



BLenheim ESTATE

HOMES

Land East of
Park View
Woodstock

Environmental Statement Technical Appendix C:
Cultural Heritage

C3

Assessment of effects on
Blenheim Palace World
Heritage Site, based on the
ICOMOS guidance (2011)

Technical appendix C3: Assessment of effects on Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, based on the ICOMOS guidance (2011)

Introduction

C1 This technical appendix presents an assessment of the WHS based on the recommended approach outlined in the Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties, ICOMOS, (2011). The guidance “sets out a methodology to allow HIAs to respond to the needs of World Heritage sites, through considering them as discrete entities and evaluating impact on the attributes of OUV in a systematic and coherent way.” and is explicit that the assessment needs “to be specific about the impacts of proposed changes on OUV” (page 1). The assessment needs to be “directly linked to the expression of the site’s OUV” that is given in the adopted Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SoOUV).

C2 As the guidance explains,

“2-1-5 In the case of WH properties, their international significance is established at the time of inscription and defined as their Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). States Parties undertake to retain and guard this OUV through protecting and conserving the attributes that convey OUV. The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SoOUV) which sets out why a property is deemed to have OUV and what the attributes are that convey OUV will be central to the HIA. Every reasonable effort should be made to eliminate or minimise adverse impacts on significant places. Ultimately, however, it may be necessary to balance the public benefit of the proposed change against the harm to the place. It is therefore also important to know who benefits from the proposed change and for what reasons. In such cases the weight given to heritage values should be proportionate to the significance of the place and the impact of the change upon it. WH properties de facto are seen to have global value and thus logically have a higher significance than national or local heritage value.”

C3 The assessment in this technical appendix takes the conclusions of chapter 5, cultural heritage of the potential effects of the proposed development on the site and the assets within the 1km study area and relates them directly to the international significance of Blenheim Palace WHS as defined in the adopted SoOUV and the set of seven attributes that convey OUV, in order to define the overall effect. This is presented in tabular form.

Methodology

C4 The following assessment covers the study area used in chapter 5 and the associated figures that extends to a 1km radius from the edge of the site. The south east part of the WHS that falls within the study area includes three of the character areas identified in the adopted WHS management plan; character area 4, Lower Park, character area 5, Bladon Park and character area 8, the gardens and pleasure grounds, and a number of individually listed structures.

C5 The staged approach given in the ICOMOS guidance aligns with the methodology used for the overall ES (see chapter 3) and specific to effects on cultural heritage (chapter 5), in being based on scales to define importance/sensitivity, magnitude of change as a result of the proposed development and the overall impact, either adverse or beneficial. The tables included in the guidance and appendices are reproduced below in the order

used in the ES: the assessment of value, the magnitude of impact and the overall assessment table.

Assessment of value (ICOMOS, page 14, Appendix 3A: Example Guide for Assessing Value of Heritage Assets)

Grading	Archaeology	Built heritage or Historic Urban Landscape	Historic landscape	Intangible Cultural Heritage or Associations
Very High	Sites of acknowledged international importance inscribed as WH property. Individual attributes that convey OUV of the WH property. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives.	Sites or structures of acknowledged international importance inscribed as of universal importance as WH property. Individual attributes that convey OUV of the WH property. Other buildings or urban landscapes of recognised international importance.	Landscapes of acknowledged international importance inscribed as WH property. Individual attributes that convey OUV of the WH property. Historic landscapes of international value, whether designated or not. Extremely well-preserved historic landscapes with exceptional coherence, time-depth, or other critical factors.	Areas associated with Intangible Cultural heritage activities as evidenced by the national register. Associations with particular innovations, technical or scientific developments or movements of global significance. Associations with particular individuals of global importance.
High	Nationally-designated Archaeological Monuments protected by the State Party's laws. Undesignated sites of the quality and importance to be designated. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives.	Nationally-designated structures with standing remains. Other buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations not adequately reflected in the listing grade. Conservation Areas containing very Important buildings. Undesignated structures of clear national importance.	Nationally-designated historic landscape of outstanding interest. Undesignated landscapes of outstanding interest. Undesignated landscapes of high quality and importance, and of demonstrable national value. Well preserved historic landscapes, exhibiting considerable coherence, time-	Nationally-designated areas or activities associated with globally- important Intangible Cultural Heritage activities. Associations with particular innovations, technical or scientific developments or movements of national significance Associations with particular individuals of national importance.

