

THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA – ALTA AND SOFIA. WORLD HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AGENTS

*La Universidad De Coimbra-Alta Y Sofia.
Agentes Gestores De Patrimonio Mundial*

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ABSTRACT

The University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia (UC-A&S) has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since the 22nd of June 2013, with the correlated material and immaterial matters. This nomination is the end of a lengthy process that began in the early 80's of the 20th century. However it was necessary for several institutions to join efforts to obtain the title.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the results of the options and policies chosen which would guarantee the best management strategies for the application process and for the future management of the property. For example, the constitution of the RUAS Association, based on a formulation of policies about compromises and synergies between the institutional entities responsible for safeguarding and protecting the property and its urban area of influence. By analysing the legal and management instruments and structures, it is possible to verify which strategic policies and agents played a relevant role in the process and are doing it still. The case of the UC-A&S management plan is an example of success concerning the application process.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to establish with every entity, both the public and the private ones, some legal bounds for the urban management itself, regarding its influence on the areas of its property and its protection zone. This paper argues that it is imperative to discuss this kind of connection between the property and the city, because, in the case of Coimbra, each seems to be the driving force stimulating or developing the other. In that sense, the institutional entities responsible for

protecting the area reached an innovative solution based on policies about urban projects and management.

It is not possible to understand the University of Coimbra without its urban context and this particular aspect may include some significant strategies to deal with this process, which has increased the urban intervention dynamics in the property area, hoping that this could be another opportunity to consider the city desired for the future, assuming that it will be better than the present one.

Key words: University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia World Heritage Application, management plan, UNESCO, urban development management, RUAS Association.

RESUMEN

La Universidad de Coimbra- Alta y Sofia (UC-A&S) ha sido un lugar Patrimonio Mundial de la UNESCO desde el 22 de junio de 2013, junto con los temas materiales e inmateriales relacionados. Esta nominación es el final de un largo proceso que comenzó a comienzo de los años 80 del siglo XX. Sin embargo, varias instituciones necesitaron unir esfuerzos para obtener este título.

El objetivo de este trabajo es discutir los resultados de las opciones y políticas escogidas que garantizarían las mejores estrategias de gestión para el proceso de solicitud y para la futura gestión del bien. Por ejemplo, la constitución de la Asociación RUAS, basada en una formulación de políticas sobre acuerdos y sinergias entre las entidades institucionales responsables de la salvaguarda y protección del bien y su área urbana de influencia. Analizando los instrumentos y estructuras legales y de gestión, es posible verificar qué políticas estratégicas y agentes jugaron un papel importante en el proceso y todavía lo desempeñan. El caso del plan de gestión de la UC-A&S es un ejemplo de éxito en relación al proceso de solicitud.

Sin embargo, es necesario establecer con cada entidad, tanto públicas como privadas, algunos límites legales para la propia gestión urbana en relación con su influencia en las áreas de su propiedad y su zona de protección. El presente trabajo argumenta que es imperativo discutir este tipo de conexiones entre el bien y la ciudad, porque, en el caso de Coimbra, cada uno de estos elementos parece ser la fuerza directora estimulando o desarrollando al otro. En este sentido, las entidades institucionales responsables de la protección del área alcanzaron una solución innovadora basada en políticas sobre los proyectos y la gestión urbana.

No es posible comprender la Universidad de Coimbra sin su contexto urbano y este aspecto concreto puede incluir algunas estrategias importantes para lidiar con este proceso, que ha incrementado las dinámicas de intervención urbanas en el área del

bien patrimonial, con la esperanza de que esto pudiera ser otra oportunidad para considerar la ciudad deseada para el futuro y asumiendo que esta será mejor que la actual.

Palabras clave: *Solicitud de Patrimonio Mundial de Universidad de Coimbra-Alta y Sofia, plan de gestión, UNESCO, gestión del desarrollo urbano, Asociación RUAS.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Definitions of the relevant protection policies and an international responsibility statement from the proponent State Party are required to enrol a World Heritage Site on UNESCO's World Heritage List (WHL). The main goal is that the respective State undertakes and accepts the responsibility of protecting the World Heritage (WH) property and leaving it as a patrimonial inheritance for the next generations. This is a national policy assumed by each State Party that should be considered as an international one. UNESCO has the task of accepting or rejecting the justification of a property's proposed Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) made by each State Party in order to obtain the desired World Heritage status after consulting its advisory bodies, ICOMOS¹ and IUCN². There are rules defined in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of World Heritage Convention* (OP) (UNESCO-WHC 2013b) about how to make the application, based on the World Heritage Convention of 1972 and that have been improved along the way. This has been done to better control the exponential increase in applications for nomination to achieve a qualitative assessment as well as conceptual and scientific developments, as Labadi verified (eds. Labadi & Long 2010, pp. 66-84).

