

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON  
TWENTIETH CENTURY HERITAGE

WORKSHOP

MODERN HERITAGE SERIAL SITES: Nomination Analysis

FRIDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2011, 6 PM

*Pavillion Suisse, Cité Universitaire*

*Paris, France*

DRAFT MINUTES

Background: There are at least 4 architectural oeuvres on World Heritage tentative lists already: Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, Henry Van der Velde, and potentially Alvar Aalto. Great men, great movements, but which properties demonstrate OUV ? Selection, context and management are all critical areas for analysis- as well as the test evaluation of authenticity and integrity.

The General Assembly in Paris in December 2011 provided the ISC20C with an opportunity for informal discussion about the experience to date with serial nominations and identify what is needed in terms of comparative and thematic analysis for twentieth century heritage properties. The perspectives of nominators, advisers and assessors as well as ICOMOS were invited and enthusiastically discussed.

**Present:** Members of the ICOMOS ISC20C (Sheridan Burke, Alfredo Conti, Fernando E.L. Monteros, Dinu Bumbaru, Kyle Normandin, Natalia Dushkina, Riitta Salastie, Yoshiyuki Yamana, Masashi Akiba (Japan) Prisca Schmuckle Von Minerwitz, Gunny Harboe, Leo Schmidt, Susan Macdonald, Laura Robinson; Maija Kairamo (Finland), Louise Cox (Australia), Louise Noelle Gras (Mexico), Peter Cox, Agnès Cailliau (France), Bénédicte Gandini (Fondation Le Corbusier, France) and others, 25 in all.

Apologies: Christiane Schmuckle Mollard

**Invited speakers:**

**Alfredo Conti (AC), ICOMOS WHWG: The ICOMOS perspective: serial nominations**

**Regina Durighello (RD), Director of the WH Programme, ICOMOS: Managing and Assessing the serial process**

**Susan Denyer (SD), ICOMOS WH Adviser: Modern serial sites experience**

**Susan Macdonald (SM), ISC20C: Thematic Study project of the ISC20C**

**Sheridan Burke (SB), President ISC20C, gave a brief overview of the WH nominations regarding Modern heritage, including serial ones (cases of Aalto 2005, Le Corbusier**

2008, Van De Velde and Wright in WH Tentative Lists). She also marked the specificity of serial groups, existing difficulties and presented speakers.

**1. Alfredo Conti** recalled the WH Convention as the most successful of all UNESCO documents and reminded that the notion of 'series' (as monuments, group of buildings, sites) appeared in the Convention, the text of which never changed since 1972. 'Operational Guidelines' (OG), 1977, have been revised repeatedly, with the last version adopted in November 2011. The notion of 'serial nomination' (first understood as linked thematically in different geographical locations) was supported by ICOMOS which stressed that 'series as a whole is much important than individual', with a special care of OUV (Outstanding Universal Value).

The OG 2005 specifically pointed out for 'series': 1) necessity of management for each component and their coordination, with establishment of a special management body; 2) possibility of serial national/transboundary nominations; 3) concept of 'adding' new properties as extension (case of several countries involved, with OUV demonstration).

In 2009 (Switzerland meeting), the notion of a serial inscription was enriched with: 1) a possibility of additions within each state party (serial national/transnational properties); 2) an idea of complimentary properties; 3) an integration of separate components into one ensemble; 4) a view at series as illustrating specific historical process/evolution (including buildings, sites, cultural routes, unique territories). These positions were implemented into the OG final version, 2011(III C: Transboundary properties, 137-139; Serial properties, 137-139).

In June 2011, while assessing new serial properties into the WH List, the necessity of substantial OUV scientific research as 'easily understood and communicated' was stressed anew, as well as of a 'common management process'.

**2. Regina Durighello** gave an overview of the WH inscription procedure, explaining the time table (including 'serial nominations'). She described the process of the ICOMOS assessment (desk and evaluation reports); and the role and interrelations of ICOMOS thematic working groups, experts, advisers, ICOMOS WH panel and the UNESCO WH Centre. She mentioned that up to 14 advisors may play a role in any one nomination assessment, a huge co-ordination exercise in 2011 when 48 sites were reviewed

In concluding RD marked the importance of the changes in the 2011 version of the OG for 'serial nominations' (including OUV assessment, justification of the components selection, authenticity/integrity balance, comparative analysis, management and legislation) and stressed that to get a consensus is a quite sophisticated process.

