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## Margravian Opera House Bayreuth (Germany) No 1379

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**Official name as proposed by the State Party**  
Margravian Opera House Bayreuth

### Location

Free State of Bavaria  
Administrative District of Upper Franconia  
Germany

### Brief description

The 18<sup>th</sup> century Margravian Opera House in Bayreuth is a masterwork of Baroque theatre architecture, commissioned by Margravine Wilhelmine, wife of Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg-Beyreuth, as a venue for *opera seria*. The bell-shaped auditorium of tiered loges built of wood lined with decoratively painted canvas was designed by the then leading European theatre architect Giuseppe Galli Bibiena. It survives as the only entirely preserved example of court opera house architecture where Baroque court opera culture and acoustics can be authentically experienced. As an independent court opera house it foreshadowed the large public theatres of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *monument*.

## 1 Basic data

### Included in the Tentative List

20 September 1999

### International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

### Date received by the World Heritage Centre

1 February 2010

### Background

This is a new nomination.

### Consultations

ICOMOS has consulted several independent experts.

### Literature consulted (selection)

Kaldor, A., *Opera Houses of Europe*, Antique Collectors' Club, UK & USA, 1996.

Ertug, A., Forsyth, M, and Sachsse, R., *Palaces of Music: Opera Houses of Europe*, AE Limited Edition, USA, 2010.

### Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 13 to 14 September 2011.

### Additional information requested and received from the State Party

ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 22 September 2011 and the State Party provided information on 24 October 2011 on the property's current conservation status, works to be undertaken between 2010 and 2014, transformation or additions to the building, impacts of adjustments to contemporary uses, regulations of visitors, participation of local authorities and other stakeholders. The information has been incorporated below. A further letter was sent on 5 December 2011 asking the State Party to consider shortening the name of the nominated property to 'Margravian Opera House Bayreuth'. A response was received from the State Party on 18 January 2012 agreeing to this proposal.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

14 March 2012

## 2 The property

### Description

The Opera House built 1745-50 faces west across a carefully contrived open space to create an urban focal point between existing buildings. The property boundary is formed by the outer peripheral walls of the theatre and covers 0.19 ha. The building is 71.5 metres long, 30.8 metres wide and 26.2 metres high. The monumental entrance façade design by the Italian architect of the Opera House interior, Giuseppe Galli Bibiena was not used; instead a design by Bayreuth's French court architect Joseph Saint-Pierre was built. The stone façade has giant-order Corinthian columns on the first floor above a rusticated stone ground floor with three arched doors beneath a cantilevered balcony. A balustrade supporting full-size figures runs along the top of the façade in front of a hipped mansard roof. Entrance is via a low vestibule to the full height foyer where the Margrave's arrival was celebrated. Here twin flights of stairs lead up to the Court Loge (Box). The upward progress of the ruling couple could be observed by the audience from three concave tiers of balustraded galleries on either side, which match the height of the loges (boxes) within the auditorium and accommodated the staircases for the audience in the corners. These galleries continue as corridors around the auditorium. From the corridors there is access to the passageways leading to the rear of the loges.

The auditorium's bell-shaped ground plan lined with three tiers of loges is typical of Italian opera houses of the period. Together with the seating in the stalls on the floor of the auditorium, the opera house can accommodate an audience of around 500. A balustraded balcony accessible from the ground floor runs around the auditorium and gives access to the Court Loge. The distance from the original front edge of the stage to the rear wall of the Court Loge is around 22 metres. The span of the roofing structure was a considerable engineering feat at the time.

Within the building's shell the auditorium and proscenium arch were constructed as a building within a building. The tiers of loges are encased in a half-timbered structure, and supported by the ceiling beams of the galleries. The interior of the building consists solely of wood, but the rear walls of the loges and the coffered ceiling are covered in canvas to avoid cracks and achieve improved acoustics.

The heavy half-timbered wall between the corridors and the loges contributes to the environment and sound insulation of the auditorium from the corridors running along the outer walls. The parquet flooring on the ground floor is a replacement, dating from 1935, of an older wooden floor, which was probably predated by flagstones. The Court Loge rises to the height of two tiers and is emphasised by Corinthian columns, as are the proscenium and the trumpeters' loges. The lower loges are ornamented with laughing heads adorned with baskets of fruits and flowers. In contrast to this, the loges of the upper tiers are more simply ornamented.

