor to the current international organizations of the United Nations system should be made known to the public and highlighted.

Finally, the historic relationship between the defense points of the Strategic Triangle for the defense of the trans-isthmian routes and the routes of global trade, and the fortified city of Panama and the fortifications of Portobelo and San Lorenzo must be preserved by means of information accessible to the public. It should include the land routes of the Camino Real and Camino de Cruces as important parts of the Strategic Triangle.

## Concluding remarks

According to the current version of the Operational Guidelines, the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is an essential tool not only for the inclusion of a property in the World Heritage List, but for its proper preservation through protection and management systems specifically created for the conservation of the attributes in which the OUV resides.

“Protection and management of World Heritage properties should ensure that the outstanding universal value, the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity at the time of inscription are maintained or enhanced in the future.” (WHC 2008:25)

The fall of the OUV [of a world heritage property] into considerable risk entails the inclusion of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and the definitive loss of the OUV entails delisting of the property from the World Heritage List. The loss of the outstanding universal value is irreversible.

The World Heritage Committee has begun a global process of updating the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of those properties registered on the World Heritage List until 2005, date on which this instrument was implemented. This process is called Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (ICOMOS et al. 2010). The review and update process is being performed in the framework of the Second Cycle of the Periodic Reporting on the Application of the World Heritage Convention in Latin America and the Caribbean. Panama, like the rest of the region, is participating in this

---

<sup>18</sup> The Salón Bolívar is part of the Palacio Bolívar (Bolívar Palace), Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Panama.

initiative. The retrospective inventory is part of the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. The retrospective inventory procedures indicate that the elements of outstanding universal value to be described (including if they still exist), shall be strictly the same ones as those reported by Panama in its nomination files for the property in its two component parts, Casco Antiguo (the Historic District) and Panama Viejo (the archaeological site). The attributes of outstanding universal value are described in the criteria that justified the inscription; the conditions of integrity and authenticity only describe their condition, that is, their permanence. Panamanian law of conservation does not identify separately the attributes of outstanding universal value of Panamanian properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, and consequently, it does not provide specific protection to their special needs. The protection measures in force must ensure their safety, that is the commitment of the State Party, the government of Panama.

## References

Carta de Atenas

1931 Primer Congreso Internacional de Arquitectos y Técnicos de Monumentos Históricos (CIAM). Electronic document available at [http://www.unesco.org/pv\\_obj\\_cache/pv\\_obj\\_id\\_6316AE2BC8967D6CF2F6D96C70395A6B95AB0D00](http://www.unesco.org/pv_obj_cache/pv_obj_id_6316AE2BC8967D6CF2F6D96C70395A6B95AB0D00) UNESCO Cultural Heritage Laws Database. Consulted on November 5th, 2011.

Castillero Calvo, Alfredo

2006 *Sociedad, Economía y Cultura Material, Historia Urbana de Panamá La Vieja*. Imprenta Alloni, Panama City, Panama.

ICOMOS

1997 y 2003 The World Heritage List - Panama, 790bis "Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama". Electronic document available at [http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory\\_body\\_evaluation/790bis.pdf](http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/790bis.pdf). Consulted in November 17th, 2011.

2008 *The World Heritage List - What is OUV? Defining the Outstanding Universal Value of Cultural World Heritage Properties*, compiled by Jukka Jokilehto. Hendrick Bābler Verlag, Berlín, Alemania.

ICOMOS, ICCROM, UICN y el Centro del Patrimonio Mundial de UNESCO

2010 Orientación Sobre la Elaboración de Declaraciones Retrospectivas de Valor Universal Excepcional Aplicables a los Bienes del Patrimonio Mundial. Unión Internacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (IUCN), Switzerland. Electronic document available at [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/wcpa\\_worldheritage/?5891/3/Guidance-on-the-preparation-of-retrospective-statements-of-Outstanding-Universal-Value-for-World-Heritage-Properties](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/wcpa_worldheritage/?5891/3/Guidance-on-the-preparation-of-retrospective-statements-of-Outstanding-Universal-Value-for-World-Heritage-Properties). Consulted on October, 2012.

Tejeira Davis, Eduardo

2007 *Panamá: Guía de Arquitectura y Paisaje. An Architectural and Landscape Guide*. Bilingual edition. Seville, Consejería de Obras Públicas y Transportes; Panama, Instituto Panameño de Turismo.

UN

2012 Charter of the United Nations. Electronic document available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/intro.shtml>. Secretary of the

Publications Board, United Nations. New York, E.E.U.U. Consulted in March, 2012.

## UNESCO

1972 Convención Sobre la Protección del Patrimonio Mundial, Cultural y Natural. París, UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Electronic document available at <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-es.pdf>.

Consulted in August, 2010.

2012a [1945] Constitución de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura. UNESCO, France. Electronic document available at [http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL\\_ID=15244&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

Consulted in March, 2012.

2012b Reglamento Sobre las Recomendaciones a los Estados Miembros y las Convenciones Internacionales Previstas en el Párrafo 4 del Artículo IV de la Constitución. In *Textos Fundamentales*. UNESCO, France.

Electronic document available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002161/216192s.pdf>. Consulted in October, 2012.

2012c General Introduction to the Standard-Setting Instruments of UNESCO.

Electronic document available at [http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL\\_ID=23772&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL_ID=23772&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Consulted in March, 2012.

## WHC

1994 [1977] Directrices Prácticas para la Aplicación de la Convención del Patrimonio Mundial, edición revisada. WHC/2/revised, París, UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Electronic document available at

<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide94.pdf>. Consulted in November, 2011.

1997 Decision 21 COM 8.C - Inscription: Historic District of the Town of Panama with the Salon Bolivar. In *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage - World Heritage Committee - Twenty-first session. Report*. Nápoles, Italia. 1st -6th of December, 1997.

Electronic document available at <http://whc.unesco.org/document/102>.

Consulted in August, 2010.

1999 [1977] Directrices Prácticas para la Aplicación de la Convención del Patrimonio Mundial, revised edition. WHC-99/2, París, UNESCO World

Heritage Centre. Electronic document available at <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide99.pdf>. Consulted in November, 2011.

2003 Decision 27 COM 8.C.40 – Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panama. In *Decisions Adopted by the 27th Session of the World Heritage Committee in 2003*. WHC-03/27.COM/24. Paris, France. 30th of June – 5th of July, 2003. Electronic document available at <http://whc.unesco.org/document/1429>. Consulted in August, 2010.

2008 [1977] *Directrices Prácticas para la Aplicación de la Convención del Patrimonio Mundial*, revised edition. WHC. 08/01, París, UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Electronic document available at <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide08-es.pdf>. Consulted in November, 2011.

Zapatero, Juan Manuel

1985 *Historia del Castillo San Lorenzo El Real de Chagre*. Servicio Histórico Militar del Ministerio de Defensa y Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo, Madrid, Spain.