Complementary document for consideration

Welsh Government

Historic Environment (Wales) Bill

Complementary document for consideration

Draft

Managing Change in World Heritage Sites in Wales

This document is a draft that has been prepared for consideration alongside the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill. It is intended to provide Assembly Members, stakeholders and members of the public with an understanding of the policy, advice and guidance that will complement the legislation after its enactment.

Some sections of this document are dependent upon the provisions of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill as introduced to the National Assembly for Wales on 1 May 2015. This document is therefore liable to changes following the scrutiny of the Bill by the National Assembly and any consequent amendments to the legislative provisions. Following those changes, the document will be subject to a full public consultation prior to publication. That consultation is likely to take place in 2016.
Change in World Heritage Sites in Wales

May 2015
Statement of Purpose

Celebrating Blaenavon’s World Heritage Site status.

Managing Change in World Heritage Sites in Wales supplements the relevant sections of Planning Policy Wales: Chapter 6 — The Historic Environment and Technical Advice Note 24: Historic Environment.1

It sets out general principles for managing World Heritage Sites in Wales and guidance for their protection and enhancement through the planning system.

This best-practice guide is aimed at decision makers, including national and local planning authorities, statutory undertakers and prospective developers, to raise the profile and significance of World Heritage Sites in Wales and to help them manage change without adverse impact on their Outstanding Universal Value — the reasons why they have been inscribed as World Heritage Sites.

This guidance should be taken into account by decision-making authorities when developing strategic plans and when considering proposals that might impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site, such as individual planning, listed building, conservation area and scheduled monument consent applications.
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Thomas Telford’s aqueduct, which is the central feature of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site.

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Fast Facts

1. There is no higher recognition of heritage value than World Heritage Site status.

2. There are currently three World Heritage Sites in Wales.

3. Because of their Outstanding Universal Value, we have a responsibility to protect, conserve and present World Heritage Sites for future generations.

4. National guidance requires planning authorities to protect World Heritage Sites and their settings from inappropriate development.

5. World Heritage Site status is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

6. World Heritage Sites can bring economic, environmental and social benefits to local communities through education, tourism and regeneration.
World Heritage Sites are places of Outstanding Universal Value to the whole of humanity. This means that their cultural and/or natural significance ‘is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.’ (UNESCO World Heritage Committee)

The international significance of Welsh heritage has been recognised by the inscription of three World Heritage Sites which represent Wales’s global importance in the history of medieval military architecture and the origins of industry. Our World Heritage Sites are places to cherish and celebrate forever. We want to foster better understanding of their history and what makes them internationally significant so that people care about them and unlock the opportunities they offer through improved tourism, regeneration and lifelong learning opportunities.

The protection and conservation of World Heritage Sites is fundamental to achieving these ambitions.

Caernarfon Castle — one of the four sites that make up the World Heritage Site of the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd.
1. The Governance of World Heritage Sites in Wales

1.1 The International Context

World Heritage Sites are considered to be places of Outstanding Universal Value, as set out in the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, better known as the World Heritage Convention.  

The World Heritage Convention

The World Heritage Convention is best known for the World Heritage List, but it covers conservation of cultural and natural heritage as a whole. Governments of countries that have ratified the convention are referred to as States Parties. As of 2014, 192 States Parties have ratified the convention, including the UK Government.

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee oversees the implementation of the convention (see Annex 1). It is made up of representatives from 21 of the States Parties to the convention elected by their general assembly.

The committee is supported by the World Heritage Centre, which acts as its secretariat, and is advised by three international bodies — ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM — which advise on nominations, state of conservation of properties and also on strategic issues and international assistance applications.

UNESCO Operational Guidelines

The committee periodically publishes Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (Operational Guidelines). The UNESCO Operational Guidelines explain the criteria under which Outstanding Universal Value is assessed and describe procedures required for the protection, conservation and management of World Heritage Sites (see Annex 2).

1.2 The UK Context

The United Kingdom ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1984 and now has 28 World Heritage Sites.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is the lead government department on World Heritage issues and is responsible for ensuring that the UK fulfils its obligations as a State Party to the World Heritage Convention. DCMS is the UK point of contact with UNESCO and works closely with the UK ambassador to UNESCO. DCMS liaises with the Welsh Government on the nomination, conservation and protection of Welsh World Heritage Sites and on matters of policy as appropriate.

The UK National Commission for UNESCO is the focal point in the UK for UNESCO-related policies and activities, including World Heritage Sites, and promotes UNESCO’s wider educational, scientific and cultural aims, some of which can be delivered through World Heritage Sites.

