

World Heritage Sites

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World Heritage Sites

- 188 countries across the world have ratified the convention
- There are 936 World Heritage Sites across the world in 153 countries.
- There are 725 cultural sites, 23 mixed sites and 183 natural sites
- The majority of sites (or properties as the World Heritage Committee wants them called) are in Europe.

World Heritage Sites in the UK

- World Heritage Sites (cultural, natural or mixed examples)



World Heritage Sites in the UK

- There are 28 World Heritage Sites in the UK



World Heritage

- World Heritage Sites (WHS) are places of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), authenticity and integrity. OUV is defined by the World Heritage Committee as "so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and of importance for present and future generations of all humanity".
- All UK mainland WHS – with the exception of Hadrian's Wall - now have either approved or draft Statements of Outstanding Universal Value. These set out the OUV agreed by the World Heritage Committee at time of inscription. The SOUVs have material weight in the English spatial planning system and, by setting out clearly why the WHS was inscribed, provide an important management tool for owners and stakeholders.

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- WHS are often seen as primarily tourist attractions or as drivers of economic regeneration
- Recent research by Price Waterhouse Coopers and by the Lake District candidate WHS has looked at benefits and challenges of WHS status
- There are obligations as well as benefits to WHS status
- By signing up to the Convention the UK government is committed to the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of its WHS to this and future generations

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- WHS range from iconic (usually the early inscriptions with little involvement of anyone else) to the innovative (the more recent inscriptions tend to be focused on gaps on the World Heritage List such as industrial or scientific sites and have a much more inclusive nomination process)
- Whatever their focus the fact that WHS are universally recognised can help with social cohesion and community pride as well

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- Blaenavon v Durham>



Tentative Lists



- In order to become a world heritage site a site must be on the national Tentative List
- The most recent UK Tentative List (2011) has 11 candidate sites from the UK and overseas territories chosen from open competition by an independent panel. Each had to demonstrate OUV, show appropriate management systems are in place and the commitment (including finance) and backing of owners and managers
- The next review is likely to take place in 2021-23

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- All nominations for WHS are put forward by national Governments from their Tentative Lists to the World Heritage Committee
- Nomination dossiers and accompanying management plans have to show that the proposed site has
 - OUV, authenticity and integrity
 - Fulfils the criteria set out by UNESCO
 - Is unique (demonstrated by examining national and international comparators)
 - Is protected by national legislation
 - Has an effective management system in place

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In the UK this effective Management System comprises individual designations, the spatial planning system and World Heritage Management Plans. All UK WHS have Management Plans some of which are on their second or third iteration

- Plans should
 - Appraise the significance and importance of the site
 - Show the extent of the WHS and any buffer zone as appropriate
 - Ensure the physical conservation of the site to the highest standards including assessment of risks eg flooding, climate change
 - Protect the site and its setting from damaging development
 - Provide policies for promotion, interpretation and education
 - Provide clear policies for tourism and access as it affects the site
- Each WHS has Stakeholder Groups (eg Steering Groups, Consultative Committees etc) to oversee development, implementation and review of WHS Management Plans
- Each WHS should have Coordinator if they are to be successful

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- Nominations are submitted to the World Heritage Centre and evaluated by the advisory bodies to the Convention ICOMOS, IUCN or sometimes both
- The World Heritage Committee decides whether a site can be inscribed on the World Heritage List based partly on the advisory body evaluations
- The evaluation takes a minimum of 2 years

Science and Technology World Heritage Sites



- Sites that demonstrate science and technology are few and far between on the World Heritage List and the World Heritage Committee recognise this is a gap which needs to be filled
- However the World Heritage Committee has concerns about how to do this
- The World Heritage Convention is a "site based" convention and moveable items such as laboratory equipment or machinery do not count!
- In light of the issues raised by the "Darwin at Down" nomination the World Heritage Committee is looking again at how scientific sites are judged but this is likely to take some time

