



Neighbourhood Planning The World Heritage Site



The purpose of this guidance note is to encourage communities to consider what Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) can do to protect the World Heritage Site

UNESCO World Heritage status is a designation for places of outstanding value to all humanity. These sites have been chosen through their natural and/or cultural significance to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. The Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site (WHS), or 'Cornish Mining', was inscribed on the World Heritage List on 13 July 2006. World Heritage status gives international recognition to Cornish Mining's contribution to the development of our modern industrial society.

The Cornwall and West Devon Mining WHS is a landscape designation, which covers a series of 10 Area locations, comprising the distinctive patterns of buildings, monuments and sites which together form the coherent series of distinctive cultural landscapes created by the industrialisation of hard rock mining processes in the period 1700 to 1914. It is a heritage asset of the highest significance. With this in mind it is useful to consider the impact of development in both a landscape visual/character sense as well as impacting upon specific buildings and structures. You can use Cornwall Council's free to use Interactive Mapping to view a map of the WHS and link directly to the information on that Area of the WHS.

Information on the WHS and the existing planning context are included in these documents:

- The World Heritage Site Management Plan (2013-2018)
- World Heritage Site Supplementary Planning Document (2017)

Both of these documents are available via the [Cornish Mining Website](#) and provide detailed information on how the impact of development should be assessed. When developing your plan, it is important to consider what additional local detail the NDP may provide to these existing policies. For example, the main benefit in terms of protection of the WHS would be if the NDP contained specific heritage and landscape policies, based on the evidence from the WHS Management Plan.

Key points to consider

➤ There are seven landscape 'Attributes' that express the 'Outstanding Universal Value' of the WHS.

- Mine sites including ore dressing sites
- Mine transport
- Ancillary industries
- Mining settlements and social infrastructure
- Mineworkers' smallholdings
- Great houses, estates and gardens
- Mineralogical and other related sites of particular scientific importance

➤ These are all of equal international importance under the World Heritage Site designation.

Attributes can have differing degrees of national statutory protection, for example a Listed engine house or chapel within a Conservation Area (nationally designated) versus a mineworkers' smallholding field or a mine spoil heap (nationally non-designated), but the whole WHS and therefore all the landscape attributes are designated assets of the highest significance.

- There will be related features/landscapes that are located beyond the boundaries of a development site that are either functionally related to the WHS or provide a landscape context that are important in terms of the setting to the WHS.
- The WHS differs from designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in that many areas of the WHS are not aesthetically pleasing, but nonetheless are essential to the make-up of the Site overall. Equally, impacts such as noise may be an issue in an AONB, where tranquility is part of that designation's special qualities, whereas this is not necessarily an issue within the WHS (subject to the context of the site in question).

The World Heritage Site: national and local planning context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Guidance (NPPG)

The NPPF confirms that WHSs are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. (Para 184) Any loss of such assets should be wholly exceptional (para 194) and local authorities should also look for opportunities to promote development that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset or which better reveal its significance (para 200)

The NPPG also gives detailed advice on planning for development in or affecting world heritage sites in paragraphs 26-38 of the [Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment](#) Section and requires WHSs to be protected from inappropriate development, while encouraging enhancement of Sites and their settings where appropriate. Paragraph 32 sets out the principles that should inform the development of a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of World Heritage Sites.

The Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies (2010-2030)

[CLP Policy 24 : Historic Environment](#) provides the local strategic policy context for the historic Environment in Cornwall. Regarding the World Heritage Site it says:

...Development within the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site (WHS) and its setting should accord with the WHS Management Plan. Proposals that would result in harm to the authenticity and integrity of the Outstanding Universal Value, should be wholly exceptional. If the impact of the proposal is neutral, either on the significance or setting, then opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance should be taken.

...Proposals causing harm will be weighed against the substantial public, not private, benefits of the proposal and whether it has been demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use, find new uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset; and whether the works proposed are the minimum required to secure the long term use of the asset.

The Cornwall & West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site Management Plan (2013-2018)

Consider referencing the following protection and conservation policies (and potentially others) as set out within the [World Heritage Site Management Plan](#):

Protection Policy P2: *All relevant strategic planning documents will make provision for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the Site and its setting.*

Conservation & Enhancement Policy C2: *New development will add to the quality and distinctiveness of the Site by being of high quality design and respectful of setting.*

Conservation & Enhancement Policy C7: *The historic character and distinctiveness of the Cornwall and West Devon mining landscape will be maintained.*

What can an NDP add to strategic Policy?

NDP Area Mapping

Consider including a suitably scaled and annotated map of the Neighbourhood Area depicting the boundary of the World Heritage Site and also other designated areas and heritage assets, as appropriate.

WHS Management Plan Appendices

Use the information in the area descriptions in [Appendix 8.1](#) to the WHS Management Plan, which includes the statement of Outstanding Universal Value for each Area and descriptions of the features and character of the Area, to inform your NDP strategy.

Examples and Case Studies

The heritage policies set out within the [Hayle NDP](#) are a good example of how to apply the above general advice to deliver appropriate policy for a specific local context. As well as a general policy about the protection of the WHS, Hayle NDP has policy HB3 on Signs, Advertising and Illumination

Signs, Advertising and Illumination

As a qualifying body with the right to set planning policies for a World Heritage Site, we take our responsibility very seriously. We seek to adhere to the policies in the current WHS Management Plan,⁵⁷ which includes obligations under Policy P3, of the Management Plan, to ensure that new development protects, conserves and enhances the World Heritage Site and its setting, and under its Policy C7 to maintain the historic character and distinctiveness of the Cornwall and West Devon mining landscape. Hayle Town Council is strongly against illuminated signs in the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site. It successfully opposed internally illuminated signs at Gratton's Garage and proposals by Asda in 2014 to have illuminated signs on its new harbour-side superstore. Regarding the Asda application, the store is situated in a sensitive conservation area and, more importantly, within a World Heritage Site. The proposed signs were over-large and internally illuminated and considered, therefore, to be inappropriate. Hayle has thus been able to retain its World Heritage Status, despite the incongruity of some recent developments. The Town Council feels that not acting to prevent illuminated signs and advertising sites could jeopardise the town's WHS status/ The Community Consultation of 2016 showed that 97.3% of respondents were in favour of this policy.

POLICY HB3 Signs, Advertising and Illuminations Development proposals within or affecting the Conservation Area or the World Heritage Site shall not include: i) advertising or other signs that are internally illuminated; and ii) external illumination of buildings or signs that impact adversely on the heritage areas.

Further Information

- If you are approached by a developer, the World Heritage Site Office provides a pre-application advice service for major planning developments within the Site and further information can be found on the [Cornish Mining Website](#) and within the document: [The Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site Pre-application Advice Service](#).
- Half-day training sessions are also available for those who wish to have an introduction to the World Heritage Site Supplementary Planning Document and its practical application.