In order to guarantee an efficient management of a property that has been awarded the title, the OG has established that, since 2005, each State Party should include a management plan to define how the property and its surrounding context are going to be safeguarded, protected and managed after the WH nomination in its application dossier. It is known that the number of visitors increases for each site after being nominated, making the increase in tourism a valuable financial resource. It is therefore important for UNESCO to guarantee a

1 The International Council on Monuments and Sites has to evaluate properties nominated for the WHL and promote "the application of theory, methodology and scientific techniques to the conservation of the architectural and archaeological heritage" (UNESCO-WHC 2013b, pp. 9-10).

2 The International Union for Conservation of Nature has to evaluate properties nominated for the WHL, influencing, encouraging and assisting societies "to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable" (UNESCO-WHC 2013b, p. 10).

sustainable management of it. In that sense, a WHA is a very specific and complex process developed with a national strategic policy and reflects the responsibilities assumed by a State Party in an international setting. The University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia (UC-AS) has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since the 22nd of June 2013, with the correlated material and immaterial aspects with the criteria II, IV and VI. This nomination came at the end of a lengthy process that began in the early 80's of the 20th century. However it was necessary for several institutions to join efforts to obtain the title.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the results of the options and policies chosen which would guarantee the best management strategies for the application process and for the future management of the property. By analysing the legal and management instruments and structures, it is possible to analyse which strategic policies and agents played a relevant role in the process and are doing it still.

2. UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA – ALTA AND SOFIA WORLD HERITAGE APPLICATION

The UC-AS dossier, sent to UNESCO as a Portuguese WHA, had been prepared by a team led by the Rector of the University of Coimbra³ (UC) from 2003 to 2013. Ten years of intense work, studies and hypotheses concerning the protection of heritage and production of reports about the UC's history and cultural dynamics. The WHA dossier was composed in seven volumes plus an *Executive Summary* book.

Volume I, *Nomination for inscription on the World Heritage List*, was intended to be the property's presentation by its identification and description. It explains the main reasons for the nomination, justifies its OUV, analyses its state of conservation, reveals the guidelines of its management plan and its influences, its assessments and monitoring carried out by the entities and organisations responsible for the WHA process.

Volume II, *Management Plan*, based on the methodology proposed by the Getty Conservation Institute for this kind of documents (ed. Lopes 2012b-I, p. 226), identifies and deals with several dimensions related to the management of the two nominated areas, the Alta (the upper area) and Sofia (the lower area), and its protection area. This document defined the *Principles and Policies* (ed. Lopes 2012b-II, p. 133), *Specific Objectives* (ed. Lopes 2012b-II, p. 135), *Strategies and Responsibilities* (ed. Lopes 2012b-II, p. 137-139), before and after the WH

3 From 2003 to 2011, the Rector of UC was Professor Fernando Seabra Santos; from 2011 to the present time, Rector Professor João Gabriel Silva.

title. The aim is to guarantee multiple approaches to the problems related with its constructed heritage and the insertion of the property, which is a considerable area of 117 hectares, in the city. It also describes its *Plans of Action* for the 2009-2016 period (ed. Lopes 2012b-I, p. 226). The Management Plan is considered a guideline working document so it should be regularly updated and constantly monitored accordingly (ed. Lopes 2012b-II, p. 9).

Volume III, *General texts*, selects the knowledge produced and supervised by the “*Scientific Commission composed of experts of different fields*” (ed. Lopes 2012-III, p. 5). It intends to contribute with detailed information about the UC and its history and multiple aspects about its origins till the present time, in a summarized and systematic manner.

Volume IV, *Influences*, clearly shows the supportive relationships and contacts with various Universities from Brazil to Asia that were created during five centuries of activities linking the universities and fomenting an exchange of knowledge between the UC and these different entities. This volume tries to express, using the statements of Rectors from Brazilian universities, the importance “*of the UC in the construction of the Lusophone world*” (ed. Lopes 2012-IV, p. 5) and its contributive role for the development of the world as we know it today by creating and leading a space of convergence with a multinational dimension.

