Blaenavon Industrial Landscape
World Heritage Site
A Development Management Perspective

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Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site
A Development Management Perspective

• Brief introduction to BILWHS
• Planning Policy Framework
• Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)
• Case Studies
• Cultural Landscape created by industry and man during late 18th and early 19th Centuries

• 33 Square Kilometres

• Inscribed as a World Heritage Site in December 2000
Outstanding Universal Value

“The Blaenavon Industrial Landscape is one of the prime areas in the world where the full social, economic and technological process of industrialisation through iron and coal production can be studied and understood”.

Extract from UK Tentative List, June 1999
Justification for Inscription

- **Criterion (iii):** *The Blaenavon Landscape constitutes an exceptional illustration in material form of the social and economic structure of 19\(^{th}\) century industry.*

- **Criterion (iv):** *The components of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape together make up an outstanding and remarkably complete example of a 19\(^{th}\) century industrial landscape.*
Population Growth & Decline

Source: OPCS
Key Features of the Site

- Blaenavon Ironworks
- Big Pit National Coal Museum
- Sources of Coal, Iron Ore and Limestone
- Transport Systems
- Management of Water Resources
- The Forging Side of the Iron Industry
- Workers’ Housing
- The Town of Blaenavon
- Llanfoist Wharf
Planning Policy Framework

Planning Policy Wales Edition 6, 2016

Local Development Plan

Blaenavon Industrial Landscape WHS SPG
Development plans must reflect that World Heritage Sites have been inscribed by UNESCO because of their Outstanding Universal Value. These sites can also contribute to a national and local sense of community and to sustainable economic development and regeneration.

The adoption of supplementary planning guidance … is considered to be the most effective way of implementing the conservation of World Heritage Sites.

The impacts of proposed developments on a World Heritage Site and its setting and, where it exists, the World Heritage Site buffer zone, is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application.

Certain permitted development rights are restricted on land in a World Heritage Site.

Cadw is a statutory consultee on planning applications likely to have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site.
Local Development Plan Policy HE2

HE2 Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site (BILWHS)
Development proposals within, and adjacent to the BILWHS will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

a) The proposal promotes a standard of design in terms of siting, scale, massing and materials, which is sympathetic to and preserves or enhances the character of the local area and settlement form; and

b) Important views into and within the BILWHS are not adversely affected by the proposals; and

c) The proposal contributes to ensuring the preservation of the ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ of the BILWHS designation; and

d) The proposal would not adversely affect the overall integrity of the BILWHS and its landscape or historic setting.

All development proposals within and adjacent to the World Heritage Site should be informed by the BILWHS Design Guidance and should identify how the proposals are consistent with the principles in this document.
Blaenavon Industrial Landscape WHS SPG

Provides guidance on,

- Design principles for new buildings and sites
- Repair, reinstatement and improvement to buildings of heritage value and extensions to buildings pre 1914
- Alterations, extensions and repair to buildings post 1914

Covers issues such as,

- Roof designs and materials
- Window & door designs
- Signage
- Boundary treatments
Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)

Blaenavon WHS Attributes and Components

UNESCO Criteria for Inscription

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

The area around Blaenavon bears eloquent and exceptional testimony to the pre-eminence of South Wales as the world’s major producer of iron and coal in the 19th century. All the necessary elements can be seen in situ – coal and ore mines, quarries, a primitive railway system, furnaces, the homes of the workers, and the social infrastructure of their community

UNESCO – Blaenavon Industrial Landscape – A Cultural Landscape

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

The components of the Blaenavon Landscape together make up an outstanding and remarkably complete example of a 19th century industrial landscape

Attributes

1. Evidence of tangible and intangible heritage of the development of early industrial society

2. Outstanding relict landscape - combined efforts of nature and man

3. Evidence of the area’s international importance in iron making and coal mining in the late 18th and early 19th century.

4. Development of transport systems in the late 18th and 19th centuries

Components

TANGIBLE HERITAGE
- St. Peter’s Church
- St. Peter’s School (BWhC)
- The Company Shop
- Ty Mawr
- Blaenavon Workmen’s Hall
- Bethel, Moriah, Horoh, Bethel
- Zion Baptist, Wesleyan Methodist and Zion Chapel (Band Hall)
- Blaenavon Town Centre
- Workers’ Housing
- King Street
- Commercial Properties (15-19 Broad St)

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE
- Patronage, Philanthropy and Social Control in early Industrial Society
- Welsh Religious Non-conformism in the Nineteenth Century
- Self-Improvement and Working Class culture in Industrial Communities
- Political Radicalism
- Trade Unionism
- Male Voice Choirs
- Town Bands
- The Decline of the Welsh Language in the Nineteenth Century

UNESCO 
Ffynnon-Goch Scouring
Landscape North of Blaenavon Ironworks
Dolgellau Limestone Quarry
Tywyn Limestone Quarry
Big Pit National Coal
Museum
Blaenavon Ironworks
Blaenavon Town
Engine Pit
Hill’s Tram Road
Cwmavon Forge (Site of)
Cwmavon Forge (Site of)
Water Management

Hill’s Tram Road
Pont Du Tunnel
Blaenavon Tunnel
Llanfoist Incline
Llanfoist Wharf
Govilon Wharf
Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal
Dyne-Steel Incline
Iron Bridge near Aaron Brut’s Level
Various remains of primitive railways
Original Steam Railway 1856
Single Dwelling

Key Issue: Recognising the significance of industrial relic which contributes to OUV
Residential Development

Key issues:

- Design
- Views
- Viability
Residential Development - New Road Farm
Residential Development – Hillside School
Residential Development – King Street
Industrial Development

Historic industrial town

Key Issues:

- Securing economic benefits/jobs
- Promoting good design
Abergavenny Fine Foods
In distant views, from higher ground, it is the roof which is the most prominent element of the building. The colour and reflective qualities should be considered carefully to minimise the visual impact on the landscape setting of the area as a whole.
Varteg Opencast Mining

Proposal for the extraction of coal through open cast mining and a subsequent land reclamation scheme.

Application site 62 ha, of which around 20 ha were within the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site, and the remaining within the proposed Buffer Zone for the BILWHS.

This proposal was originally submitted in 2006 and refused by Torfaen Council in 2011 and also dismissed at appeal. A revised scheme received in 2014 but subsequently withdrawn.

Accompanied by an ASIDHOL

Objection from Cadw & concerns expressed by ICOMOS

Direct impact upon OUV of BILWHS
Conclusion

Development Management within Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site

Main challenge is the juxtaposition between Blaenavon as a living town and safeguarding the historic environment and Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS. Managing appropriate change.