

UNESCO World Heritage in Bath: The story so far

- **1986** The inscription material for the City of Bath is compiled in a 36-page report by the (then) Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England. See www.bathworldheritage.org.uk The nomination was readied for the second batch of initial UK nominations, following the first in 1986.
- **1987** The City of Bath was inscribed by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 11th Session in Paris on 11 December 1987. UNESCO ref: SC-97/CONF.005/9 Paris.
- **1996** As a result of local government re-organisation, Bath City Council was succeeded by Bath & North East Somerset Council.
- **1999** The Great Western Railway (including the section through Bath) was included in the UK Tentative list of World Heritage Sites. It was not carried forward into the subsequent 2014 Tentative List.
- **14 June 2001** A WHS Steering Group was convened and met for the first time. An early task was the appointment of a 'World Heritage Co-ordinator' (Ms Abby Harrap) initially funded by 3-year tapering support from English Heritage, who also chaired the Steering Group.
- **2003** The first WHS Management Plan for the City of Bath WHS (2003-2009) was published and was a pioneering document given the lack of published guidance and other examples worldwide. It was subsequently used as a model by many other sites worldwide.
- The property was inscribed without a boundary map. The city boundary was confirmed by the World Heritage Centre to be the World Heritage Site boundary (letter dated **17 October 2005**).
- Economic pressure before the **2008** financial crash saw major development proposals including the redevelopment of Southgate Shopping centre, Thermae Bath Spa, Bath Western Riverside, the Holburne Museum extension and a proposed Dyson Academy.
- Reacting to concern from third parties over the level of development, UNESCO, at the July 2008 World Heritage Committee, proposed that a reactive monitoring mission visit Bath, looking specifically at the Bath Western Riverside and Dyson Academy development proposals. The Mission visited in **November 2008**.

- Governance changes in Bath were instigated in response to the Mission. A new position of World Heritage Manager was created (Mr Tony Crouch) and an independent Steering Group Chair appointed (Mr David Beeton).
- The World Heritage Enhancement Fund was created in **2009**. This grant scheme was funded by B&NES and Bath Preservation Trust.
- World Heritage Day was first celebrated in **April 2009** and has since become an annual fixture.
- The Mission Report was considered by the **2009** UNESCO World Heritage Committee. [UNESCO report reference: WHC-09/33.Com/7B](#).
- The report concluded that the state of conservation was good and the site well managed. The decision expressed satisfaction that the Dyson Academy Project had been withdrawn, made recommendations regarding Bath Western Riverside Scheme improvements and recommended that protection of the surrounding landscape be enhanced. Reinforced interpretation for the site was suggested and a revised Management Plan including a Tourism Plan, Public Realm Strategy and traffic plan called for. [UNESCO decision reference: Decision ref: 33 Com/7B.13](#).
- In **2009** a Bath WHS Setting Study was produced and later adopted in 2013 as a Supplementary Planning Document. See: <https://www.bathworldheritage.org.uk/bath-world-heritage> under the *management* tab.
- The [2010-2016 Bath WHS Management Plan](#) was produced as a response to the mission.
- In **2010** a conference was held in Baden-Baden bringing together the leading European spas. This can be seen as the official start of the 'Great Spa Towns of Europe' project.
- **2012** saw the 25th anniversary of the inscription, with a range of activities and a celebratory civic function on 11 December – exactly 25 years after the decision was made.
- The 'Statement of Values' was revised and adopted by UNESCO in **2013** to add sections on authenticity, integrity and management. [UNESCO Ref: WHC-09/33.Com/7B](#). Also, a list of 'attributes' was compiled and adopted.
- **2013** A new Steering Group Chair was recruited (Mr Peter Metcalfe). A full monitoring exercise on Management Plan actions was undertaken and a

report, together with update on current and forthcoming developments, was submitted to Department Culture, Media and Sport (for forwarding to UNESCO) in **November 2014**.

- **2014** The Roman Curse tablets, recovered from the Sacred Spring, were added to the UK national UNESCO 'Memory of the World' register. An award ceremony took place on 31 October 2014.
- **25 July 2014** The Great Spa Towns of Europe are formally added to the UK Tentative List of WHS.
- **3 November 2015** The Great Spa Towns undergo a Technical Appraisal Evaluation in London.
- **2017** A new Steering Group Chair was recruited (Mr Barry Gilbertson). The name of the group was subsequently changed to the Advisory Board.
- **24 July 2021** The UNESCO WH Committee approves the [inscription of the Great Spa Towns of Europe to the WH List](#). Management Plans were also part of the decision papers.
- **May 2022** The Bath World Heritage Centre in York Street opens, together with the Clore Learning Centre.
- **August 2023** A B&NES governance review is undertaken. New Advisory Board terms of reference and Chair's role descriptions are implemented. The World Heritage function is transferred from Heritage Services to the Planning Service. Mr Tony Crouch becomes the Great Spa Towns of Europe Site Manager for Bath, with Mr Adrian Neilson recruited as City of Bath WHS Manager.
- **2024** A new Advisory Board Chair is recruited (Prof. Marion Harney). New terms of reference and role descriptions are implemented.