Volume V, *Master Plans*, is a compilation of surveys and maps of “*studies and proposals for all the buildings*” (ed. Lopes 2012-V, p. 7) included in the Property’s area, characterizing their ownership status and property rights, their constructive history, their typologic evolution, their recent interventions, in order to form “*the basis of a bid proposal for a new stage, in which its integrity and value will be restored*” (ed. Lopes 2012-V, p. 7).

Volume VI, *Execution*, analyses and lays out the methodology used in previous projects and conservation works and rehabilitation of UC buildings and of public space based on the *Detailed Master Plan of the Uptown University Area* draw up by the architect Gonalo Byrne in 2001.

Finally, Volume VII, *Protection Area*, explores the historical role that the UC played for the implementation of the design and development of the city, mainly in its historic centre where the property has a direct urban influence.

These volumes are just a part of the WHA process but they highlight the options and policies chosen to justify the OUV of UC-AS property to be put on the WHL.

3. UC-AS MANAGEMENT PLAN: ITS INSTITUTIONAL AGENTS AND ITS MAIN PROTECTION LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

In accordance with *La Valletta Principles*, “a Management Plan is a document specifying in detail all the strategies and tools to be used for heritage protection and which at the same time responds to the needs of contemporary life. It contains legislative, financial, administrative and conservation documents, as well as Conservation and Monitoring Plans” (ICOMOS 2011, p. 4). That is why this management instrument is so important for the future of each property. The UC-AS Management Plan identifies and analyses the property’s value, diagnoses its physical conditions, assesses its context and its influence on the urban life, and then, develops Action Plans according to the principles, policies, objectives, strategies and responsibilities previously assumed. It was prepared to assure the future of the property’s management in a cooperative attitude with those who have the responsibility to manage the territory. The sustainable protection and development of an architectural and cultural heritage is the main common main of each management plan, but it needs responsible agents to implement those guidelines and to manage it.

Given the total area of the UC-AS property, 117 hectares, of which, an important part is 35.5 hectares, 29 of which correspond to the *Alta* (the upper part of town) and 6.5 to *Sofia* (the lower), surrounded by a protection zone of 81.5 hectares, it would be very difficult to have just one manager responsible for controlling everything (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 – The UC-AS World Heritage areas and its protection area. (ed. Lopes 2012-I, p. 224).

In an urban area, like the nominated one, there is an accumulation of public and private ownership types to consider. Further, the Municipality of Coimbra is the entity responsible for its urban management, under the *Coimbra Municipal Master Plan of 1994* (PDM – *Plano Director Municipal*) regulation, which is the instrument to regulate and implement the urban policies for the city⁴. In order to deal with this issue, the Management Plan proposed a possible partnership and administrative coordination to monitor the property. Considering that the UC and the Municipality of Coimbra are the most influential entities in the administration and management of the candidate area, an association between both was created and called the Foundation Univer(sc)ity, to play a key role in its management model. Although the creation of this association was proposed to share the “responsibilities in the management of the whole territory included in the nomination” by these two institutions, it was not clarified how it would, in practice, work.

During the UC application process some of the municipal regulations were improved and others were created in order to match the candidate parameters with the legal instruments necessary to implement it. The application for the WH title generated new considerations concerning the urban revitalization of the historic areas. Both, the UC and the Municipality of Coimbra, were interested in co-operating to achieve the best result for the aspects imposed by the OG to include a property into the WHL. Working groups were created to aid the two institutions to define local regulations based on the Alta area, the upper town, and the Sofia area, in the lower part of Coimbra, to define the final boundaries of the nominated area and to work out the Management Plan of the future property.

In 2010, the Municipality of Coimbra approved the *Strategic Plan for the City of Coimbra*⁵ (henceforth Strategic Plan), for sustainable urban development and one of its main goals was to contribute to the UNESCO application process, which was considered as a resource to help the urban rehabilitation in the historic areas by being an example to follow. The UC became a strategic partner to create the necessary synergies of knowledge, based on its status as an owner and its cultural and social role, providing its technical support in addition with the management of the WHA role.