Sensitive bridge design allows access for all to Caernarfon Castle.
1.3 The Welsh Context

There are three World Heritage Sites in Wales, in whole or in part:

- Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd (inscribed 1986)
- Blaenavon Industrial Landscape (inscribed 2000)
- Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal (inscribed 2009).

The mechanisms in place to protect World Heritage Sites in Wales are devolved matters and the Welsh Ministers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the convention. These functions are discharged through Cadw, the historic environment service of the Welsh Government. Enquiries from the UNESCO World Heritage Committee about World Heritage Sites in Wales are referred by DCMS to Cadw.

The Welsh Ministers are responsible for identifying those elements of World Heritage Sites in Wales that should be given statutory protection as scheduled monuments and listed buildings.

Local planning authorities have an important role in managing change, protecting and conserving World Heritage Sites. They are responsible for the designation of conservation areas, which may include parts of a World Heritage Site. They are also responsible for spatial planning in World Heritage Sites and, in some cases, communication, management and promotion. Occasionally, local authorities own parts of World Heritage Sites.

1.4 Other Advisory Bodies

ICOMOS-UK can provide non-statutory advice to the UK and Welsh Governments, local authorities and World Heritage Site management/steering groups. World Heritage: UK promotes the sustainable management and conservation of the UK’s World Heritage Sites.
World Heritage Governance in Wales

UNESCO
World Heritage Committee
World Heritage Centre

Department for Culture,
Media and Sport (DCMS)

Welsh Ministers
Cadw

UK National
Commission for
UNESCO

ICOMOS

ICOMOS-UK

WHS Coordinator
Cadw

WHS Coordinator
Torfaen CBC

WHS Coordinator
Wrexham CBC

World Heritage Sites in Wales Management/Steering Groups

Castles and Town Walls of
King Edward in Gwynedd
World Heritage Site

Blaenavon Industrial
Landscape
World Heritage Site

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct
and Canal
World Heritage Site
2. Management of World Heritage Sites in Wales

2.1 General Principles

World Heritage Sites are complex historic assets. They can cover large areas, such as the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape, be spatially separated like the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd, and cross national boundaries like Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal. The Welsh Government’s approach to the protection of World Heritage Sites is based on statutory designation of elements of each site, the use of the spatial planning system and the collaborative creation and implementation of World Heritage Site management plans to ensure the effective and active involvement of all key stakeholders.

Each World Heritage Site has a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. This statement provides a clear, shared understanding of the reasons for the site’s inscription on the World Heritage List, and of what needs to be managed to sustain the Outstanding Universal Value for the long term.

The main elements of the protection and management of World Heritage Sites in Wales are:

- Statutory designation of specific historic assets within World Heritage Sites (listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas).
- Recognition of World Heritage Site status as an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- Preparation of a Heritage Impact Assessment for all planning applications likely to have a significant impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of a World Heritage Site.
- Inclusion of policies in local development plans to protect the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of World Heritage Sites supported by the preparation of supplementary planning guidance.
- Production, adoption and regular review of agreed management plans for each World Heritage Site.
- Establishment of management/steering groups including stakeholder representation from key partners, major owners, managers and communities.
- Effective coordination, normally by a dedicated coordinator.

 Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal crosses national boundaries. Coordinated management helps protect its Outstanding Universal Value.
2.2 Protection by Designation and Other Means

Significant parts of all three World Heritage Sites in Wales are protected by statutory designation as individual scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas. It is a criminal offence to damage or undertake work on these designated historic assets without prior approval. Cadw, on behalf of the Welsh Ministers, administers scheduled monument consent and local planning authorities consider applications for listed building consent and conservation area consent.

World Heritage Sites, in whole or in part, may also benefit from protection by other means including their location within National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and sites on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales. What is protected should be kept under review and updated when necessary.

Local planning authorities may choose to identify historic assets of special local interest, which include places within a World Heritage Site. If local planning authorities identify such local historic assets, policies for their preservation and enhancement must be included in the local development plan.6

Historic environment records are an important source of information about non-designated historic assets.

2.3 Conservation Principles

Cadw's Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales7 explains the Welsh Government’s approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales and reflects many of the presumptions of the World Heritage Convention. Four heritage values — evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal — can be used as a consistent basis for describing the significance of a site. These heritage values can help define the attributes which convey the Outstanding Universal Value of a cultural World Heritage Site, as defined in the UNESCO Operational Guidelines.8 These attributes might include:

- form and design
- materials and substance
- use and function
- traditions, techniques and management systems
- location and setting
- language, and other forms of intangible heritage
- spirit and feeling
- other internal and external factors.

Attributes such as spirit and feeling do not lend themselves easily to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity, but nevertheless are important indicators of character and sense of place, for example, in communities maintaining tradition and cultural continuity.

