

APPENDIX B - BACKGROUND TO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

B1 The World Heritage Convention

- B1.1 World Heritage Sites are inscribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on the basis of nominations from the countries concerned. UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty (the “Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage”, adopted by UNESCO in 1972). The United Kingdom ratified the Convention in 1984.
- B1.2 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is responsible for the UK’s compliance with the Convention, and for submitting nominations for the United Kingdom and its overseas territories to UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee.
- B1.3 There are currently 17 World Heritage Sites in England. The inclusion of a site in the World Heritage List highlights its outstanding international importance but does not in itself confer any additional statutory protection. It is the responsibility of the countries concerned, in the light of operational guidelines published by UNESCO, to ensure that adequate protection is in place.

B2 Process of Inscription

- B2.1 Nominated sites must demonstrate integrity and authenticity, meet one or more of UNESCO’s criteria, and have adequate systems of protection and management. UNESCO’s criteria for selecting cultural Sites are as follows:

‘Sites with World Heritage Status should:

- i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;*
- ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values on development in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design; or*
- iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation; or*
- iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological assemblage or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history; and/or*
- v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land use which is representative of a culture; or*
- vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living tradition, with ideas, or beliefs, with artistic literary works of outstanding universal significance.’*

- B2.2 The UNESCO World Heritage Committee oversees the selection of sites for inclusion on the List. The Committee comprises representatives of 21 of the 185 countries that have ratified the Convention, each elected for up to 6 years. It is serviced by UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre in Paris. The Centre advises countries on the preparation of site nominations, organises technical assistance on request, and co-ordinates reporting on the condition of Sites and on emergency action to protect threatened Sites.
- B2.3 The Centre and the Committee are advised by three non-governmental international bodies: International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) on cultural sites; World Conservation Union (IUCN) on natural sites; and International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), which provides expert advice and training on the conservation of cultural sites. Once nominated by the appropriate nation

state, a potential World Heritage Site is evaluated by ICOMOS and/or IUCN. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee takes the final decision on inscription.

B3 Need for a World Heritage Site Management Plan

B3.1 The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention¹ requires that nominated properties should have management frameworks and adequate legal protection to ensure that their Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity are maintained and enhanced. The guidelines emphasise the importance of Management Plans as an effective way of achieving this. Among other things, the Guidelines require boundaries to be drawn that encapsulate all aspects of a site's outstanding universal value, and wherever necessary for the proper conservation of the site, the provision of an adequate buffer zone.

B3.2 UK Government policy on World Heritage Sites is set out in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG15)². PPG15 clearly states that World Heritage Sites are ‘...a key material consideration to be taken into account by local planning authorities in determining planning and listed building consent applications...’. PPG15 also states that local planning authorities should formulate policies for the protection of World Heritage Sites. The preparation of comprehensive Management Plans for World Heritage Sites by local planning authorities, in consultation with local stakeholders, is encouraged by PPG15.

B3.3 The UK Government published proposed measures to enhance the protection of World Heritage Sites in England in May 2008 following a commitment in its white paper *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century*, published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The consultation paper on the Protection of World Heritage Sites (March 2007) includes a **draft Planning Circular on World Heritage Sites** jointly prepared by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The Circular meets the Government's commitment to “...further recognise in national policy the need to protect World Heritage Sites as sites of outstanding universal value, and...make more prominent the need to create a management plan for each WHS, including, where needed, the delineation of a buffer zone around it.” The Planning Circular replaced the current advice in paragraphs 2.22 to 2.23 and 6.35 to 6.37 of PPG15 in 2009, and explains the Government's objectives for the protection of WHS, the principles which underpin those objectives, and the actions necessary to achieve them. In relation to World Heritage Site Management Plans, paragraphs 13 and 14 of the draft Circular state:

'A Management Plan needs to cover all the issues affecting the site, some of which do not relate to planning matters, and to reflect the advice cited in the UNESCO Operational Guidelines. It needs to be developed in a consensual way, fully involving all interested parties, including those responsible for managing, owning or administering the Site. The key stakeholders should form a Management Plan Steering Group, which will, in many cases, be led by the relevant local or regional authority. The plan needs to draw its policies from a proper understanding of the significance of the site and focus on protection of the outstanding universal value, authenticity and integrity of the site. The plan should take account of sustainable community strategies as relevant. Further guidance on the preparation of Management Plans is provided in the English Heritage Guidance Note.

¹ Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (World Heritage Committee, 2008)

² Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (Department of the Environment, September 1994)

The Secretaries of State for Communities and Local Government and for Culture, Media and Sport expect local authorities to treat relevant policies in Management Plans as material considerations in making plans and planning decisions, to take them fully into account when devising core strategies and other local development documents, and to give them due weight in their other actions relating to World Heritage Sites. For some sites it may be useful for Management Plan Steering Groups to develop the section of the Management Plan dealing with development control in such a way as to allow adoption of that section within a local development document.'

- B3.4 The draft Planning Circular is supported and supplemented by further guidance developed by English Heritage, which was also included in the consultation paper. The ***English Heritage Guidance Note on the Protection and Management of World Heritage Sites in England*** explains the national and international context, considers the role of the planning system and community strategies, and explains the role and preparation of management plans for the protection of World Heritage Sites. The Guidance Note recommends that each World Heritage Site should have an agreed Management Plan to provide a holistic approach to their overall management, developed with local authority commitment and the effective and active involvement of all key stakeholders, including the owners and occupiers of sites and the local communities.
- B3.5 In summary, the need for a Management Plan stems not only from international guidance and UK Government policy but also from the reality of the site and its environs. To achieve the Convention's aim of sustaining the outstanding universal value of World Heritage Sites, there is a need to develop a co-ordinated and consensual framework for the long-term management and development of the Site. This Management Plan forms a core component of that framework for the proposed Chatham Dockyard and its Defences World Heritage Site.