The Public Company of Urban Rehabilitation Societies (*SRU – Sociedade de Reabilitação Urbana Coimbra Viva*) was set up to administer the Strategic Plan

⁴ The PDM was under revision at that time. In 2014 it was published in the *Diário da República*, 2ª série — No. 124 — 1 de julho de 2014, the National Official Journal, under the Announcement no 7635/2014, July 1st.

⁵ *Edital* No. 21/2010.

and which would focus its studies and work on the development and urban rehabilitation of the historic areas like the upper town, the lower town and river side. By this time, all urban intervention in those areas was also under SRU jurisdiction. However, the responsibility of managing the territory was not exclusive to these entities. By the Portuguese Law⁶, the *National Law on Cultural Heritage*, Decree-law no 107/2001, September 8th, which governs the regime for protecting and safeguarding cultural heritage when any property is under a patrimonial classification, every intervention on it must be assessed by the proper entity that governs cultural heritage, that is, the Portuguese Government and its national and regional administrations. In the case of Coimbra, the Regional Office of the State Secretary of Culture (DRCC – *Direcção Regional de Cultura do Centro*) plays that role. So, it was not just the Management Plan and the Foundation Univer(s)ity that should be relevant for the future management of the property UC-AS.

Beyond the Management Plan for the UC-AS property there are also some other specific legal instruments to protect Coimbra's property, based on national regulations (Capela & Murtinho 2014a), such as:

1. The *National Law on Cultural Heritage*, Decree-law no 107/2001, September 8th, regulated by Decree-law no 265/2012, December 28th. This National Law automatically establishes a Protection Zone for any proposed heritage nomination;

2. *Announcement no 14917/2013, December 5th*, published in the National Official Journal⁷, made the addition of the UC-AS to UNESCO's WHL known and the classification of the property as a National Monument as well as the definition of its Special Protection Zone;

Concerning local regulations (Capela & Murtinho 2014a):

6 "The Portuguese Law imposes complex restrictions on interventions in classified areas. Any application for a heritage nomination is immediately safeguarded by the national legal jurisdiction, in order to protect and conserve any possible future heritage area. The *National Law on Cultural Heritage*, Decree-law no 107/2001, September 8th, governs the protection and safeguard regime for cultural heritage. It is regulated by Decree-law no 265/2012, December 28nd. This National Law automatically establishes a Protection Zone for any proposed heritage nomination. A surrounding safeguard area which is 50 meters from the property's external perimeter limits (which has been imposed on a heritage application, in Portugal, since 1932 – Decree no. 20985, June 7th 1932) is established, which will influence not only the spatial understanding of the insertion area, but also the entire city. This point encourages those responsible for the urban planning to assess the purpose of this limit within the urban space. After a rigorous technical evaluation this Protection Zone should be revised, establishing a Special Protection Zone based on topographic or landscape references and the urban context" (Capela & Murtinho 2014a).

7 *Diário da República*, 2.^a série — No. 236 — 5 de dezembro de 2013.

1. *Coimbra Municipal Master Plan*, published in the National Official Journal, made the strategies for territorial development and land occupancy rules for the city known and established the area limits of the historic centre;
2. *Municipal Regulation of Urban Building, Recovery and Reconversion of the area resulting from the nomination of the University of Coimbra as World Heritage by UNESCO, including the Protection Area*⁸, published in the National Official Journal⁹, states the regulations concerning the enhancement, development, valorisation and safeguarding of the area referred to;
3. *Strategic Plan for the City of Coimbra*, published the four main purposes based on i) developing the regional economy, ii) increasing the health cluster, iii) safeguarding and restoring cultural heritage and iv) managing sustainable urban development, defining the regulation of the Urban Rehabilitation Areas¹⁰, which are relevant for the areas of priority for urban rehabilitation – the *Baixa* (the lower town), the *Baixa-Rio* (the lower part-river) and *Alta* (the upper town) (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 – *The Urban Rehabilitation Areas: the Alta, the Baixa and Baixa-Rio.* (ed. Lopes 2012-VII, p. 120).

⁸ Announcement no 2129/2012, February 10th.

⁹ *Diário da República*, 2.^a série — No. 30 — 10 de fevereiro de 2012.

¹⁰ ARUs – Área(s) de Reabilitação Urbana.

So the UC-AS property had efficient legal instruments to ensure an effective protection of the heritage (Fig. 3). However it was necessary to rethink the solution concerning who would administrate the process.