Grading	Archaeology	Built heritage or Historic Urban Landscape	Historic landscape	Intangible Cultural Heritage or Associations
			depth or other critical factors.	
Medium	Designated or undesignated assets that can contribute significantly to regional research objectives.	Designated buildings. Historic (unlisted) buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities or historical associations. Conservation Areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character. Historic townscapes or built-up areas with important historic integrity in their buildings, or built settings.	Designated special historic landscapes. Undesignated historic landscapes that would justify special historic landscape designation. Landscapes of regional value. Averagely well preserved historic landscapes with reasonable coherence, time-depth or other critical factors.	Areas associated with Intangible Cultural heritage activities as evidenced by local registers. Associations with particular innovations or developments of regional or local significance. Associations with particular individuals of regional importance.
Low	Designated or undesignated assets of local importance. Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Assets of limited value, but with potential to contribute to local research objectives.	“Locally Listed” buildings. Historic (unlisted) buildings of modest quality in their fabric or historical associations. Historic Townscape or built-up areas of limited historic integrity in their buildings, or built settings.	Robust undesignated historic landscapes. Historic landscapes with importance to local interest groups. Historic landscapes whose value is limited by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations.	Intangible Cultural heritage activities of local significance. Associations with particular individuals of local importance. Poor survival of physical areas in which activities occur or are associated.
Negligible	Assets with little or no surviving archaeological interest.	Buildings or urban landscapes of no architectural or historical merit; buildings of an intrusive character.	Landscapes little or no significant historical interest.	Few associations or ICH vestiges surviving.
Unknown potential	The importance of the asset has not been ascertained.	Buildings with some hidden (i.e. inaccessible) potential for historic significance.	n/a	Little is known or recorded about ICH of the area.

The magnitude of change (ICOMOS, page 16, Appendix 3B: Example Guide for assessing magnitude of impact)

Impact grading	Archaeological attributes	Built heritage or Historic Urban Landscape attributes	Historic landscape attributes	Intangible Cultural Heritage attributes or Associations
Major	Changes to attributes that convey OUV of WH properties. Most or all key archaeological materials, including those that contribute to OUV such that the resource is totally altered. Comprehensive changes to setting.	Change to key historic building elements that contribute to OUV, such that the resource is totally altered. Comprehensive changes to the setting.	Change to most or all key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; extreme visual effects; gross change of noise or change to sound quality; fundamental changes to use or access; resulting in total change to historic landscape character unit and loss of OUV.	Major changes to area that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
Moderate	Changes to many key archaeological materials, such that the resource is clearly modified. Considerable changes to setting that affect the character of the asset.	Changes to many key historic building elements, such that the resource is significantly modified. Changes to the setting of an historic building, such that it is significantly modified.	Change to many key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; visual change to many key aspects of the historic landscape; noticeable differences in noise or sound quality; considerable changes to use or access; resulting in moderate changes to historic landscape character.	Considerable changes to area that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
Minor	Changes to key archaeological materials, such that the resource is slightly altered. Slight changes to setting.	Change to key historic building elements, such that the asset is slightly different. Change to setting of an historic building, such that it is noticeably changed.	Change to few key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; slight visual changes to few key aspects of historic landscape; limited changes to noise levels or sound quality; slight changes to use or access; resulting in limited change to historic landscape character.	Changes to area that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
Negligible	Very minor changes to key	Slight changes to historic building	Very minor changes to key historic	Very minor changes to

Impact grading	Archaeological attributes	Built heritage or Historic Urban Landscape attributes	Historic landscape attributes	Intangible Cultural Heritage attributes or Associations
	archaeological materials, or setting.	elements or setting that hardly affect it.	landscape elements, parcels or components; virtually unchanged visual effects; very slight changes in noise levels or sound quality; very slight changes to use or access; resulting in a very small change to historic landscape character.	area that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
No change	No change.	No change to fabric or setting.	No change to elements, parcels or components; no visual or audible changes; no changes in amenity or community factors.	No change.