The balustraded central bay of the Court Loge forms a triumphal arch with the bays on each side also accentuated by Corinthian columns with spiral garlands. It is crowned by a baldachin carrying the Brandenburg heraldic eagle. The three loges above are emphasized by caryatids on the supports and balustrades. Above are rocailles over the side bays and a centrally-placed cartouche with a dedication to the Margraves. The stuccoed stove recesses in the Court Loge were installed in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in order to heat the loge, since it quickly became evident that heating the building would be a problem (traditionally concerts were held during the cold months of the year). The red eagle of the Margraves of Brandenburg appears in the centre of the coffered ceiling with the heart-shaped shield of the Hohenzollern.

The proscenium loges were converted into stage exits in 1935. Due to this intervention the balustraded trumpeters' loges have a greater emphasis today. Forming diagonal splays to the proscenium, they housed trumpeters and drummers who announced the Margrave's entrance. Spirally garlanded Corinthian columns frame the proscenium arch, echoing the treatment of the Court Loge and emphasising the relationship between the stage action and the watching princely couple. Up until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the stage portal opened up fully and created a direct spatial

connection between the auditorium and the stage, and the audience and the theatrical action.

Depicted on the centre of the auditorium ceiling is a view of the heavens. The illusion is assisted by an enormous painted trompe l'oeil entablature. As a prince of peace and active supporter of the arts, it was Apollo whom Margrave Frederick chose as his iconological model. In the sculptural programme on the façade of the opera building, Athena, goddess of wisdom in war and peace, is at his side representing the Margravine.

ICOMOS notes that the balustrade motif serves to integrate the proceedings on the stage with the Court society in the auditorium to form an artistic whole, the audience itself becoming part of the theatre. The motif is continued in the illusionist perspectives, creating an exceptional three-dimensional effect.

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century stage renovation and 20<sup>th</sup> century restoration works, the area behind the proscenium meets the needs of a modern theatre company.

The buffer zone covers 4.22 ha and comprises the area bounded by the Old Castle to the West, the Opernstrasse and the Münzgasse to the North, the bend in the Münzgasse to the East, and the Badstrasse as far as the Sternplatz to the South.

#### **History and development**

The patron of the Margravian Opera House was Margravine Wilhelmine, wife of Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg-Bayreuth. Begun in 1745, the building was sufficiently complete to accommodate celebrations for their daughter's wedding in 1748. However the exterior was not completed until 1750. The building functioned as the Court Opera House for only 25 years, and was subsequently used only sporadically as a performance venue. During the French occupation 1806-1810 the property was used for storage and all stage scenery and props were lost. Between 1810 and the 1860's the stage was altered and gas lighting was installed. The theatre was closed from 1883 to 1887 due to fire safety requirements. The works then undertaken were the insertion of smoke dampers in the roof, connecting galleries between the loges and tier passageways, stone spiral staircases to the side of the vestibule and new door openings in the entrance area as well as fire-proof treatment to curtains and backdrops. From 1919 to 1930 restoration works and electrification were carried out.

In 1935 the Bavarian Department of Palaces undertook a restoration programme aimed at reinstating the historic condition. Performances continued to be held and an electric heating system was installed. While works to the loge structure and foyer rooms were carried out in the 1935 program according to conservation principles, increased use of the building and modifications to accommodate the demands of a modern venue prevailed from 1960-1963 onwards. The stage equipment's renewal led to the loss of the last examples of machinery from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Installation

and use of a heating system caused damage to decorative elements. The 1935-6 program included reduction of the stage opening and installation of an iron fireproof curtain between stage and auditorium, conversion of the proscenium loges to exits and alterations to the orchestra pit. The canvas lining was extensively stabilised, and later insertions in the foyer area were removed.

During the 1970s an air conditioning system was installed, the façade was cleaned, the staircase from the Court Loge to the mezzanine hall was reconstructed and the foyer was remodelled. The stabilisation of the stage architrave and restoration of the loge including its decorative painting were undertaken between 1977 and 1981.

In 2010 the theatre was closed for investigation preceding an extensive conservation program planned to begin in 2013.

### 3 Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity

#### Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis considers the most important European theatres of the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries and a review of those built by the famous Galli Bibiena family. The nomination dossier makes comparisons within the following framework:

- Early theatres based on antique theatre structures: the Teatro Olimpico of Vicenza (1580) listed as World Heritage; Teatro Olimpico of Sabbioneta (1589) also World Heritage listed and Teatro Farnese of Parma (1601-1628).
- *Teatro pubblico*: the public loge theatres of the Baroque: Teatro della Pergola of Florence; Teatro Argentina of Rome; Teatro Manoel of Valletta; Teatro San Carlo of Naples; Teatro Regio, Torino and La Fenice of Venice.
- Theatre rooms integrated into palace complexes or urban surroundings: Palace Theatre in Gotha, Germany; Palace Theatre of Caserta, listed as World Heritage within the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Caserta Royal; Schlosstheater in Český Krumlov listed as World Heritage within the Historic Centre of Český Krumlov; Palace Theatre of Ludwigsburg in Germany; Theatre in the Potsdam New Palace, listed as World Heritage within Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin; Versailles Opéra Royal listed within the World Heritage Palace and Park of Versailles; and Gripsholm Palace Theatre, Sweden.
- Independent, free-standing opera houses of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century: Margravia Theatre of Erlangen, Germany; Berlin Royal Opera House; Old Residenz Theatre (Cuvillies Theatre), Munich; Schwetzingen

Palace Theatre (on Germany's Tentative List and nominated in 2011 within Schwetzingen: A Prince Elector's Summer Residence) and Drottningholm Palace Theatre listed as World Heritage within the Royal Domain of Drottningholm in Sweden.

- The court ceremonial theatre designed by the Galli Bibienas as a merging of stepped theatre and loge theatre; Vienna Grosses Hoftheater, Opéra de Nancy (1708); Teatro Filarmonico in Verona; Teatro Alibert, Rome; Mannheim Opera House; Großes Hoftheater am Zwinger in Dresden; Teatro Comunale (Nuovo Teatro Pubblico) in Bologna; Teatro Scientifico of Mantua, a part of the Mantua and Sabbioneta World Heritage inscription; Teatro dei Quattro Cavalieri of Pavia and Lugo, Teatro Rosso.
- Ephemeral ceremonial architecture of the 18<sup>th</sup> century: the decorative design at the church of Trinità dei Monti and the Spanish Steps in honour of King Louis XIV, Rome 1687.

The analysis includes 18<sup>th</sup> century theatres destroyed or radically altered by fire: Naples' San Carlo, London's Covent Garden and Venice's La Fenice. Also included are Milan's La Scala and Dresden's Opera both bombed in the 1940s.

It is concluded in the nomination dossier that no independent court theatre building is currently inscribed on the World Heritage List. The only cases are part of listed larger complexes as mentioned above. A table listing all the important opera houses destroyed by fire supports the finding that very few historic theatres have survived today. The comparative analysis shows that the nominated opera house represents a specific point in the development of this type of building, being a court opera house located not within a palace but as an urban element in the public space as were later public theatres. It is argued in the nomination dossier that the property, as the earliest original surviving example of this type of building, foreshadowed the great opera theatres of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is explained that the interior form of tiered loges around the auditorium follows that introduced into 17<sup>th</sup> century theatrical architecture to accommodate the privileges of Italian society as patrons of the opera. Prior to this innovation, theatres had stepped, concentric seating as in the Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza in the classical mode of the Renaissance. The nominated property is now the earliest surviving intact example of this form. The Margrave's Opera House has the further distinction of being directly connected to a princely family of the 18<sup>th</sup> century ruling class whose exploits were often portrayed in the opera productions known as *opera seria*. The plot of the *opera seria* was typically set at court and revolved around emotions and their surmounting by means of virtue. While the Margravine's brother Frederick II had built the Berlin Royal Opera House which formed the model for hers, it was almost completely destroyed by fire in 1843, and although subsequently rebuilt has undergone many changes.

The exceptional qualities of the nominated property including the interior architectural decoration and its relationship to courtly self-representation and 18<sup>th</sup> century ceremonial culture are not specifically argued in the comparative analysis, but ICOMOS considers that these are well described in the nomination dossier.

ICOMOS considers that the Margravian Opera House, described as “*an exquisite jewel of an opera house*” by Andras Kaldor (1996), as a well preserved, architecturally decorated ceremonial Baroque space, authentically conveys the courtly theatrical and ceremonial culture of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which otherwise can only be reconstructed by means of written and visual sources. The retention of the original materials of the auditorium means that the original acoustics of an 18<sup>th</sup> century opera house can still be appreciated today.

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ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

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#### **Justification of Outstanding Universal Value**

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value for the following reasons: It is today the most important and best preserved example of court opera house architecture and of the Baroque opera culture.

- It is the only performance venue worldwide where *opera seria* is experienced as a formal expression of the political system of absolutism in all its authenticity.
- It not only served as a means of self-representation and for the passive enjoyment of music, Margravine Wilhelmine, sister of Prussian King Frederick II, was herself a highly talented composer, artistic director and stage director, performing on her own stage.
- It testifies to the intimate connection of theatre with 18<sup>th</sup> century Central European music culture developed from the competition between courts and cities with musical interests.
- The loge structure with half timbered construction in wood and painted canvas is an example of the ephemeral architecture which played an outstanding role in Baroque court ceremonies.
- It is an outstanding exponent of a genre which was one of the three key building types for courtly self-representation.
- As a model example of court opera house, it is a key work within the development of theatre architecture, between the early Italian theatres that looked to the Antiquity and the 19<sup>th</sup> century large bourgeois opera houses.
- It demonstrates a new building type of the opera house within the public space thus marking a unique moment in the history of architecture.