Attributes should be defined and agreed for all World Heritage Sites based on the approved Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

Harlech Castle – one of the four sites that make up the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd World Heritage Site.
2.4 Management Plans

To remain on the World Heritage List, States Parties must ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the sites for which they are responsible is maintained, sustained and communicated. UNESCO requires the production of management plans for each World Heritage Site to bring together all responsible parties and enable a coordinated approach to the management of the site. The management plan is also the way in which UNESCO can be certain that there are adequate management mechanisms in place to support the conservation of the World Heritage Site.

The Welsh Government expects the lead body for each World Heritage Site in Wales to follow the UNESCO guidelines that each World Heritage Site should have a management plan with an overall vision for the site and short-, medium- and long-term objectives to protect, conserve and present the site.

Plans should be tailored to the specific characteristics and needs of the site. They should set out clearly the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value and provide policies for their protection and enhancement. Management plans serve as framework documents designed to sustain Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity. They should establish a framework for decision-making and provide information on threats and opportunities for the site so that it can be managed in a sustainable way. Management plans should be reviewed at least every five years.9

Plans should be based on consensus and subject to public consultation. Relevant policies in the management plan need to be taken into account in local development plans, National Park authority and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty management plans, and when determining planning permission. It is good practice to adopt all or part of the management plan as supplementary planning guidance.

2.5 Management/Steering Groups and Site Coordinators

All the current World Heritage Sites in Wales fall into more than one local planning authority. Management plans should involve management/steering groups which include representatives of all the relevant local planning authorities (including conservation officers and curatorial archaeologists), owners, managers, town and community councils, Cadw and other official bodies with an interest in the site. ICOMOS-UK is normally a member of management/steering groups. The leader of the group is often the key owner or custodian of the site, or the key local authority.

The success of a site — in terms of protection, conservation, and promotion — depends on the input and shared vision of the partners. Each management/steering group is responsible for the formulation and implementation of the plan, including public consultation, so it is critical that all partners are prepared to commit the time and resources to ensure the success of the management plan.

Management/steering groups and management plans are most effective when there is a World Heritage Site coordinator in place. World Heritage Site coordinators drive the implementation, monitoring and revision of a management plan, promote the Outstanding Universal Value and public benefit of World Heritage Sites, increase awareness and understanding among partners, stakeholders and the public, and provide a central point for advice. They represent sites’ and partners’ interests and promote best practice in the management of the World Heritage Site, locally, nationally and internationally. They produce and coordinate the periodic reports to UNESCO.

Management/steering groups should consult Cadw before proposing changes which will require full renomination because this is a lengthy and expensive process. At present, such renominations would also prevent nomination of a new site in the same committee cycle (see Annex 3).
Blaenavon Industrial Landscape
World Heritage Site Management Plan

Although the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000, it was three years earlier that the Blaenavon World Heritage Site Partnership was established. Its purpose was not only to coordinate the successful nomination but also to implement the accompanying management plan — as laid out in UNESCO’s Operational Guidelines.

With the historic town of Blaenavon at the heart of this landscape, the site’s significance lies in the extensive remains of early mineral works and processing, as well as the remains of the later commercial production of coal, iron and steel.

By its very nature, the site covers a large area — 3,290 hectares — which crosses the boundaries of three planning authorities and involves a multitude of stakeholders ranging from national agencies to the residents of Blaenavon and the surrounding settlements. Coordination and management were major challenges.

The partnership — made up of local and national authorities led by Torfaen County Borough Council — focused its vision on protecting the landscape but also on presenting and promoting it to increase cultural tourism and assist economic regeneration in an area that was socially and economically depressed. Ten years after inscription, the partnership reviewed the success of the first management plan. Their list of achievements is impressive and includes:

- National monuments saved, conserved and interpreted, including state-of-the-art multimedia displays at the ironworks.
- The conservation and reuse of derelict buildings. The UK’s first dedicated World Heritage Centre is in a former school.
- Major repairs to 500 older properties.
- Environmental improvements, especially work done by volunteer rangers as part of the Forgotten Landscapes project.
• New jobs, new skills and new businesses, such as the Rhymney Brewery and visitor experience.
• Increased visitor numbers and tourist spend.
• Education and events programmes, including Blaenavon’s annual World Heritage Day.
• Community and volunteer participation, leading to a new sense of pride in the town.

‘Blaenavon probably offers the best model of the potential for WHS heritage-led regeneration in the UK.’

International Study carried out by Rebanks Consulting Ltd.

Taking the lessons learned from the first ten years, the partnership set about planning for the next five years. The issues ranged from revising how the steering group operates through to giving it a more strategic role and exploring the potential of a buffer zone to protect a wider area of cultural significance. The new management plan includes some definite projects, for which funding has been secured, but also more ambitious proposals.