**3. Susan Denyer** addressed her presentation to a wide range of the 20<sup>th</sup> C examples (comparing the single nomination of Horta buildings in Brussels that represented stylistic evolution; the two separated nominations of works by Gaudi in Barcelona which resulted in 7 properties selected form a larger group proposed, and the variety of inclusions for the 'Bauhaus' with separate inscriptions including six Berlin housing settlements, educational and industrial buildings etc). She stressed the fundamental role of comparative analysis and voiced concern about a tendency for serial nominations 'to become a catalogue of sites with unclear OUV', commending close reading of the 2009 Ettinger meeting report.

The core of SD's contribution was devoted to the revised and twice deferred serial/transboundary nomination 'Architectural works of Le Corbusier, an outstanding contribution to the Modern Movement' (France, Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Japan, Switzerland).

She enumerated the major ICOMOS objections for inscription expounded in the ICOMOS report to the WHC: 1) unclear whether the LC's works are exceptional for MoMo to compare with other architects of the period; 2) lack of key characteristics of MoMo with uncertain influence either of the whole series, or of LC personally; 3) lack of urban dimension within nomination; 4) doubts on selection process; 5) lack of clear justification that selected list is of outstanding significance; 6) objection to emphasizing the role/personality of architect rather than stressing series of properties and their architectural attributes to be of the outstanding MoMo manifestations; 7) belief that intellectual aura of LC changed the world stronger than the influence of his individual buildings; 8) concluding that only several masterpieces of LC were demonstrated to deserve WH inscription on their own rather than part of serial nomination; etc.

SD stressed the necessity to continue the international debate of these issues (started after Paimio nomination was withdrawn) in order to allow a clear way forward for the nomination of other 20<sup>th</sup> C properties, and commended the Finish authorities for facilitating open international dialogue. SD noted that this subject needs strategic vision of the existing problems based on clear framework and convincing justification.

**4. Susan Macdonald** presented 'Historic Thematic Framework to Assess the Significance of 20<sup>th</sup> C Cultural Heritage' a major ICOMOS ISC20C initiative, briefly presenting the outcomes of the meeting held in Los Angeles, California in May 2011, sponsored by the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI).

ISC20C is aiming to develop (in collaboration with TICCIH, DOCOMOMO, UIA, national heritage organizations) a thematic framework that articulates the heritage of the twentieth century by examining the major historic changes and built outcomes of the era. 'Serial' methodology is a part of this ambitious project. It aims to provide a historic context for the WH nomination assessment, and will assist in the identification of the 20<sup>th</sup> C heritage resources and conservation on national levels, too. She enumerated the main 'themes' for analysis (technology and science, governance, globalization, increased mobility, culture and society, with many others typological and conceptual lines within each thematic groups; see the LA meeting report of SM at ISC20C web-site). Concluding, SM stressed that this framework will significantly help comparative analysis.

**Discussion- Natalia Dushkina** (ND, ISC20C VP) marked that 'serial nomination' is an objective notion, not specifically for the 20<sup>th</sup> C and should be analyzed as such; she also addressed 'series' as a 'mechanism' regulating the quantity of the WH sites inscribed on the List, which could not be endless. As for evaluation process, ND (being on the ICOMOS evaluation missions both for Aalto and Le Corbusier), expressed her doubts on final decisions taken by ICOMOS WH panel in both cases as -they appeared to oppose each other (Aalto to be series, LC – to reject from collection principle). She also pointed out that in case of great masters/architects, the position of ICOMOS/WH Committee calling for addressing of 'properties' rather than their authors, to some extent is contradictory to the criteria (i) regarding 'a masterpiece of human creative genius'. ND also called for a need of more transparent position of both ICOMOS/WH

Committee for the 20<sup>th</sup> C nominations. The time for preparation and assessment of a dossier for series (e.g. LC, second version – 1600 pages) takes significant human and financial resources. The current situation with 'LC collection' might discourage other State parties to go on forward with serial nominations.

**SD** also regretted the timeframe imposed, but felt that ICOMOS/WH group aimed at constructive recommendations and in case of LC nomination versions (even in the second round ) there was no clear justification of OUV as for the whole series, as for separate structures. She indicated that it was felt by the WHWG that there was sufficient justification to go on forward with only three individual nominations - Marseilles, Villa Savoye and Ronchamp (and possibly NMWA in Tokyo) is based on a lack of this basic justification in the second dossier approach. In general, the concept of serial nomination needed more discussion, and emphasized that the staff are always ready to do so. She spoke briefly about the current Silk Road(s) nomination where extensive upstream negotiation is underway, with a thorough thematic study providing initial overview, specialist essays about critical sites and their context.