- As a unique surviving, colourfully decorated ceremonial space of the Baroque, it conveys with extraordinary authenticity the courtly theatre and ceremonial culture of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which otherwise can only be traced in written and visual sources.
- It is today the most important testament in Europe to a lost cultural form, which in its supraregional structure was one of the foremost phenomena of the period as a whole.
- It is the sole surviving example of this genre.

ICOMOS considers that the theatre is a masterwork of Baroque court theatre architecture by Giuseppe Galli Bibiena in terms of its tiered loge form and acoustic, decorative and iconological properties. It marks a specific point in the development of opera houses, being a court opera house located not within a palace but as an urban element in the public space, foreshadowing the great public opera houses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **Integrity and authenticity**

##### **Integrity**

The streetscape and surroundings retain the 18<sup>th</sup>-century forms. The façade retains its original appearance excepting the doors in the side bays inserted as emergency exits 1887, which did not disturb the overall appearance. The side elevations also preserve their original form.

Due to the sandstone employed, the extremely weathered sculptures on the attic storey balustrade were replaced by casts in 1936 and 1959/60, the originals being relocated to museums.

The stone surfaces have received minimal stone replacement. The stage door and the ramp on the rear elevation have been retained. Also original is the 18<sup>th</sup> century roof construction.

The layout, form and capacity of the opera house have been largely unchanged. While the foyer’s walls retained their original shape, its interior spaces were transformed. Cloakrooms and toilets were built around the edges of the ground floor. The hall on the main floor, according to documents, originally extended over two floors. In place of a small side room, a flight of stone steps was inserted in 1887 as an emergency fire exit, and the original main timber stairs were removed in 1935. These were later reconstructed.

The corridors around the loge structure retain their original appearance but now accommodate the electricity installation. This fragile loge structure made from wood and canvas has been well preserved. All wooden elements are original, as is the painted canvas covering. The decoration and stucco sculptures have not been altered to date.

The auditorium's 18<sup>th</sup> century painted surfaces are preserved. Investigations on the loge seating show that the ageing original colouration is clearly identifiable. Ninety percent of the Baroque painting has been retained. Later retouching and over painting will be removed during the currently planned restoration program.

The orchestra pit, proscenium and stage floor have been altered several times. The stage opening was reduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and again in 1936 for performance and fire safety reasons. However the original portal can still be seen and still provides the original overwhelming spatial unity of the stage and loge seating areas. On the stage the view up into the original roof beam structure is retained. During the planned restoration program, it is aimed to reinstate the original size of the stage opening, the original form of the proscenium and stage and possibly the orchestra pit.

The stage machinery renewed in the 1960s had been renovated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Research demonstrates that this machinery could be reconstructed. Some old designs and fragments of backdrops still exist although the original stage sets disappeared in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The essence of this grand Baroque Opera House has been retained through the persistence of most of its original physical attributes. The restoration program intends to recover some of the lost elements on the basis of the large amount of written documentation and research done on the Opera House.

ICOMOS considers that the elements necessary to express Outstanding Universal Value are included within the property as one sole building and are in good condition. No adverse effects are expected to occur and an overall conservation and restoration plan has been approved by the State Party.

#### Authenticity

Most of the building and the decorative programme of the loge theatre remain unchanged. Adaptations were due to regulations for fire safety in public buildings and requirements in line with the contemporary use of theatres. The large scale restoration from 1935 was undertaken in accordance with conservation standards and it attempted to restore the property to its original state. In spite of changes to the stage area, the highly unified Baroque work can still be appreciated.

The survival of the interior materials of wood and canvas enable the opera house's original acoustic quality to still be appreciated, and testifies to the authenticity of the property as an 18<sup>th</sup> century opera house.

The retention of the original fabric is the most important aim of the property's planned restoration program. The existing fabric will be safeguarded to the highest

professional standards. Based on the existing documentation and findings, reconstruction of the original stage opening, the proscenium stage and the foyer hall are planned.

ICOMOS considers that the high degree of authenticity is not focused merely on the main attributes of the theatre. The materials still display the structure and craftsmanship of the original craft technology; the preserved parts of the wooden construction bear traces of its original preparation; the painted canvas covers are original, and locksmith elements such as handles, hinges, locks and nails are also original.