Following extensive partner and public consultation, the partnership has adopted this new management plan for 2011–16 to guide the protection and promotion of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site for a further five years, and to make sure that the residents of Blaenavon and the surrounding area continue to see change for the better.

The management plan and supporting documents are available on the Visit Blaenavon website www.visitblaenavon.co.uk

Summary

The Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site management plan demonstrates best practice because:

• There is an overarching vision for the site that responds to local needs as well as protecting the site’s Outstanding Universal Value.
• It sets out the significance of the site and how it can be protected and enhanced.
• It sets out the management roles and responsibilities of the partnership, the steering group and working groups, which are flexible enough to respond to meet changing circumstances.
• It sets out management objectives focused on the key issues and proposals for specific projects and activities, including likely phasing and possible sources of funding.
• Wide public and partner consultation has ensured that the plan is robust.
• The success of the plan has demonstrated that heritage protection and heritage-led regeneration are complementary.
• The plan is kept under review.
2.6 Periodic Reporting

Every six years, the States Parties submit a periodic report to the World Heritage Committee to show how they apply the World Heritage Convention. The report also includes the state of conservation of all their World Heritage Sites.

Periodic reporting is intended to provide:

- An assessment of how a State Party applies the convention.
- An assessment of whether the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site inscribed on the World Heritage List is being maintained over time.
- Updated information about the World Heritage Site to record its changing circumstances and state of conservation.
- A mechanism for regional cooperation and exchange of information and experiences between States Parties about implementing the convention and World Heritage conservation.

2.7 State of Conservation Reports

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee monitors the state of conservation of World Heritage Sites. States Parties should notify the World Heritage Centre of major events (such as natural emergencies) which affect a World Heritage Site as well as major restorations or new developments which might affect their Outstanding Universal Value. Third parties can also raise concerns with the World Heritage Centre about the state of conservation of individual World Heritage Sites.

When investigating concerns about Welsh World Heritage Sites, the World Heritage Committee might request a state of conservation report from DCMS as the national State Party. DCMS would pass the request to Cadw, who would contact those responsible for the relevant World Heritage Site where applicable.

Where significant concern has been raised about the preservation of a World Heritage Site, or in response to an unsatisfactory state of conservation report, the World Heritage Committee and World Heritage Centre will ask the State Party to invite a Reactive Monitoring Mission. Such missions are usually carried out by ICOMOS, sometimes jointly with the World Heritage Centre and/or representatives of its advisory bodies. At their own expense, States Parties can request advisory missions to inspect and report on proposals that could affect a World Heritage Site. In very serious cases, the World Heritage Committee can place a site on the List of World Heritage in Danger as a means to try and find ways to reverse damage, or, if its Outstanding Universal Value has been lost, can remove it from the World Heritage List altogether.

World Heritage Sites need to remain relevant and vibrant. Re-enactors like this medieval knight help bring the sites alive for twenty-first-century visitors.
3. Planning Policy and World Heritage Sites in Wales

3.1 Planning for Change

Local planning authorities have a key role to play in managing change, protecting and conserving World Heritage Sites via the spatial planning system. The system is plan-led and guided by a hierarchy of national guidance produced by the Welsh Government, including Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Notes. Local planning authorities produce local development plans and together these policies set the framework against which local planning authorities determine applications for planning permission, listed building consent and conservation area consent.

3.2 Local Development Plans

Although no additional statutory controls result from World Heritage designation, the Welsh Government expects local planning authorities to establish specific policies to protect and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of World Heritage Sites by managing development within and adjacent to them. These policies should take account of international and national requirements as well as specific local circumstances and should be included in local development plans.

Local development plan policies should also reflect that World Heritage Sites can be important for social cohesion and can help to foster a sense of pride. They can also act as the focus for education, tourism, economic development and regeneration.

Local planning authorities should aim to:

- Protect the World Heritage Site and its setting, including the buffer zone, from inappropriate development.
- Balance the needs of conservation, biodiversity, access, the interests of the local community, the public benefits of a development and the sustainable economic use of the World Heritage Site in its setting, but ensure that balance is not at the expense of integrity or authenticity.
- Engage with and deliver benefits to the local communities around the site.
- Protect the World Heritage Site from the effect of changes which are relatively minor but which, on a cumulative basis, could have a significant effect.
- Enhance the World Heritage Site and its setting, where appropriate and possible, through positive management.
- Protect the World Heritage Site from the effects of climate change but ensure that mitigation and adaptation is not at the expense of integrity or authenticity.
- Require Heritage Impact Assessments for development proposals likely to have a significant impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity or authenticity of a World Heritage Site.