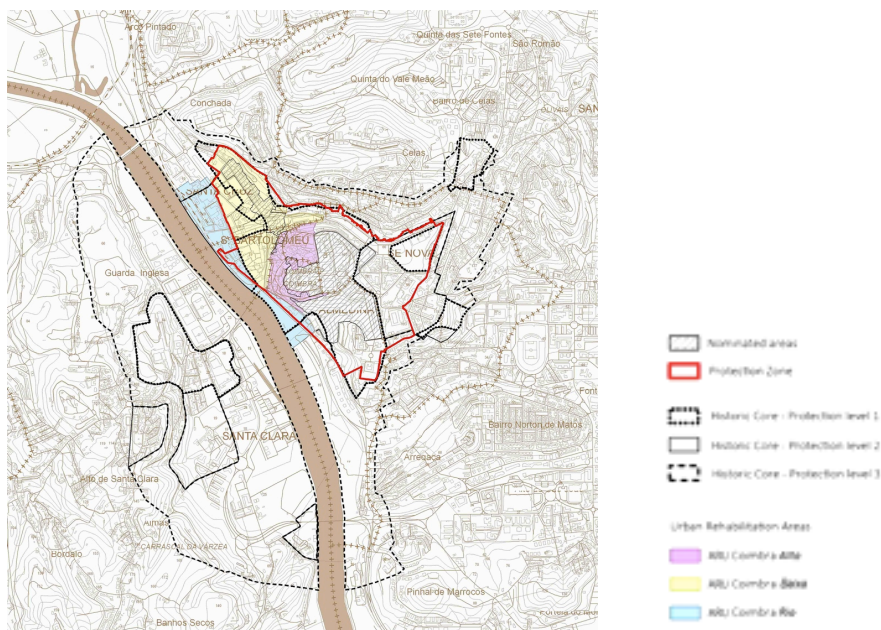


Fig. 3 – Protection's main legal instruments (RUAS 2013, p. 7).

4. RUAS ASSOCIATION – AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

It is necessary to examine the aspect of ownership before starting an urban management approach in the case of a heritage nomination. Being the administrator of a public classified property, or being the administrator of a private classified property, or even being a public administrator of a public or private classified property, is not the same thing at all. A survey of ownership should be done to define the most effective methodology, not only for the administration of the property but also for the protection zone as well. This is in order to maintain a sustainable development at the levels of use and conservation. For that reason, the variety of the ownerships of property within the nominated area in the case of Coimbra was a concern revealed by ICOMOS and stated in the visiting and assessment reports. In fact, the property UC-AS has four types of ownerships: public properties of the UC; other public properties; private properties used by the UC and; private ones (ed. Lopes 2012-I, p. 210).

When it is about a building it is easier to draw up an administration plan to define its future administration. There is usually an agent to administer, to decide and to define strategies. But when the property is part of an urban fabric (Fig. 4), it is necessary to consider the scale of the city to resolve problems related to the diversity of connections and apprehensions concerning what should be relevant for its sustainable development and management.

