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Heritage Impact Assessment for Cultural World Heritage Sites in England

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Heritage Impact Assessment for World Heritage Sites

- States Parties to the WH Convention meet their obligations through the application of domestic legislation and guidance
- The World Heritage Committee can take sanctions, eg deletion of a WHS from the World Heritage List, but it has no planning powers in any state party to the Convention
- The Committee can however provide advice to States Parties as it sees fit



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Heritage Impact Assessment for World Heritage Sites

- the Committee: “encourages States Parties to integrate the EIA/HIA processes into legislation, planning mechanisms and management plans, and reiterates its recommendation to States Parties to use these tools in assessing projects, including assessment of cumulative impacts, and before any final decision is taken”
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6189/> , Bonn Committee Session 2015



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Heritage Impact Assessment for World Heritage Sites

- For Cultural WHSs the Committee favours the use of the ICOMOS Heritage Impact Assessment Guidance , 2011 http://www.icomos.org/world_heritage/HIA_20110201.pdf
- In England the Planning Practice Guidance advocates the use of Heritage Impact Assessments and suggests that the approach set out in the ICOMOS Guidance may be helpful



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Heritage Impact Assessment for World Heritage Sites – Planning Practice Guidance, 2014 (England)

- “Applicants proposing change that might affect the Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and, where applicable, authenticity of a World Heritage Site through development within the Site or affecting its setting or buffer zone (or equivalent) need to submit sufficient information with their applications to enable assessment of impact on Outstanding Universal Value”



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Rationale for ICOMOS HIA Guidance

- Lack of specific attention to world heritage values in many environmental impact assessments in most regions of the world
- Need to have a standardised template to enable the WH Committee to understand current threats to WHSs and emerging trends and to develop policy in response



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ICOMOS HIA Guidance

- What is the heritage at risk and why is it important – how does it contribute to OUV?
- How will change or a development proposal impact on OUV?
- How can these effects be avoided, reduced, rehabilitated or compensated?



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ICOMOS HIA Guidance

- A Scoping Report (or HIA brief) should be agreed with all relevant parties – the State Party, regional or local government, heritage advisors or managers, local communities or others as necessary. The scoping report should make it clear what is to be done, why and how, when and what are the expected outputs



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ICOMOS HIA Guidance

- Focus on attributes of OUV and overall effect on OUV.
- The scale or severity of impact can be ranked without regard to the value of the asset as:
 - no change;
 - negligible change;
 - minor change;
 - moderate change;
 - major change



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ICOMOS HIA Guidance

- As change or impacts may be adverse or beneficial, there is a nine-point scale with “neutral” as its centre point:
- Major beneficial
- Moderate beneficial
- Minor beneficial
- Negligible beneficial



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ICOMOS HIA Guidance

- Neutral
- Negligible adverse
- Minor adverse
- Moderate adverse
- Major adverse



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ICOMOS HIA Guidance

- The scale and severity of impact then needs to be assessed in relation to the **significance** and **value** of the attributes and their component parts
- A component that makes a negligible contribution to OUV could be severely adversely affected, but the significance of the impact will be slight
- A component that makes a very significant contribution to OUV and which is subject to a major adverse impact will show as a very large adverse effect



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ICOMOS HIA Guidance

- *Total demolition of a key building which is the main conveyance of OUV for a WH property to make way for a new road would be a major adverse effect or overall major adverse impact.*
- *Removal of a later road from the immediate vicinity of a key building which conveys OUV and which is not directly related to its OUV attributes would be a major beneficial effect or overall impact.*
- Overall impact needs to be considered as well



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ICOMOS HIA Guidance

- Appendix 4 of the ICOMOS Guidance provides a useful table of contents for an HIA
- *An HIA undertaken as part of an EIA ... is not additional to normal EIA requirements, but uses a different methodology which clearly focuses on OUV and attributes that convey that OUV*



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ICOMOS HIA Guidance

- The HIA should be summarised early on in the Environmental Statement, or Design and Access Statement or heritage Statement and the full technical HIA report should be included as a technical appendix



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Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City WHS: SOUV and Attributes

- Liverpool was a major centre generating **innovative technologies and methods in dock construction and port management in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries**. It thus contributed to the **building up of the international mercantile systems throughout the British Commonwealth**.
- Liverpool is an outstanding example of a world mercantile port city, which represents the **early development of global trading and cultural connections throughout the British Empire**.



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Liverpool SOUV and Attributes





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Liverpool SOUV and Attributes





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Liverpool Waters





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Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscapes WHS: Hayle Harbour - Attributes

- Cornwall's principal mining port which exported copper ore to the South Wales smelters, importing much of the Welsh coal which fuelled the Cornish steam revolution and was the means by which many of its beam engines were shipped to the far corners of the World.
- Location of two (of three) of Cornwall's principal iron foundries creating the greatest steam engine manufacturing centre in the C19th world.



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Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscapes WHS: Hayle Harbour - Attributes

- Massive, landform-scale, maritime infrastructure of extensive quays, wharves and massive sluicing ponds.
- Unique example of twin ‘company’ industrial ‘new towns’ of Foundry and Copperhouse, these being wholly the product of their industrial past and maritime location, fringing the southern edge of the Hayle estuary in a distinctly linear character



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Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscapes WHS: Hayle Harbour - Attributes

- Within Copperhouse, the use of copper slag blocks for construction adds a distinctive ‘vernacular’ character to houses, boundary walls, bridges and other structures.



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Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscapes WHS: Hayle Harbour





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Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscapes WHS: Hayle Harbour





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Health Warning

- This 9 point scale can be applied subjectively
- Different professionals can reach sometimes dramatically different conclusions
- There is a need for expertise and capacity on the part of the decision maker and its advisors to enable a critical evaluation of HIAs submitted by applicants



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Health Warning

- Both the NPPF and the ICOMOS HIA methodology recognise the concept of proportionality – the greater the heritage value, the greater the need to prevent harm, but equally allowing low impact/low value changes
- However Article 4 of the Convention says that we must do our “utmost” to protect conserve etc, suggesting that *any* adverse change should be avoided
- An interesting philosophical clash