The view along the wall-walks of Conwy’s town walls.
3.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

It is good practice for local planning authorities to support the local development plan with supplementary planning guidance. Supplementary planning guidance may cover a range of issues, both thematic and site specific, which may expand policy or provide further details to policies in a local development plan. All the current World Heritage Sites in Wales fall into more than one local planning authority so cooperation between them is vital. This is achieved most effectively through the collaborative adoption of shared supplementary planning guidance to ensure a consistent approach to all planning decisions. The supplementary planning guidance needs to be linked closely to the local development plan and World Heritage Site management plan.

3.4 Setting and Views

The UNESCO Operational Guidelines seek protection of the ‘immediate setting’ of each World Heritage Site and of ‘important views and other areas or attributes’ that support the Outstanding Universal Value. The setting is more than simply the immediate surroundings of a site and extends beyond the site boundary. It can also relate to how the site was intended to fit into the landscape, the views from it, and how the site is seen from the surrounding area. The setting is not necessarily the same as the buffer zone (where one exists), which it can overlay or extend beyond. General guidance on the impact of development proposals on the setting of historic assets is given in Technical Advice Note 24: Historic Environment.

Planning authorities may wish to assess which views of the World Heritage Site contribute to its Outstanding Universal Value. Typically, this will involve a baseline study in which the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value are assessed in relation to views. The study should be publicly consulted upon before adoption by planning authorities. The impact of development proposals can be assessed by developers and others against this baseline study. Other landscape designations may be effective to protect the setting of a World Heritage Site, and should be explained in the local development plan.

3.5 Buffer Zones

Some World Heritage Sites have buffer zones. UNESCO’s Operational Guidelines describe a buffer zone as an area surrounding a World Heritage Site which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development to give an added layer of protection for the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of a site. Buffer zones are appropriate when the area surrounding a World Heritage Site contains a cultural, settled and aesthetic landscape which contributes to the presentation, setting and history of the site and is important to the integrity and sometimes also to the authenticity of the inscription.

A buffer zone is not part of a World Heritage Site. Where a buffer zone exists it should include the immediate setting of the inscribed site, important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the site and its protection. The setting of a World Heritage Site may, however, extend beyond the buffer zone.

A buffer zone can be an important management tool. It can be used to highlight areas where potential impacts need to be given careful consideration by developers and decision makers, and where planning restrictions may be appropriate. World Heritage Sites and their buffer zones should be identified clearly in local development plan maps. Changes to the boundaries of World Heritage Sites and their buffer zones can only be made by the World Heritage Committee following submission of a proposal for a minor modification by the UK Government.

The setting of the wharf at Llanfoist is important to the integrity and authenticity of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape.
Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site Supplementary Planning Guidance

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2009.

The site is a long, narrow corridor, stretching 18km from just north of Llangollen to Chirk Bank and crossing three local authority areas. Two of the authorities are in Wales and one is in England.

The site itself is a feat of civil engineering. Built in a difficult geographical setting, it was completed in the early years of the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution. Although the World Heritage Site focuses on the canal and Thomas Telford’s monumental and elegant aqueduct, a buffer zone encompasses a wider area which recognises that the cultural, settled and aesthetic landscapes are important to the site’s Outstanding Universal Value.

These landscapes contribute to the presentation, setting, sense of arrival and history of the World Heritage Site and buffer zone, and are important to the integrity of the designation, irrespective of administrative boundaries.

To maintain this integrity, the three local authorities have cooperated to take a consistent approach to new development to preserve the site’s Outstanding Universal Value and avoid adverse impacts on the setting, including the buffer zone.

The three local planning authorities — Wrexham County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council and Shropshire Council — have worked together to produce a joint supplementary planning document which amplifies the development plan policies of the three councils. Because of the different planning systems in Wales and England, Wrexham and Denbighshire have adopted it as supplementary planning guidance; Shropshire will use it to inform a supplementary planning document about the historic environment. The supplementary planning guidance is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications that affect the World Heritage Site and its setting.

Left: Managing the World Heritage Site for positive social, economic and environmental benefits has led to increased tourism opportunities.

Bottom: Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site crosses the boundaries of three local planning authorities. Joint planning guidance ensures a consistent approach to planning decisions.
Aimed at developers, members of the public, and officers and members of the councils, the guidance explains the planning context, the significance of the World Heritage Site and buffer zone, and sets out the vision for managing development as laid out in the World Heritage Site management plan and agreed with UNESCO. By linking the local authority development plan with the World Heritage Site management plan through supplementary planning guidance, a cohesive and holistic approach to protection and development can be maintained.

General guidance for planning applications explains that development proposals must demonstrate how they have considered the impact on the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, taking into account local character, views and sense of arrival as well as the site’s integrity and authenticity.