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ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

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#### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (iii) and (iv).

*Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Margravian Opera House is the most important and best preserved example of an 18<sup>th</sup> century court opera building in Europe, and a testament to European musical culture. The Opera House was commissioned by one of the most remarkable women of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and designed by Giuseppe Galli Bibiena, the most renowned theatre architect, responsible for shaping the development of theatrical scenery with the invention of the *scena per angolo*. No other theatre by this architect has completely survived. Thus, the court opera building as the last example of a prominent building genre can only be properly studied in Bayreuth.

The original loge structure with its painted decoration shows the sophisticated art of spatial arrangement linked to the *opera seria* as a typical Baroque expression. The whole room was designed and furnished so that it could be turned into a unified ceremonial space, appropriate for other court festivities such as pageants and dances.

The auditorium with its high percentage of original architectural fabric and painting is a singular Baroque example of its genre. The building still retains its original function as a lively performance venue for musical theatre being a unique, authentic example of court music and ceremonial culture. Due to its historical construction from wood and canvas, it permits the unique experience of the original acoustics. In this way it offers a complete insight into the past. Its original form can be entirely experienced within the unchanged 18<sup>th</sup> century urban context.

ICOMOS considers that the justification of this criterion is as a masterwork of Baroque court theatre architecture by Giuseppe Galli Bibiena in terms of its tiered loge form and acoustic, decorative and iconological properties.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been demonstrated.

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*Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Margravia Opera House is today the only performance venue where the Baroque opera culture and *opera seria*'s relationship to Absolutism may be authentically experienced. The Opera House thus represents the only building in Europe that still exhibits the performance context belonging to Baroque *opera seria*, still offering a vivid authentic testimony to this once highly significant genre.

In a unique way, it represents the building type of the Baroque court opera house at its highest ceremonial level of development. This applies to the form and to the appearance of its stuccoed, carved and painted decorative programme.

ICOMOS considers that the stuccoed, carved and painted decorative programme of the Opera House bears exceptional testimony to Baroque court ceremonial culture in relation to *opera seria*. But ICOMOS does not consider that this constitutes sufficient justification of criterion (iii).

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

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*Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Margravia Opera House's loge structure built in wood with illusionistic painted canvas represents the ephemeral ceremonial architecture tradition with Baroque decorative techniques that was employed for pageants, firework displays, funerals and other prominent elements for princely self-representation, a European wide architectural genre no longer surviving in its original form. These features are only currently present in engravings and paintings so this loge structure offers a unique view of ephemeral ceremonial architecture created for a historic moment. Since the stage and stalls could be combined on a single level for larger festivities, it offered the opportunity for the unique staging of princely self-representation during the absolutist era.

Within the development of opera houses since the first solid Renaissance theatres such as Vicenza's Teatro Olimpico onwards, the Margravia Opera House represents the high point of court self-representational requirements, as an exemplary model of Absolutism's

opera architecture. It allows us to experience the most important aspect of the 18<sup>th</sup> century's theatre architecture.

The Margravia Opera House is one of the first independent opera houses with a prestigious exterior architectural design inspired by the Berlin Opera House designed by Knobelsdorff. As the surviving example of its kind, it demonstrates the then new building type of the opera house within the public space, whereas older court opera houses had largely been integrated into palace buildings.

ICOMOS considers that the Opera House is an outstanding example of a Baroque court theatre. It marks a specific point in the development of opera houses, being a court opera house located not within a palace but as an urban element in the public space, foreshadowing the great public opera houses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been demonstrated.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i) and (iv) and conditions of authenticity and integrity and that Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

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#### **Description of the attributes**

The attributes carrying the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are:

- Location in its original 18<sup>th</sup> century public urban space;
- The 18<sup>th</sup> century Baroque façade;
- The original 18<sup>th</sup> century roof structure spanning 25 metres;
- The internal layout and design of ceremonial foyer, tiered loge theatre and stage area including all existing original materials and decoration.

## **4 Factors affecting the property**

### **Development Pressures**

The property is not affected by development. Its extensive buffer zone ensures the preservation of its surroundings.

### **Tourism pressures**

Tourist visits as well as use, number and timing of events have been studied and ICOMOS notes that new regulations will be applied after reopening.

ICOMOS considers that a key decision has been to terminate winter operation of the theatre and reduce activities in the theatre.

#### Environmental pressures

Pollution from traffic is negligible due to restrictions in the immediate vicinity. The sandstone facades are monitored for the corrosive effects of atmospheric pollutants and are cleaned in the course of building maintenance.

