

RETROSPECTIVE STATEMENT OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE (2012)

Site	Historic Town of Ouro Preto
State Party	Brazil
ID. No.	124
Date of Registration	09/ 05/ 1980
Approximate Area:	2.5 Km²

a. Brief synthesis

Founded in the early 18th century 513km north of Rio de Janeiro, the Historic Town of Ouro Preto (Black Gold) covers the steep slopes of the Vila Rica (Rich Valley), centre of a rich gold mining area and the capital of Minas Gerais Province from 1720-1897. Along the original winding road and within the irregular layout following the contours of the landscape lie squares, public buildings, residences, fountains, bridges and churches which together form an outstanding homogenous group exhibiting the fine curvilinear form of Baroque architecture. The Historic City of Ouro Preto was the symbolic center of the *Inconfidência Mineira* in 1789, a Brazilian independence movement, and home to exceptional artists responsible for many of the most significant works of the Brazilian Baroque period, including the Church of São Francisco of Assisi by the distinguished architect and sculptor Antonio Francisco Lisboa (Aleijadinho). The area's isolation for the better part of the 19th and 20th centuries generated economic stagnation, fostering preservation of the original colonial constructions and urban pattern.

b. Justification for Criteria

Criterion (I): Set in a remote and rugged landscape, the aesthetic quality of the vernacular and erudite architecture and irregular urban pattern of Ouro Preto makes the town a treasure of human genius. The most notable of the city's architectural works are represented by the religious monuments and administrative buildings, including the Palácio dos Governadores (Governors' Palace), today the School of Mines, and the former Casa de Câmara e Cadeia (Administrative and Prison House), home to the Inconfidência Museum. The Baroque churches carry sculptures by Antônio Francisco Lisboa, Aleijadinho, colonial Brazil's greatest artist, and the ceiling paintings of Manuel da Costa Athaide among others. These were the representatives of the initial expressions of an artistic form deemed genuinely national and developed in a region marked by difficult access and a scarcity of materials and labor in the 18th century.

Criterion (III): The built heritage of the Historic City of Ouro Preto bears exceptional testimony to the creative talents of a society built on pioneering mining wealth under Portuguese colonial rule. Although the architecture, paintings, and sculptures are based on underlying models introduced by Portuguese immigrants, the works vary significantly from the contemporary European art, not only with respect to their spatial conception, but in their decorative treatment, in particular the stone sculptures carved on the facades, distinctive for their originality and design and in the combined use of two materials, gneiss and soapstone. The absence of formal convents or monasteries, due to the edict of the Portuguese Crown which prohibited the establishment of religious orders in Minas Gerasi, led to the construction of churches and chapels displaying the full splendor, quality, and originality of the syncretized artistic traditions of two cultures.

c. Statement of Integrity

The Historic Town of Ouro Preto retains its urban nucleus built in the colonial period, including the diversity of civic and religious buildings marked by refined aesthetic and architectural qualities that express

Outstanding Universal Value. Not all of these are in a good state of conservation; some houses and churches suffer from neglect.

The historic town is vulnerable to urban growth, traffic, industrialization and tourist impact. The expansion of Ouro Preto to the surrounding hillsides, occupying geologically unstable terrains, green areas, archaeological areas, and public spaces, poses a threat of irreversible damage to the urban setting.

d. Statement of Authenticity

The relevant examples of religious and civic architecture and the accompanying works of art within Ouro Preto have been preserved in terms of form and design, materials and immediate setting. Controlled growth of the city's surrounding areas and limits on the scale of new buildings have served to maintain the urban landscape of the 18th and 19th centuries within the property largely unaltered. In regard to the city's residential and commercial constructions, inevitable modifications have been authorized while safeguarding the original facades. The preservation measures adopted by the Federal Government with the support of the local government, based on urban planning norms and successive conservation and recovery projects have ensured the authenticity of the cultural property.

e. Protection and Management requirements

Since the 1930s, the Historic City of Ouro Preto has been targeted for protection through a series of government initiatives. The first involved Municipal Decrees 13 of 1931 and 25 of 1932 issued by Mayor João Velloso, which mandated the "preservation of the colonial façade." A year later, President Getúlio Vargas designated the city a National Monument. Creation of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Service (Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional – SPHAN), today the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional – IPHAN), and enactment of Decree-Law 25 of November 30, 1937, put in place the necessary legal instruments, which continue in effect to the present day, to ensure the protection of all cultural property determined to be of outstanding value to the nation. Based on the Decree, the Architectural and Urban Framework of Ouro Preto was formally entered in the Fine Arts Heritage Registry (Livro de Tombo de Belas Artes) on January 20, 1938.