A useful table offers detailed guidance for different development types in particular locations. This has been tailored to meet the specific needs of both applicants and the World Heritage Site and sets out a framework to ensure a consistent approach.

The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site supplementary planning document is available on the Wrexham County Borough website www.wrexham.gov.uk and the Denbighshire County Council local development plan website www.denbighshire.gov.uk

Summary

The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site supplementary planning guidance demonstrates best practice because:

- It was developed through the collaboration of three local planning authorities — two in Wales and one in England — to support local development plans and the World Heritage Site management plan.
- It recognises that a consistent approach to planning decisions affecting the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone is crucial to maintaining the site’s integrity.
- It recognises that change needs to be managed positively to maximise the potential social, economic and environmental benefits of World Heritage Site status.
- It offers detailed guidance for a variety of development scenarios in the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone.
- It supports planning decisions to protect and enhance the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone.
4. Development Management and World Heritage Sites in Wales

4.1 Managing Change

Change is inevitable and needs to be managed carefully so it does not threaten the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site. The impact of change can be neutral, beneficial or detrimental in its effect on the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of a World Heritage Site. Planning authorities should assess this impact when considering planning applications within World Heritage Sites, their settings or buffer zones.

The desirability of sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of a World Heritage Site, and of considering the impacts of proposed development on its setting and, where it exists, the World Heritage Site buffer zone is an important material consideration when determining planning applications. World Heritage Site status does not remove the obligation to consider other statutory and non-statutory designations, such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments, National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, that lie within the World Heritage Site, its setting or buffer zone (if one exists), or diminish their significance in planning decisions.

4.2 Assessing the Impact of Development on World Heritage Sites in Wales

In all cases that are likely to have a significant impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of a World Heritage Site and its setting, it is best practice to carry out pre-application discussions with the planning authority and Cadw to ensure that all the implications are fully understood and explicitly portrayed in supporting illustrative material. The planning authority will decide at this stage whether or not a Heritage Impact Assessment is required.

Applicants should use Cadw’s conservation principles to assist them to justify their proposals and demonstrate how they have considered the impact of their development proposals on a World Heritage Site and understand in particular:

- The character of the area in which the development is located and how the development will affect the setting of the World Heritage Site.
- How the development within the setting of the World Heritage Site will impact on its Outstanding Universal Value and on views into and out of the World Heritage Site.
- How the development will contribute to, or minimise the impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value, as defined by its attributes, and the integrity and authenticity of the World Heritage Site.

The nature, scale and location of development will be important in determining the range and depth of information that will be required with a planning application. A Heritage Impact Assessment should be produced for all planning applications likely to have a significant impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of a World Heritage Site. The need for a Heritage Impact Assessment will be determined by the local planning authority during pre-application discussion.

Planning authorities should consult Cadw on all planning applications affecting a World Heritage Site and any associated buffer zone as directed by the Welsh Government. Planning authorities may also wish to consult ICOMOS-UK.

Local planning authorities should welcome appropriate modern design that contributes positively to the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site and its setting.
4.3 Permitted Development Rights

In certain circumstances, permitted development rights in World Heritage Sites are restricted to prevent any potential impact on the Outstanding Universal Value. This is intended to control cumulative small-scale changes which, over time, could erode the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity, authenticity and character of the site.

Local planning authorities may wish to consider Article 4 or Article 7 Directions to limit other potentially damaging classes of permitted development within World Heritage Sites as appropriate ways of improving the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value.

Although some development will not require a planning application, such as work carried out by statutory undertakers and development subject to agricultural and forestry notifications, the impact on the Outstanding Universal Value should be considered by the relevant authority and steps taken to avoid harm to the Outstanding Universal Value wherever possible. A Heritage Impact Assessment may be appropriate.

4.4 Environmental Impact Assessments

World Heritage Sites are classed as ‘sensitive areas’ for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations. When an EIA is required, the Heritage Impact Assessment should form part of this wider study. Guidance on the production of a Heritage Impact Assessment for a World Heritage Site is provided by ICOMOS in Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties, which focuses on the methodology for assessing the impact of the proposal on the site, its Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity.

A Heritage Impact Assessment undertaken in these circumstances is not additional to a standard EIA but integral to it, using the ICOMOS methodology to focus on Outstanding Universal Value and its attributes.

Where an EIA is required, the Environmental Statement should highlight the environmental impacts of proposed developments and propose appropriate mitigation and monitoring measures. It is also good practice for the Environmental Statement to consider alternative approaches to the development.

4.5 Call-in and Referral to the World Heritage Committee

The Welsh Ministers may consider for call-in any planning application which raises planning issues of more than local importance. It could be considered appropriate to call in applications when the proposals impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site.