The technical facilities are antiquated and are currently being constantly maintained at great expense. Most of the antiquated stage and air conditioning technology will have to be dismantled and replaced with the latest technical facilities. Winter productions have been discontinued to reduce pressure on the property from the need for heating.

#### Natural disasters

Storms, thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, flooding, hail and snow represent a fundamental danger for the building. Facades and roofs are continuously monitored and maintained.

According to the Bavarian Palaces Department's general fire protection regulations, the property has a smoke alarm system and fire extinguishers fitted. An external engineering company was commissioned to produce a conservation-sensitive fire protection plan. The installation of new safety and stage machinery systems will be carried out in a conservation sensitive a manner.

#### Impact of climate change

No impact from climate change has been noted in the nomination dossier.

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ICOMOS considers that the main potential threats to the property are due to severe weather events, antiquated technical systems and the impact of visitors and use on the interior of the property, and are for the moment duly controlled. ICOMOS considers that these threats need ongoing monitoring and all necessary preventative measures should be incorporated in the planned restoration project.

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## 5 Protection, conservation and management

### Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundary of the nominated property is the exterior perimeter of the theatre walls. This includes all the elements expressing the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The buffer zone comprises the area bounded by the Old Castle to the West, the Opernstrasse and the Münzgasse to the North, the bend in the Münzgasse to the east, and the Badstrasse as far as the Sternplatz to the south. The boundaries of the buffer zone are well

delineated and include the immediate setting and views to the property.

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ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone are adequate.

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### Ownership

The property is owned by the State of Bavaria.

### Protection

#### Legal Protection

The nominated property is protected at State level by the Bavarian Law for the Protection and Preservation of Monuments (1973, 2007). It is also protected by inclusion on the List of Monuments of Bayreuth under the Bayreuth City Civic Statutes and Ordinances.

ICOMOS notes that the property is covered by the Federal Building Code.

The buffer zone has been agreed and established with local authorities and its historic buildings are included in the Bayreuth Monuments List.

#### Effectiveness of protection measures

The property is protected by Bavarian State law as well as legal instruments of the City of Bayreuth. The inclusion of planning and systematic control by the City authorities does not allow any inappropriate development of the nominated area and buffer zone which would affect their values, integrity and authenticity.

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ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is appropriate and effective.

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### Conservation

#### Inventories, recording, research

A large amount of multidisciplinary research has been done and is continuously enriched as a base for decisions and interventions.

#### Present state of conservation

The property is in a good overall state of conservation. All parts of the building are well protected against weather effects. The roof covering was renovated and sealed on numerous occasions. The sculptures on the attic storey's balustrade are casts of extant originals damaged by weathering. Measures against rain and pigeon damage protect all façades. The foyer, anterooms and stage are in good condition. The structure and fire protection systems conform to regulatory requirements, although the latter need updating.

The Auditorium aside from minor retouching and residues from the wood preservative treatment has its paintings intact. Few loose paint layers are detectable in the surfaces from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The wooden loge

interior with its decorative ornamentation is exceptionally well preserved. Original painted surfaces have survived almost unaltered.

#### Active Conservation measures

In response to ICOMOS request for information on the conservation works planned for 2010-2014, the State Party provided the following information:

In 2009, theatre operations were discontinued due to safety concerns regarding technical facilities.

The comprehensive restoration plan 2010-2014 has official approval and funds allocated. Scientific investigations and damage mapping were carried out to prepare the plan. Structural repairs and maintenance will focus on structural engineering and building energy management as well as safety measures, addressing long-term protection. Works will mainly affect the attic space, the fire wall along the proscenium arch and the foyer.

Restoration of the Auditorium's 18<sup>th</sup> century paintings will be undertaken. General impermeability will be improved.

Operational rooms in the backstage area will be renovated in accordance with modern standards. The stage opening will be enlarged and restored to its original size to recover the original, unified ceremonial space of auditorium and stage.

Fire safety measures proposed include maintenance of fire escapes and emergency exits and installation of a fire alarm system. A sprinkler system will be installed above the stage as a fire protection measure. Due to the auditorium's value and its delicate paintings a water mist fire protection system will be installed in the attic space above it.

The electrical and stage equipment will be completely renovated to the latest standards. The stage equipment will be replaced to comply with current safety standards and occupational regulations. Heating, ventilation and sanitary systems will be renovated, replacing and reducing older installations.

Works will start in early 2013, with estimated completion in late 2016 and re-opening in 2017. Additional projects planned for 2016 deal with presentation. In terms of conception and technical execution relevant interventions are debated in joint discussions with experts, including ICOMOS. Guidelines for sensitive use have been developed and also for stabilising the environment and efficient technical facilities as well as for fire prevention. It has been defined that the use of the property will be limited to a museum function and summer performances only will be staged between the months of May and October.