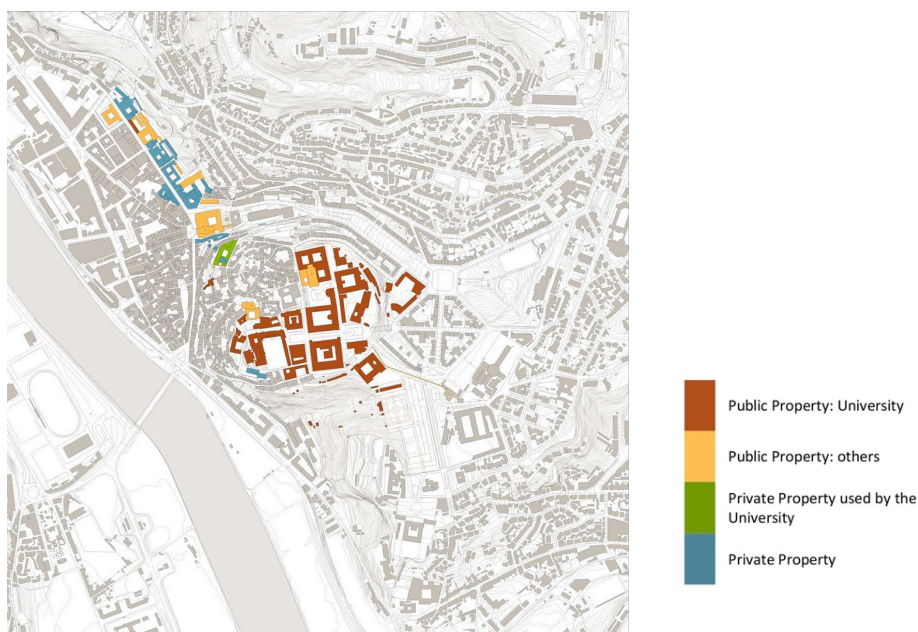


Fig. 4 – The ownership survey in the nominated areas (ed. Lopes 2012-I, p. 210).

It means that the methodology of urban management is the most suitable to consider in the case of an urban property. Consequently, the stakeholders have an essential role, mainly to achieve a common consensus based on proactive synergies for the best practices in the case of a nominated heritage. The UC-AS WHA dossier was drawn up taking that issue into account. Several drawings and graphs were included in order to clarify the questions and doubts about ownership within the candidate area (ed. Lopes 2012-I, p. 210) and buffer zone (ed. Lopes 2012-IV, p. 33). Previous to the heritage nomination, the Municipality was responsible for the management of the urban space of the city of Coimbra, with the legal instruments and local regulations to do that. When the future administration of the property became an issue, it was considered that only the Municipality and the UC should be able to do the administration efficiently at first. A partnership between the

public and private owners was created where the Municipality of Coimbra and the University were the leaders, while the Foundation Univer(sc)ity was to produce the policies for protecting and safeguarding the site and implementing the model of administration to achieve “*methodologies and criteria for intervention and financial support*” (ed. Lopes 2012-II, p. 7), thus sharing responsibilities in the management of the city.

ICOMOS wanted answers to questions such as the following: *But how did it work? How is it going to work? Who is responsible for the final decisions?* It considered that the information provided did not clarify how it would be able to provide an efficient administration of the urban space within the designated area and how the authorities/institutions with the task of administrating and monitoring would be co-ordinated (ICOMOS 2012a). ICOMOS required these issues to be resolved beforehand to guarantee the proper urban management system and dynamics for the future of the property (ICOMOS 2012a; 2012b). It was this problematic issue that revealed the gap in the administration of the property, constrained by the Portuguese Law, which was the beginning of an innovative solution for the UC-AS WHA.

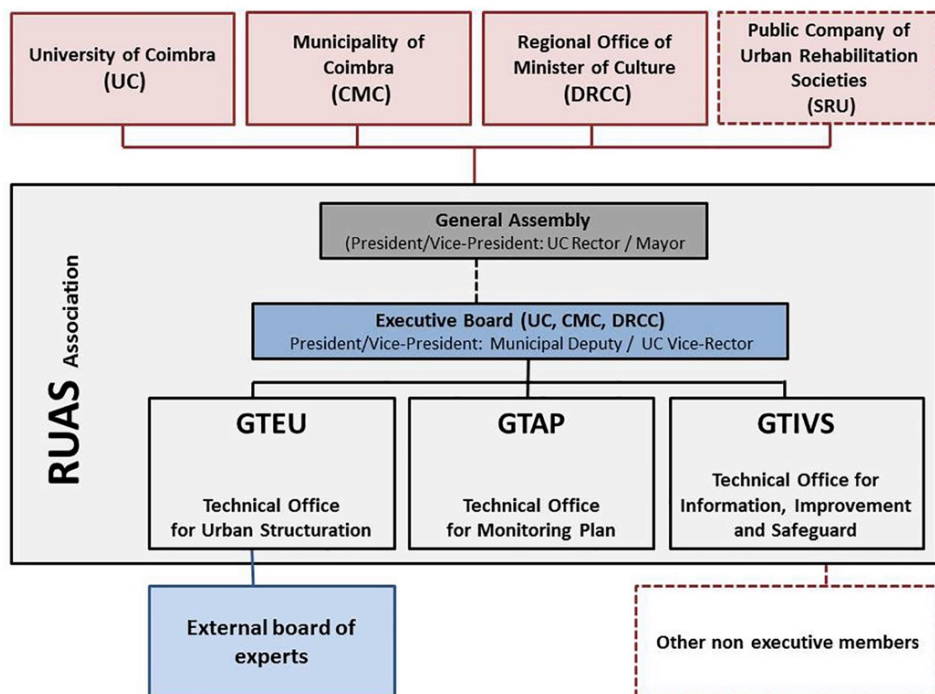


Fig. 5 – The RUAS Association organisational structure according with RUAS report sent to ICOMOS (RUAS 2012b, p. 25).