The World Heritage Committee has asked States Parties to inform it at an early stage of proposals that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site and ‘before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, so that the committee may assist in seeking appropriate solutions to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is fully preserved’.

Cases that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site for which the Welsh Ministers request call-in may be reported to DCMS before the planning application is determined. DCMS may refer the case to the World Heritage Committee.

*Conwy Castle and Town Walls – one of the four sites that make up the Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd World Heritage Site.*
Annexes

Annex 1: The Role of the World Heritage Committee

The World Heritage Committee meets annually to:

• Determine and review the strategy for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.
• Decide on nominations for inscription as World Heritage Sites.
• Monitor the conservation of World Heritage Sites through reactive monitoring and periodic reporting and decide whether sites should be placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger or deleted from the World Heritage List.
• Consider requests for international assistance.
• Raise awareness of World Heritage and promote educational activities.

Annex 2: UNESCO Operational Guidelines

The UNESCO Operational Guidelines explain the criteria under which Outstanding Universal Value is assessed and describe procedures required for the protection, conservation and management of World Heritage Sites, which include:

• The production of a management plan for each World Heritage Site to bring together all responsible parties and ensure a coordinated approach to its management.
• Legislative and regulatory measures at national and local levels that assure the survival of the site and its protection against development and change that might negatively impact its Outstanding Universal Value, or the integrity, or the authenticity of the site.
• Where necessary, the provision of an adequate buffer zone for the proper protection of the inscribed site.
• States Parties must submit periodic reports to UNESCO which record their implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the state of conservation of the World Heritage Sites on their territories.

Annex 3: Nomination and Renomination

World Heritage Sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List by the World Heritage Committee. They must meet at least one of ten criteria (six cultural, four natural), which are used to assess Outstanding Universal Value, and satisfy requirements of integrity and — for sites of cultural significance — authenticity.

The World Heritage Committee inscribes World Heritage Sites on the World Heritage List following careful scrutiny by international advisory bodies — a process that takes around 18 months from nomination by national governments. The nomination must demonstrate the site’s importance through a comparative study of other sites of national and international importance. Sites must have adequate legal protection and management systems to protect their Outstanding Universal Value, including integrity and authenticity.

Before a site can be nominated to the World Heritage Committee, it must be included on the tentative list of its national government. This is a list of sites which a government might consider nominating over a 10-year period. The tentative list is published on the UNESCO website. Wales currently has one site, the Slate Industry of North Wales, on the UK tentative list.

Recommendations for inclusion on the tentative list are subject to scrutiny by an independent expert panel of specialist advisors convened by DCMS and currently chaired by the UK National Commission for UNESCO.

If a State Party wishes to modify the boundary of a World Heritage Site significantly or add, reduce or change the criteria used for the original inscription, it shall submit this request as if it was a new nomination. This renomination will be evaluated according to the procedures and timetable outlined in para. 168 of the Operational Guidelines.
Attributes can be defined as the expression of the cultural values which meet the conditions of authenticity for a World Heritage Site.

**Authenticity**

Those characteristics that most truthfully reflect and embody the cultural heritage values of a historic asset.

Depending on the type of cultural heritage, and its cultural context, properties may be understood to meet the conditions of authenticity if their cultural values (as recognised in the nomination criteria proposed) are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes including: form and design; materials and substance; use and function; traditions, techniques and management systems; location and setting; language and other forms of intangible heritage; spirit and feeling; and other internal and external factors.

**Buffer Zone**

It is important to protect the setting of a World Heritage Site. Some World Heritage Sites have a buffer zone around or attached to their boundaries, which provides an added layer of protection to the site. The buffer zone itself is not of Outstanding Universal Value but includes the immediate setting of the World Heritage Site, important views and attributes that are functionally important as a support to the World Heritage Site and its protection. Buffer zones can only be amended or altered by the World Heritage Committee.

**ICCOMOS**

The International Council on Monuments and Sites, a non-governmental organisation, was founded in 1965 after the adoption of the Charter of Venice, in order to promote the doctrine and the techniques of conservation. ICCOMOS provides the World Heritage Committee with evaluations of properties with cultural values proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List, as well as with comparative studies, technical assistance and reports on the state of conservation of inscribed properties.

**ICCOMOS-UK**

ICCOMOS-UK is the UK National Commission of ICCOMOS and is an independent charity that advises on aspects of World Heritage and sites for nomination across the UK. It promotes and supports best practice in the conservation, care and understanding of the historic environment.

**Integrity**

Wholeness, honesty.