**AC** continued the preparation theme pointing again that in case of series it is very important to show how each component can contributing to a potential of collection. He also stressed the difficulties in assessing authenticity for the 20<sup>th</sup> C properties being built with a short life span. For serial transboundary nominations (if being rejected for WH inscription) enormous political impact is inevitable.

SB suggested that for modern architecture, the transboundary influence of individuals like Mies, Le Corbusier and FL Wright needed thoughtful analysis.

**Dinu Bumbaru** marked that 'serial nomination' is a confusing approach as people want to know 'what is really outstanding', what achievements are standing behind especially in the case of 20<sup>th</sup> C. Other dimensions of serial are important. He talked on necessity to work out Tentative lists for Modern heritage in order to assess what is prospective – groups of buildings or separate structures, explore the existing lists and national inventories to better see the context.

**Maija Kairamo** being involved in Aalto case treats 'Corbusier List' as a test in a way. She thinks that Aalto will never be listed as a serial as was recommended by ICOMOS. This architect was very rich in construction and his best buildings are in permanent use with inevitable losses through time (even for Villa Mairea or Aalto's Own House, now Aalto Foundation). Application of WH evaluation criteria are apparently opposing this ongoing living functionality and adaptation, though from the very beginning Aalto was included to all Tentative lists, including DOCOMOMO.

**Gunny Harboe** reminded the case of FL Wright with Taliesin nomination, which was rejected and advised for serial group, similar to Aalto. If now to take the recommended line for LC, with several individual nominations, this will be an enormous work for the country. The works of Wright are all related to each other and representing a 'creative genius'. Individual approach 'diminishing the meaning of the whole group'. **SD** stressed anew that Convention is not about architects, 'we inscribing properties reflecting the ideas'.

**Agnès Cailliau**, Chair DOCOMOMO/France, insisted that only the variety of LC works presents OUV. She compared this case with the sonatas of Beethoven when they could

be estimated only as a whole. Agnès recalled LC's paintings, color, material, philosophy sacred/social architecture, etc, which only in combination are unique universally, as a process and creative achievement.

Peter Cox (Ireland) questioned whether there was a need to review the Convention as a whole, not just the Operational Guidelines!

**Laura Robinson (South Africa)** called for rejecting from 'gigantic' dossiers and preparing very simple ones, really to the point and significance in order to get essence, not a reference book.

**Louise Cox (UIA)** appealed to the quality of individual components in serial nomination as a core problem. She also commented the case of Charles Darwin nomination mentioned by SD saying that his ideas are important as intangible heritage, not properties connected with this historical figure. She recommended a "selection of the fittest" approach.

**SB** raised a point that all nomination cases should be seriously discussed within the context of Tentative lists, and at the level of the ICOMOS ISC20C, before nomination by a State party. To assist this work, the thematic framework described by SM was essential. A special methodology based on Thematic studies and tentative analysis could then be worked out, as was presently happening for industrial heritage nominations in Japan.

**SD** agreed, and marked the importance of comparative analysis questions and a need for supporting context in order to explain values of the nomination within a framework. In order to evaluate significant values in serials (on local, national and international levels), wide publications and promotion are important.

Concluding **AC**, **RD** and **SD** expressed their thanks and congratulations to ISC20C for launching this discussion and pointed out at the necessity of thematic and typological framework as useful tools for the WH communities (States parties, experts, etc) and very important for the future. **SD** said that for recent heritage this framework is of great significance as we facing potentially large numbers of nominations for 20<sup>th</sup> C structures.

#### **Proposed actions for the future action by ISC20C:**

- To encourage development of Tentative lists for C20 properties nationally, and for the WH
- To continue developing Thematic history framework for recent heritage
- to develop a toolkit of relevant Conservation tools and information on the ISC20c website;
- including a data base on evaluation of the 20thC heritage (including existing chronological, typological, etc Tentative lists worked out since 1985 within ICOMOS, DOCOMOMO, WH Centre);
- To promote further discussion on the value and construction of 'serial nomination' including ones for the 20thC;
- To establish a joint working platform with the ICOMOS/WH group and possibly the WH Centre for 20thC promotion and an elaboration of strategic guidelines.

SB thanked everyone, especially the members of the WH secretariat and advisers for their open and enthusiastic participation and was encouraged by the open doors that seemed available for further discussion with the ICOMOS WHWG and the secretariat through Alfredo Conti. She emphasized her personal commitment as President of ISC20C to facilitating further discussion such as this, and welcomed the opportunity offered by the Japanese government to continue this debate further at an expert symposium early next year in Tokyo.

Chair of the meeting: Sheridan Burke

Rapporteur: Natalia Dushkina

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