Beginning in the 1950s, the city experienced significant expansion and a rise in heavy traffic flows in the light of the region's emerging economic development, a direct consequence of intensified steel production and mining activities. In response, the Federal Government built a highway around the city named after SPHAN's first director, Rodrigo Mello Franco de Andrade. A second measure implemented to protect the city from excessive vehicle traffic involved construction of a bus terminal on the outskirts of Ouro Preto to clear the central section of intra- and interstate and tourist buses. With a view to enhancing management of Ouro Preto's cultural heritage, IPHAN opened a Technical Office in the city in the 1980s staffed with a multidisciplinary team of professionals. In the light of these measures, the Brazilian Government submitted an application to UNESCO requesting designation of Historic Town of Ouro Preto as a World Heritage Site. On September 5, 1980, the city became Brazil's first cultural property entered on the World Heritage List. On September 15, 1986, IPHAN expanded the site's heritage designation through inscription in the Historical Landmark Registry and the Archeological, Ethnographic and Landscape Registry.

In the 1990s, the Technical Advisory Group (Grupo de Assessoramento Técnico – GAT) was established, composed of technical experts representing IPHAN and the Municipal Government, in addition to other government agencies devoted to the city's preservation efforts. The group developed a series of guidelines to control land use and occupation in the city center, officially referred to as the Special Protection Zone (Zona de Proteção Especial). These guidelines were formally consolidated in a specific IPHAN Directive issued in 2004.

Similarly, a set of regulations agreed to by the different levels of government served to reinforce the initial version of the Municipal Master Plan approved through Complementary Law 1 of December 19, 1996. Ten

years later, the Master Plan was submitted to review and updated through a specific Complementary Municipal Law.

In addition to these legislative initiatives, the Municipality adopted a number of other measures to regulate urban land use, in particular through the introduction of model Architectural Projects based on “Community Design Plans” (“Plantas Populares”) for construction work within the Municipality of Ouro Preto, but outside the area entered on UNESCO’s Heritage List, and the establishment of the Municipal Public Engineering and Architectural Service (Serviço Municipal de Engenharia e Arquitetura Pública), tasked with providing low-income families with free public technical assistance on the design and oversight of social interest housing building projects.

With a view to strengthening shared management of the site, in 2006 the Municipality established the Municipal Secretariat of Urban Heritage and Development (Secretaria Municipal de Patrimônio e Desenvolvimento Urbano), an agency composed of a multidisciplinary team of professionals. The Secretariat provides support to the Municipal Cultural and Natural Heritage and Urban Policy Councils (Conselhos Municipais de Patrimônio Cultural e Natural e de Políticas Urbanas) and is financed through the Heritage Preservation Fund (Fundo de Preservação do Patrimônio).

In 2010, IPHAN issued rules setting forth criteria for the preservation of Ouro Preto’s Architectural and Urban Framework, regulating interventions in the federally protected area, and repealing, in the process, all previous regulations governing (includes the declared area) the related questions. Also in 2010, IPHAN issued two normative rules aimed at enhancing the city’s management: Directive 187 of June 11, 2010, governing the procedures for conducting investigations into alleged administrative violations involving conduct and acts which are deemed to be harmful to or damage the city’s cultural heritage structures, and Directive 420 of December 22, 2010, which sets out the procedures for authorizing interventions in protected heritage structures and the respective surrounding areas.

A number of challenges remain to ensure proper management of the city, enhance urban expansion planning through additional controls on the occupation of the surrounding hillsides, regulate general traffic planning in the urban zone surrounding the protected area, and effectively develop the area’s tourist-cultural potential, transforming the city into an international cultural destination, recognized for its rich cultural heritage.

The substitution of traditional materials and techniques with new ones and the occupation of open spaces at the back of existing lots and within the heart of the complex has been spurred by demands for new housing, a contributing factor for which has been the significant expansion of the Federal University and local Technical School. Measures have been taken at both the federal and municipal levels to stem this trend, an effort which has secured modest success to date.

Throughout the period described above, the Historic City of Ouro Preto has received significant investments aimed at conserving and restoring its cultural heritage and ensuring, in this way, the site’s perpetuation and use for current and future generations.