



Office:

Historical Center Management

Jean-Paul-L'Allier Heritage Prize 2024 Edition

Morelia's Cultural Sites Advisory Council

The city of Morelia is located in the Central Highlands of **Mexico**; it has a population of close to one million inhabitants and was founded by the Spaniards in 1541, on a site where there was a settlement of the *Pirindas* indigenous people.

It is one of the eleven Mexican cities of World Heritage and its buildings of major historical and architectural importance are located within the perimeter of its Historic Center, being remarkable the unity and formal harmony of its buildings, within the variety of architectural styles developed through almost five centuries of its existence.

The Historic Center of Morelia has an extension of 482 hectares with 1,113 properties of patrimonial value. It preserves, practically without alterations, the original layout given by the founders of the city, with characteristic visual auctions and a perfect adaptation to the unique topography of the site.

In recognition of its rich heritage, the Historic Center of Morelia was declared a **Historic Monument Zone** by Presidential Decree on December 14, 1990.

In turn, the Historic Center of Morelia was distinguished by the **World Heritage Committee of UNESCO** with its incorporation to the **World Heritage List** on December 12, 1991, in consideration of the exceptional quality of its urban-architectural environment.

These awards implicitly carry with them the responsibility and commitment to the conservation and safeguarding of heritage assets, which is why the municipal authorities understood from the outset that this commitment had to be assumed jointly by the government and civil society.

H. City Council of Morelia

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To this end, several organizations were created to involve the community in the planning, administration, control and conservation of the Cultural Heritage, giving rise to the creation of several civil associations, such as the Citizen Council, made up of 154 representatives of various social groups and organizations, which address various aspects of the problems of the urban environment, such as: urban mobility, environment, tourism and culture, etc.

However, there was a lack of an organism that specifically dealt with aspects related to Cultural Heritage. For this reason, in the methodological aspect, and in order to have the support of a legal basis, the City Council first approved a "**Regulation of Cultural Sites and Transition Zones**"; thus complying with the Federal Decree that declared the Historic Monuments Zone of Morelia, which determined that local and federal authorities should coordinate among themselves and with the participation of civil society, for the protection of the Heritage Zone.

In compliance with Article 10 of the aforementioned Regulations, the "...**Cultural Sites Advisory Council** was created as a consultation and coordination body of the Municipal authorities with members of the local community, for the preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Municipality."

The Cultural Sites Advisory Council is an organ of consultation and coordination with the municipal authorities and members of the local community for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the municipality.

The Council is presided over by the Municipal President and is made up of municipal officials and authorities, as well as representatives of professional associations and specialists in the restoration and conservation of cultural property. The Council meets in ordinary and extraordinary sessions. Resolutions are taken by simple majority vote, and are passed to the operative areas of the municipal administration for their execution:

- To act as an expert body in matters of conservation and revitalization of cultural heritage.
- To know and give its opinion on reports of actions affecting Cultural Heritage, proposing the consequent sanctions.
- To rule on all projects, works, remodeling, etc. that are located within the Cultural Sites of the Municipality.
- To give an opinion regarding the Plans, Programs, Rules and Regulations related to the Cultural Sites of the Municipality.
- It also has a support body called the Technical Commission of the Cultural Sites Advisory Council.

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The Technical Committee of the Advisory Council is the support body, which analyzes each of the matters to be resolved, formulating a proposed resolution, which is presented to the full Council for discussion and approval.

The Technical Commission receives the applications and reviews the required documentation, according to the list of requirements for each procedure. If the individual requires technical and/or legal advice, it is provided to guide the process and for the proper integration of the file.

Perform a site inspection visit to corroborate the current state of the property, documenting it graphically.

It analyzes each case, establishing its viability in accordance with the regulations determined by the Partial Urban Development Program and the Historic Center Management Plan, as well as the Construction Regulations in force.

Prepare the technical opinion corresponding to the case and deliver it, together with the respective file, to the Secretary of Urban Development and Mobility.

The Technical Opinion issued by the Cultural Sites Advisory Council is one of the documents required to obtain the Construction License for all projects, works, remodeling, etc. located within the Monuments Zone, Transition Zone and all Cultural Sites of the Municipality.

Before starting the process, it is necessary to have the Authorization of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), for the properties located in the Monuments zone, and in case of a use other than a house, the Land Use License issued by the Directorate of Municipal Urban Order.

The following documentation is required to process and analyze the cases:

- Request addressed to the Technical Commission.
- Oficio and authorization from INAH (only for Monuments Zone).
- Certificate of ownership.
- Proof of current property tax.
- License of use of soil, (except house-habitation).
- Receipt of potable water and electricity services.
- Registration of the Director responsible for the work.
- Digitized planimetry (approved by INAH for the Monuments Zone).

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In case the procedure is related to hydraulic or electrical works, the approvals or authorizations from OOAPAS or the C.F.E., as the case may be, must be submitted. Likewise, if the actions to be carried out are on sidewalks or public roads, authorization must be obtained from the Secretary of Urban Development and Sustainable Mobility of the Municipality.

- A technical visit is made to the property.
- The Technical Opinion of the Advisory Council is delivered after the case has been analyzed at the Meeting of the Cultural Sites Advisory Council, and the resolution and decision issued at that meeting is sent to the applicant via e-mail.

The citizens who participate in the Council do so on an honorary basis, without receiving any remuneration; however, they do so with an excellent disposition considering that they contribute to the surveillance and conservation of the heritage, participating in the respective decision making.

In the course of its operation, the Council has issued rulings in more than 1,300 cases, including new constructions, demolitions, expansions, restorations, opening of openings, change of land use, etc.

Therefore, we can affirm that throughout the time that the Morelia Cultural Heritage Advisory Council has been functioning, it has proven to be an excellent instrument to contribute to the conservation of the Historic Center, as well as to involve the community in the appreciation and valuation of its cultural assets.

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