Overall assessment table (ICOMOS, page 9)

VALUE OF HERITAGE ASSET	SCALE & SEVERITY OF CHANGE/IMPACT				
	No change	Negligible change	Minor change	Moderate change	Major change
SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPACT (EITHER ADVERSE OR BENEFICIAL)					
For WH properties Very High – attributes which convey OUV	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/very Large	Very Large
For other heritage assets or attributes	SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPACT (EITHER ADVERSE OR BENEFICIAL)				
Very High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/very Large	Very Large
High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/Very Large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate/ Large
Low	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Slight/ Moderate
Low	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Slight/ Moderate
Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight

Baseline information

- C6 Chapter 5 of the ES gives a narrative of the development of the designed landscape at Blenheim and of the sections of the parkland that fall within the 1km study area.
- C7 Blenheim Palace WHS is inscribed as an outstanding example of an 18th century European princely residence, unique in England, set within a monumental landscape

park of c.10 square kilometres, that was central to the development of the naturalistic English landscape garden style in the later 18th century. The full SoOUV that was adopted by UNESCO in 2013 is reproduced below.

Brief Synthesis

Blenheim Palace, in Oxfordshire, was designed by John Vanbrugh. The English nation presented the site to John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, in recognition of his victory in 1704 over French and Bavarian troops, a victory which decided the future of the Empire and, in doing so, made him a figure of international importance. The Palace sits within a large walled landscape park, the structure by Vanbrugh overlaid by the designs of Lancelot “Capability” Brown from 1761 onwards.

The design and building of the Palace between 1705 and 1722 represented the beginning of a new style of architecture and its landscaped Park, designed by Lancelot “Capability” Brown, is considered “a naturalistic Versailles”. In tangible form, Blenheim is an outstanding example of the work of John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor, two of England’s most notable architects. It represents a unique architectural achievement celebrating the triumph of the English armies over the French, and the Palace and its associated Park have exerted great influence on the English Romantic movement which was characterised by the eclecticism of its inspiration, its return to natural sources and its love of nature.

The original landscape set out by John Vanbrugh, who regulated the course of the River Glyme, was later modified by Lancelot “Capability” Brown who created two lakes, seen as one of the greatest examples of naturalistic landscape design.

Blenheim Palace was built by the nation to honour one of its heroes John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, and is also closely associated with Sir Winston Churchill.

Criterion (ii):

By their refusal of the French models of classicism, the Palace and Park illustrate the beginnings of the English Romantic movement, which was characterised by the eclecticism of its inspiration, its return to national sources and its love of nature. The influence of Blenheim on the architecture and organisation of space in the 18th and 19th centuries was greatly felt both in England and abroad.

Criterion (iv):

Built by the nation to honour one of its heroes, Blenheim is, above all, the home of an English aristocrat, the 1st Duke of Marlborough, who was also Prince of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire, as we are reminded in the decoration of the Great Drawing Room [the Saloon] by Louis Laguerre (1719-20). Like the World Heritage properties Residence of Würzburg and the Castles of Augustusburg and Falkenlust in Brühl, Blenheim is typical of 18th century European princely residences.

Integrity

The property is enclosed by an 18th century dry stone wall which defines its extent and maintains its physical integrity. Within the wall, the layout of the principal buildings remains unaltered since their construction, and the overall structure of the landscaped park layout remains largely as set out by Vanbrugh and Brown. The buildings and Park were laid out over an earlier Roman and medieval landscape, remnants of which are still visible through the Vanbrugh and Brown landscapes.