The Foundation Univer(sc)ity was improved in 2012 to create another more complete one, it is called the RUAS Association (*Associação RUAS – Recriar a Universidade, Alta e Sofia* – Recreate the University, Alta and Sofia) and adopted an innovative model for the implementation of the administrative plan. It united all the official institutions with executive responsibilities promoting the legal jurisdiction for the protection of the property (Capela & Murтинho 2014a). Founded by the UC, CMC, DRCC and SRU¹¹, in December of 2012 the RUAS Association took over responsibility of the administration of the UC-AS property (Fig. 5).

The RUAS Association set up an organisational structure capable of responding to all possible situations as a general assembly. The RUAS Association is headed by a presidency and vice-presidency, the UC Rector or the President of the Municipality in alternation. Its second level is an executive one, the Executive Board, with the same alternation of positions by a Municipal Deputy and a Vice-Rector of the UC, according to its statutory requirements which are the same as the former association. It responds directly to the Executive Board, which is a specialized level composed by three technical offices with different work and responsibilities, i) Technical Office for Urban Structuration¹² (GTEU), ii) Technical Office for Monitoring Plan¹³ (GTAP) and iii) Technical Office for Information, Improvement and Safeguard¹⁴ (GTIVS).

The main purpose of the Technical Office for Urban Structuration is to supervise the urban interventions relating to the property and its protection area, describing, informing, analysing, assessing and authorizing all urban operations within the WH area and involving public or private property under the jurisdiction of the RUAS Association or not. It is supervised by a municipal co-ordinator and it is composed of architects and archaeologists from the Municipality, DRCC and SRU (RUAS 2012b, p. 25) and unites all the entities with direct responsibilities for the urban management of the area. This solution was based on the understanding of the property as an integrant part of a larger territory. The aim of GTAP is to ensure that the Management Plan is carried out effectively. It means that a team of members from the UC, the Municipality and DRCC¹⁵ develop strategies

11 SRU does not have an executive role.

12 *GTEU – Gabinete Técnico de Estruturação Urbana.*

13 *GTAP – Gabinete Técnico de Acompanhamento do Plano.*

14 *GTIVS – Gabinete Técnico de Informação, Valorização e Salvaguarda.*

15 According with the report sent by the RUAS Association to ICOMOS (2012b, p. 25), the GTAP technical office was composed by one coordinator (RUAS Association), one civil engineer (Municipality of Coimbra), one technician of International Relations (Municipality of Coimbra), one technician of Public Administration Management (DRCC), one economist (UC) and one civil engineer (UC).

of monitoring, verifying and coordinating the activities correctly, in order to implement the requirements of the Management Plan and achieve its objectives, such as the planned interventions and works. One aspect of the objective of the Technical Office for Information, Improvement and Safeguard is research into construction methodologies for heritage buildings. It produces knowledge and information about conservation techniques and methodologies, which can contribute to the technical support for the project makers. It can also oversee the cultural development related to the protection and safeguard parameters of the property for its future administration, this technical office is composed by UC and Municipality members, the entities that can best ensure this type of pedagogical instruction and education of the local population.

The most innovative aspect of this approach to the administrative structure was the introduction of the consultative forum, on the next level of the association's organisation, to advise the GTEU office and the Technical Office for Information, Improvement and Safeguard. In the case of the GTEU office, an External Board of Experts was set up, with the participation of ICOMOS Portugal, for instance (RUAS 2013, p. 9), in order to guarantee the assessment of the impact of urban interventions on the property's visual protection. In the case of the Technical Office for Information, Improvement and Safeguard, other social agents, owners and institutions related with the property or its protection zone are taking part in the non-executive group that contributes to the safeguarding and protection of the WH property.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to discuss the legally based operational options and policies concerning Coimbra's WHA, which may contribute to developing the best administrative strategies within the WHA and guarantee an effective administration of the property in the future. The UC-AS Management Plan is a specific volume of its WHA and has been revealed to be a fundamental document where the administration and related policies of the property and its protection zone are discussed and defined in order to guarantee the urban spatial continuity of the city. This strategic document establishes an opportunity to develop, not only the urban intervention processes, but also the interactive bonds between the various entities given responsibility for urban management under the Portuguese law and the owners, in order to protect and safeguard the sustainable development of the property's territory. In accordance with that principle, the UC and the Municipality of Coimbra set up a partnership to administrate the property and protect the property's interests and implement the decisions defined in the Management Plan. There are five legal instruments to do this: the National Law