#### Effectiveness of conservation measures

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures planned, funding and skilled personnel are appropriate to preserve the property's value, authenticity and integrity. However ICOMOS would urge caution in relation to the proposal to reduce permeability due to possible adverse impacts on joinery and paintwork if the building becomes unable to 'breathe'.

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ICOMOS considers that special attention is needed to ensure that all interventions planned are done according to the abundant documentation and research in the hands of Bavarian authorities and valid conservation principles, under strict supervision by the correspondent technical bodies.

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#### Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The Management authority is the Bavarian Palaces Department. Implementation of the Management Plan is guaranteed by a steering group including the Bavarian Palaces Department; the City of Bayreuth; the Upper Franconia regional government; the Bavarian State Ministry for Science, Research and Arts; the Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Monuments and Historic Buildings, and ICOMOS Germany.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

The Management Plan concluded in 2009 was agreed with all organisations involved. According to the State Party its aims are to:

- Stipulate the strategies, objectives, main instruments and measures for the sustainable protection and continuous care of the Margravial Opera House in Bayreuth, in order to guarantee the site's preservation in accordance with World Heritage requirements, which will be carried forward, developed and regularly updated in collaboration with all parties involved.
- Serve as a planning instrument both for the Free State of Bavaria (as owner) and for the City of Bayreuth (as the location of the Margravial Opera House) and thus record the significant development plans and their effects on the area nominated for World Heritage listing.
- Document the collaboration between the various specialised institutions which ensure the preservation and protection of the site, and are committed to its future preservation by means of the proposed conservation measures.

As a result of research, experience and consultations the impact of visitors and events has been regulated by the Bavarian Department of Palaces. Effective measures have been established to control the number of visitors and frequency of events which will be exclusively limited

to the summer period after the restoration program is concluded. Nevertheless, ICOMOS considers that these aspects should be included within a Visitors Management Plan within the General Management Plan.

#### Risk preparedness

The nomination dossier does not report a risk preparedness plan as such but the Management Plan presented includes an analysis of risks and measures taken or foreseen. The Bavarian Palaces Department coordinates the minimisation of any potential risk.

#### Involvement of the local communities

No direct involvement of local communities is described in the nomination dossier. The City of Bayreuth is included in the steering group.

#### Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and training

The Bavarian Department of Palaces has specialised officers and staff in the fields of conservation and restoration with many years of experience dealing with valuable historic sites. Among them, a buildings officer, a museum officer and a conservator are all responsible for the Margravian Opera House together with an officer in charge of general conservation and historic buildings research issues. A site manager responsible for World Heritage issues takes care of all issues relating to World Heritage for those sites already listed, and for the Margravian Opera House.

At the Bayreuth Office of the Department, staff members responsible for the Margravian Opera House include the Head; administrative assistants for events, the shop, accounts, tours and public relations, and the Head of Technology. At the Bayreuth State Building Office maintenance and conservation are undertaken by a director of construction, a chief building consultant, a senior architectural technician and an architectural technician. On site staff at the Opera House include the Steward, the Opera House Manager, three further staff members dealing with events, tours, shop, housekeeping, 1 cleaner and half time internal and external caretakers.

#### Effectiveness of current management

ICOMOS considers that the property is well managed overall.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate and effective. However ICOMOS recommends that a risk preparedness plan and visitor management plan be included in the Management Plan.

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## 6 Monitoring

The key monitoring indicators reported by State Party are:

- Civic landscape and buffer zone, continuously monitored by the Building Control Office;
- Tourism development, annual monitoring by the City of Bayreuth's Culture Department;
- Visitor development and tourism, continuously monitored by the City of Bayreuth's Culture Department;
- Condition of the building fabric; fire protection, public venue regulations and stage, continuously monitored by the Bayreuth State Building Office, Bavarian Palaces Department and experts as part of the maintenance programme;
- Lightning protection, annually monitored by the Bayreuth State Building Office with the Bavarian State Trade Institute;
- Electrical systems, annually monitored by the Bavarian State Trade Institute;
- Environment monitoring, continuously undertaken by the Restoration Centre, Bayreuth State Building Office and experts.

Monitoring is performed by different entities but the Bavarian Palaces Department, as the management authority, collects all relevant information. It also checks compliance with the Management Plan's objectives and reports to the Bavarian State Ministry for Science, Research and the Arts.