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes. Examining the conditions of integrity requires assessing the extent to which the property:

- includes all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value
- is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property’s significance
- suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect

**IUCN**

International Union for the Conservation of Nature is an international, non-governmental organisation that provides technical evaluations of natural heritage properties and, through its worldwide network of specialists, reports on the state of conservation of listed sites.
Outstanding Universal Value

Outstanding Universal Value is defined as ‘cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity’.28

Stakeholder

A person/organisation/business with an interest or concern in the World Heritage Site.29

Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Each World Heritage Site has a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value approved by the World Heritage Committee, which includes statements of integrity and — for cultural sites — authenticity. The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value provides a clear, shared understanding of the reasons for the site’s inscription on the World Heritage List and can only be changed by the World Heritage Committee. It is a key reference document for the protection, management and monitoring of each site.30

States Parties

States Parties are countries which have ratified the World Heritage Convention. They identify and nominate sites on their national territory to be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. States Parties have the responsibility to protect the World Heritage values of the sites inscribed and report periodically on their condition.31

Sustainable

Able to be maintained at a certain rate or level. In the context of sustainable development and management, it can be described as meeting ‘the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (Brundtland Commission, United Nations, 1983).32

Sustainable Development

In Wales, this means enhancing the economic, social and environmental well-being of people and communities, and achieving a better quality of life for our own generations in ways which:
- promote social justice and equality of opportunity; and
- enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limits — using only our fair share of the earth’s resources and sustaining our cultural legacy.

Sustainable development is the process by which we reach the goal of sustainability.33

UNESCO

is the United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture.34

World Heritage List

The World Heritage List was established through the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention). In general, the World Heritage Committee adds about 25–30 sites per year to the list. In 2014, there were 911 sites on the list, located in 151 countries around the world, including 28 in the UK.35

World Heritage: UK

World Heritage: UK promotes the sustainable management and conservation of the UK’s World Heritage Sites through advocacy, networking and awareness-raising activities. It helps people to recognise and understand the importance of conserving, protecting and enhancing World Heritage Sites and their Outstanding Universal Value. Membership is open to any organisation that plays a primary role in managing a UK World Heritage Site, any organisation that plays a primary role in preparing the nomination for a tentative list World Heritage Site, and any local authority that contains a World Heritage Site within its administrative area.36
## References

1. Planning Policy Wales: Chapter 6, paras 6.4.4 and 6.5.1–6.5.4
   Technical Advice Note 24, section 3
2. Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for Welsh sites are on the UNESCO website
3. UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
4. Technical Advice Note 24, para. 3.7
5. Planning Policy Wales: Chapter 6, para. 6.4.4
   Technical Advice Note 24: paras 3.6–10
6. Planning Policy Wales: Chapter 6, para. 6.4.8
   Technical Advice Note 24: para. 2.3
   Managing Lists of Historic Assets of Special Local Interest (forthcoming)
7. Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales
8. UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention
9. Technical Advice Note 24: paras 3.11–12
10. Planning Policy Wales: Chapter 6, para. 6.4.4
11. ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties
   Technical Advice Note 24: para. 3.14
12. Technical Advice Note 24: para. 2.4
14. Technical Advice Note 24: paras 1.20–1.27
15. UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention paras 103–07
16. Planning Policy Wales: Chapter 6, para. 6.5.2
   Technical Advice Note 24: para. 3.14
20. Insert direction when known
21. Planning Policy Wales: Chapter 6, para. 6.5.3
22. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, Articles 4 and 7
   Technical Advice Note 24: para. 3.13
25. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, section 77
   Planning Policy Wales: Chapter 3, para. 3.12
26. UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, para. 77
27. UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, para. 168
28. UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, para. 49
Key Links

**Cadw**
http://gov.wales/cadw

Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales

**Department for Culture, Media and Sport**
http://www.dcms.gov.uk

**ICCROM**
http://www.iccrom.org/

**ICOMOS-UK**
http://www.icomos-uk.org/world-heritage/

**ICOMOS**
http://www.icomos.org/en/

**ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties**

**IUCN**
http://www.iucn.org/

**UK National Commission for UNESCO**
http://www.unesco.org.uk/

**UNESCO World Heritage Centre**
http://whc.unesco.org

UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention

UNESCO Managing Cultural World Heritage

UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

**Welsh Planning Policy**
http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/?lang=en

Planning Policy Wales
Planning Policy Wales: Chapter 6 – The Historic Environment
Technical Advice Note 24: Historic Environment
Technical Advice Note 12: Design

**Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal

Contacts

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**World Heritage Sites in Wales**

Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd

Blaenavon Industrial Landscape
http://www.visitblaenavon.co.uk/en/Homepage.aspx

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal
http://www.pontcysyllte-aqueduct.co.uk/
A view across part of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site.