Changes to the landscape and buildings by their owners have continued to the present day though these have not detracted from the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The Park contains important veteran trees. Disease and time have caused some loss of original tree specimens but these have been replanted with the same species where possible and appropriate. Because of climate change and the greater incidence of drought, adjustments have to be made to the mix of species used in conserving the park landscape.

The integrity of the property is well protected by its enclosing wall but important visual links do exist between the gates, the parkland buildings, buildings in the surrounding villages and landscape, and care needs to be taken to ensure these key visual links are protected.

Authenticity

The overall relationship between the Baroque Palace and its Park is still clearly in place and the Outstanding Universal Value of the property can be very readily understood despite the early 20th century changes to the landscape. The form and design of the Palace and Park survive well and there is a high degree of survival of fabric and indeed original fittings and furnishings.

Protection and management requirements

The UK Government protects World Heritage properties in England in two ways. Firstly, individual buildings, monuments, gardens and landscapes are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act and secondly, through the UK Spatial Planning system under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Acts. Government guidance on protecting the Historic Environment and World Heritage is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Circular 07/09. Policies to protect, promote, conserve and enhance World Heritage properties, their settings and buffer zones are also found in statutory planning documents. World Heritage status is a key material consideration when planning applications are considered by the Local Authority planning authority. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan contains policies to protect the property. The property as a whole is designated as a Grade 1 registered Park and Garden and was given National Heritage tax exemption status in 1999 in recognition of its important architecture, its outstanding scenic, historic landscape, and the outstanding importance of the buildings' contents and their intimate association with the property. Forty five key buildings on the site are Grade 1 and Grade 2* Listed Buildings, with the park wall designated Grade 2. There are 5 scheduled ancient monuments within the Park. The lakes and High Park are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the ancient woodland and hedgerows are both protected. Part of the setting of the property is within the Conservation Areas of Woodstock and Bladon and part is in the Cotswold's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A Management Plan has been in place since 2006 and is monitored on an annual basis by a Steering Group which includes representatives from English Heritage, ICOMOS-UK, DCMS, Natural England, the County Council and the local planning authority. Relevant Management Plan policies carry weight in the planning system. There is a comprehensive and successful visitor management plan. The Steering Group is coordinated by the Blenheim Palace and Estate Chief Executive who has responsibility for implementing the Management Plan Action Plan. There is an ongoing programme of repair and regular maintenance of the buildings and structures. Recent work has included the

strengthening and reinstatement of the Blenheim Dam during 2009 to comply with safety legislation. The Park is open through the year and the Palace and Formal Gardens are open from mid-February to mid-December each year. The property has a long tradition of public access (going back to at least Easter 1950) and it provides the setting for informal recreation as well as a series of activities including sporting events, craft and country fairs and entertainment events such as music concerts and historical re-enactments. The property also offers a very high quality resource for a variety of educational uses. Firm implementation of existing policies is important to provide effective protection of the setting of the World Heritage property and it will be important to ensure that the management of the Park prioritises conservation of the elements of the landscape that reflect the work of Vanbrugh and Brown. The Steering Group meets annually to monitor progress and implementation with regard to the 33 stated objectives in the Management Plan and to check awareness with regard to risk preparedness and to monitor any issues regarding the integrity of the property – particularly with regard to the continuous monitoring of the key visual links.

C8 An informal set of seven attributes which help convey the OUV were adopted at the same time and are described in greater detail in the management plan. They were:

Attribute 1. It remains the home of the same aristocratic family, the successive Dukes of Marlborough, for whom it was built.

Attribute 2. It still contains the unique early 18th century architecture of the Palace and its associated assemblage of buildings together with an archive of original survey and building documentation.

Attribute 3. It is still set within the early 18th century grand Vanbrugh landscape overlaid by Lancelot Brown's masterpiece of English Landscape style design, internationally considered to be the 'English Versailles'.

Attribute 4. The surviving special relationship between the important architectural elements and their landscape setting are an exceptional piece of design and, together are greater than the sum of their parts.