ICOMOS understands that monitoring includes checking the preservation of attributes and the existence of threats but the nomination dossier does not explicitly state this. The nomination dossier does not clarify how often the Palaces Department reports to the Bavarian State Ministry for Science, Research and the Arts.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that monitoring measures are adequate. However, ICOMOS recommends that key indicators be directly related to attributes and potential threats. ICOMOS also recommends that the periodicity of reporting to the Ministry of Science, Research and Arts be specified in the Management Plan.

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## 7 Conclusions

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. The nominated property meets criteria (i) and (iv), and conditions of integrity and authenticity. Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated. The legal protection in place is adequate and effective.

The overall conservation measures planned are appropriate to preserve the property's value, authenticity

and integrity. The management system is effective and assisted by a qualified steering committee. The main potential threats due to technical systems as well as to the impact of visitors and use inside the property, are duly controlled and currently subject to revision but the management plan does not include risk preparedness and a visitor management plan as such.

There is enough stable funding allocated and skilled personnel in charge. Monitoring measures are correct but the direct relation of key indicators with attributes and potential threats is not explicit and the reporting periodicity to the Ministry of Science, Research and Arts is not stated.

#### **Recommendations with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that Margravial Opera House Bayreuth, Germany, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (i) and (iv)**.

#### **Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

##### Brief synthesis

The 18<sup>th</sup> century Margravial Opera House in Bayreuth is a masterwork of Baroque theatre architecture, commissioned by Margravine Wilhelmine of Brandenburg as a venue for *opera seria* over which the princely couple ceremonially presided. The bell-shaped auditorium of tiered loges built of wood and lined with decoratively painted canvas was designed by the then leading European theatre architect Giuseppe Galli Bibiena.

The sandstone façade designed by court architect Joseph Saint Pierre provides a focal point within the urban public space that was particularly planned for the building. As an independent court opera house rather than part of a palace complex, it marks a key point in opera house design, foreshadowing the large public theatres of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today it survives as the only entirely preserved example of court opera house architecture where Baroque court opera culture and acoustics can be authentically experienced. The attributes carrying Outstanding Universal Value are its location in the original 18<sup>th</sup> century public urban space; the 18<sup>th</sup> century Baroque façade; the original 18<sup>th</sup> century roof structure spanning 25 metres; the internal layout and design of the ceremonial foyer, tiered loge theatre and stage area including all existing original materials and decoration.

**Criterion (i):** The Margravial Opera House is a masterwork of Baroque court theatre architecture by Giuseppe Galli Bibiena in terms of its tiered loge form and acoustic, decorative and iconological properties.

**Criterion (iv):** The Margravial Opera House is an outstanding example of a Baroque court theatre. It marks a specific point in the development of opera houses, being a court opera house located not within a

palace but as an urban element in the public space, foreshadowing the great public opera houses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

##### Integrity

The elements necessary to express outstanding universal value are included within the property as one sole building and are intact and in good condition. No adverse effects are expected to occur and an overall conservation and restoration plan has been approved by the State Party.

##### Authenticity

Most of the building and the decorative programme of the loge theatre remain unchanged. Adaptations were due to regulations for fire safety in public buildings and requirements in line with the contemporary use of theatres. The highly unified Baroque work can still be appreciated. The survival of the interior materials of wood and canvas enable the opera house's original acoustic quality to still be appreciated, and testifies to the authenticity of the property as an 18<sup>th</sup> century opera house.

##### Management and protection requirements

The nominated property is protected at State level by the Bavarian Law for the Protection and Preservation of Monuments (1973, 2007). It is also protected by inclusion on the List of Monuments of Bayreuth under the Bayreuth City Civic Statutes and Ordinances. The buffer zone has been agreed and established with local authorities and its historic buildings are included in the Bayreuth Monuments List.

The Management authority is the Bavarian Palaces Department. Implementation of the Management Plan is guaranteed by a steering group including the Bavarian Palaces Department; the City of Bayreuth; the Upper Franconia regional government; the Bavarian State Ministry for Science, Research and Arts; the Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Monuments and Historic Buildings, and ICOMOS Germany. As a result of research, experience and consultations the impact of visitors and events has been regulated by the Bavarian Department of Palaces. Effective measures have been established to control the number of visitors and frequency of events which will be exclusively limited to the summer period after the restoration program is concluded.

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- Ensuring that all interventions planned are done according to the abundant documentation and research in the hands of Bavarian authorities and valid conservation principles, under strict supervision by the correspondent technical bodies;

- Including a Risk Preparedness Plan and a Visitor Management Plan as such within the existing Management Plan;
- Explicitly establishing the direct relation of key indicators to attributes and potential threats and clarify the periodicity of monitoring reporting to the Ministry of Science, Research and Arts.