on Cultural Heritage, the Announcement of UC-AS as a national monument, the Coimbra Municipal Master Plan, the Municipal Regulation of Urban Building, Recovery and Reconversion of the WH territory and Coimbra's Strategic Plan. However the initial configuration of these entities proposed was considered insufficient by ICOMOS as UNESCO's advisory body. A number of property owners and other entities with jurisdiction over the nominated area also drew attention to this failing. It was essential that a solution be found, it was decided that all the institutions with urban responsibility, the UC, the Municipality of Coimbra, the DRCC and SRU should be coordinated to achieve the best results in protecting and administrating the property. As a result, the RUAS Association was founded by those four institutions, based on a formulation of policies about compromises and synergies between the institutional entities responsible for safeguarding and protecting the area and many associations and entities with a relevant social, economic and cultural role in Coimbra.

The UC-AS WH title was a common goal of the city and capable of uniting the people and its representative stakeholders. However, this should not only be achieved when striving for an international patrimonial title, it could also be used as a pro-active attitude towards protecting heritage as a sustainable element of urban development. It is about the image and the identity of the entire city whose characteristics reveal its history, its urban culture and its collective memory. The UC-AS Management Plan is an example of success concerning the application process. Nevertheless, it is necessary to establish some legal bounds for the urban management itself, regarding its influence on the areas of its property and its protection zone with every entity involved, both the public and the private. Nowadays, heritage plays different roles and UNESCO should be a vigilant and a pro-active partner cooperating with local stakeholders striving for the city's sustainable development. This may be achieved by embracing the continuity of an urban space, determined by its identity and its representation, and based on its implementation, culture and collective memory (Fig. 6).

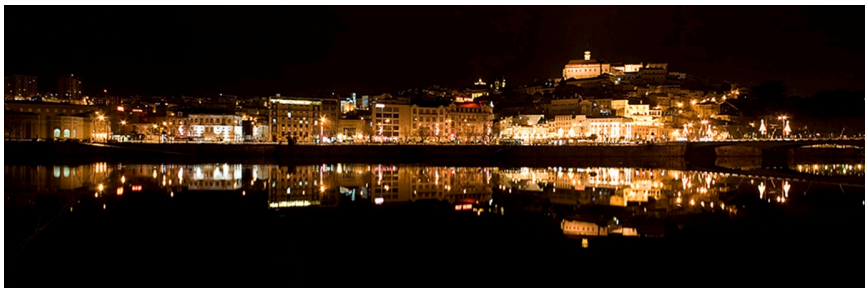


Fig. 6 – Coimbra crowned by the UC. (Photo: Alice – CES, 2013).

This paper argues that it is imperative to discuss this kind of connection between the property and the city because it contributes to its image and identity. The UC property is not closed in on itself and it does not end at its boundaries. On the contrary, the UC is, in fact, part of a territory that is the consequence of particular conjunction of historic footprints left behind through time. In the case of Coimbra, the university and the city seems to be the driving forces mutually stimulating or developing each other. In that sense, the institutional entities responsible for protecting the area have reached an innovative solution based on policies about urban projects and administrative guidelines. By uniting Coimbra's various social and cultural associations and entities, the solution of the RUAS Association has started promoting synergies to guarantee the democratization of the responsibility of protecting and safeguarding Coimbra's heritage, and also makes a considerable contribution to develop Coimbra's culture.

To sum up, it is assumed that the Management Plan would be more difficult to apply without the RUAS Association, because the relevant legal instruments are governed and managed by many different participants and the WHA would be in risk of failure. More important than the WH title itself, it is the implementation of a solid link between the history of the city and its urban identity. It is not possible to understand the University of Coimbra without its urban context and this particular aspect should include some significant strategies to deal with the development of this urban management process. It has already increased the dynamics of the urban intervention within the area of the property, and it is hoped that this will be another opportunity to consider the city desired for the future, assuming that it will be better than the present one.

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