Attribute 5. The UK has by far the greatest concentration of veteran trees in northern Europe and within High Park, which sits in the south-west section of Blenheim Park, is one of the finest areas of ancient oak-dominated woodland in the country. It is partially descended from the ancient Wychwood Forest, a 12th century deer park and an Anglo- Saxon chase.

Attribute 6. The gardens and pleasure grounds which surround the Palace were partly designed by Lancelot Brown in the mid 18th century, and partly by the French landscape architect Achille Duchene at the start of the 20th century.

Attribute 7. The park retains a complete, 18th century enclosing stone wall which protects its integrity, but views into and out of the site still provide key linkages between Blenheim Palace and the traditional English countryside and villages surrounding it.

Assessment of effects

C9 The table below relates the assets in the study area that are considered in the assessment of effects in chapter 5 directly to these attributes. These are shown on figure 5.2 of the main ES.

Assets in the 1km study area	Relevant attributes that convey OUV
The site, boundary tree belts (part of WHS setting)	7
The RPG & WHS within the 1km study area: character area 4, Lower Park, character area 5, Bladon Park and character area 8, the gardens and pleasure grounds)	3, 4
The park wall LB1	2, 4, 7
The Cowyards LB2	4
Eagle Lodge LB3	4
The walled gardens LB4, LB5	2, 4
Hensington Gate LB6	2, 4
Hensington Gate related group LB7, LB8	4
Woodstock conservation area	7

C10 The table below relates the conclusions of the assessment of the magnitude of effect in the ES chapter 5 directly to the attributes and to the OUV of the WHS. All are graded as of very high value in line with the methodology reproduced above. In relation to attribute 7, the value of the views from and towards the WHS, and its wider setting, the assessment of effects on the role of the site area as part of the approach towards Woodstock from the south on the A44 Oxford Road, was considered in the assessment of the park wall, the listed buildings at Hensington Gate at the park entrance, the Woodstock conservation area and the RPG overall.

Adopted attributes that convey OUV	Conclusions of ES chapter 5.	Significance of impact
Attribute 2. It still contains the unique early 18th century architecture of the Palace and its associated assemblage of buildings together with an archive of original survey and building documentation.	<i>Negligible change</i> LB1, LB6	Slight
	<i>No change</i> LB4, LB5,	Neutral
Attribute 3. It is still set within the early 18th century grand Vanbrugh landscape overlaid by Lancelot Brown's masterpiece of English Landscape style design, internationally considered to be the 'English Versailles'.	<i>Negligible change</i> RPG & WHS within the 1km study area: character area 4, Lower Park	Slight
	<i>No change</i> RPG & WHS within the 1km study area: character area 5, Bladon Park and character area 8, the gardens and pleasure grounds	Neutral
Attribute 4. The surviving special relationship between the important architectural elements and their landscape setting are an exceptional piece of design and, together are greater than the sum of their parts.	<i>Negligible change</i> RPG & WHS within the 1km study area: character area 4, Lower Park LB1, LB6, LB7, LB8	Slight
	<i>No change</i> RPG & WHS within the 1km study area: character area 5, Bladon Park and character area 8, the gardens and pleasure grounds LB2, LB3, LB4, LB5	Neutral

Adopted attributes that convey OUV	Conclusions of ES chapter 5.	Significance of impact
Attribute 7. The park retains a complete, 18th century enclosing stone wall which protects its integrity, but views into and out of the site still provide key linkages between Blenheim Palace and the traditional English countryside and villages surrounding it.	<i>Negligible change</i> The site, boundary tree belts (part of WHS setting) LB1, Woodstock conservation area	Slight

Conclusions

- C11 The proposed development at Lane East of Park View would result in an overall slight/neutral adverse effect on the OUV of the Blenheim Palace WHS.
- C12 The ES assessment also considers in the category of induced effects the financial contribution of the proposed development to the conservation, maintenance and restoration of the Blenheim Palace WHS via the Blenheim Heritage Foundation. The identified small magnitude of change would equate to a minor change based on the methodology tables given above, and a moderate/large beneficial impact.