

UNITED KINGDOM

Tower of London

Brief description

The massive White Tower is a typical example of Norman military architecture, whose influence was felt throughout the kingdom. It was built on the Thames by William the Conqueror to protect London and assert his power. The Tower of London – an imposing fortress with many layers of history, which has become one of the symbols of royalty – was built around the White Tower.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription

1988

Agency responsible for site management

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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria

C (ii) (iv)

Justification as provided by the State Party

The Tower of London was first built by William the Conqueror for the purpose of protecting and controlling the city. Of the present buildings the White Tower survives largely intact from the Norman period, and architecture of almost all the styles which have flourished in England since may now be found within the walls.

The Tower has in the past been a fortress, a palace and a prison, and has housed the Royal Mint, the Public Records and (for a short time) the Royal Observatory. It was for centuries the arsenal for small arms, the predecessor of the existing Royal Armouries, and, as one of the strongest fortresses in the land, has from early times guarded the Crown Jewels.

The Tower today is the key to British history for many of the thousands of visitors who come every year from all over the world to see the buildings, the Royal Armouries and Crown Jewels and the

museum collections, to relive the past and to enjoy the pageantry of the present. But at the same time it is still a fortress, a royal palace, and the home of a community of some 150 hardworking people. As such it epitomises all that is best in World Heritage. UNESCO criteria: 5 a) ii, iv and vi.

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Criterion II. A monument symbolic of royal power since the time of William the Conqueror, the Tower of London served as an outstanding model throughout the kingdom from the end of the 11th century. Like it, many keeps were built in stone, e.g. Colchester, Rochester, Hedingham, Norwich or Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight.

Criterion IV. The White Tower is the example par excellence of the royal Norman castle in the late 11th century. The ensemble of the Tower of London is a major reference for the history of medieval military architecture.

Criterion VI. [not recommended by the Committee]

Committee Decision

Bureau (1988): the Bureau recommended inscription of this property, on condition that assurances be given that the area surrounding the Tower of London is duly protected by the British authorities so that the site and its environment are safe-guarded without further damage.

Committee (1988): the Committee has expressed its regrets regarding the building of the Tower Hotel, which would have best been avoided, and took note of the assurances of the United Kingdom authorities as to protection henceforth to be granted to the environment of the Tower of London. The Committee further suggested that inscription on the World Heritage List be extended to the Tower Bridge which constitutes a coherent whole with the Tower of London.

- The draft management plan contains a new Statement of Significance. The State Party will discuss and agree a revised Statement of outstanding universal value and will in due course submit it to the World Heritage Committee
- No change required to the official UNESCO description of the site

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: no buffer zone has been defined but one is needed

- State Party is considering several proposals for a buffer zone

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- Continuing harm to the setting of the World heritage Site: Commercial development of ever-increasing density and scale affecting the setting of the Tower of London continue to erode its integrity. Current proposals include a 10 storey hotel building directly abutting the WHS boundary, on axis with the historic main entrance and exit

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- The site is scheduled as an ancient monument; in addition, most buildings and structures within it are included in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, and the whole site lies within a conservation area. Any physical works to a scheduled monument require the consent of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, who in making such decisions is advised by English Heritage. This requirement takes precedence over the other forms of statutory protection of the heritage, except for those parts occupied as dwelling houses, which are subject to listed building controls. The relevant local authorities have policies in place which should protect the setting of the Tower
- The protection arrangements are considered not sufficiently effective

Actions taken/proposed:

- Discussion on townscape setting: the combination of a single charitable body (HRP) being responsible for the care of the site in the public interest, and statutory controls ensuring that its proposals are subject to detailed scrutiny, provide highly effective conservation-based management of the inscribed WHS. The problems lie entirely in the ongoing development of its townscape setting, where concerns about individual proposals, as well as attempts to put protective mechanisms in place have not yet been resolved. These issues are being further discussed
- Local level of action. Timeframe not provided

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, religious use

Management /Administrative Body

- No steering group: a steering group was originally established to administer the consultation process for the draft management plan. Many of this group are still involved in work connected with the plan but a new membership will be established once the current exercises have been completed. The site is in single ownership and therefore it is easier for HRP to drive.
- No site manager but none is needed
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national (DCMS, Historic Royal Palaces); local;
- Management under contractual agreement between the State Party and a third party
- The current management system is highly effective

5. Management Plan

- No management plan
- The preparation of a management plan may be envisaged

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Visitor income, retail sales, events, etc.
- Also: EU funds - SRB for Tower Environs Scheme
- No funding drawn in through the World Heritage Fund
- Sufficient for the management of the site but inadequate for its protection and conservation
- How is this funding problem being addressed? State of the Estate surveys and prioritised work in a planned maintenance programme

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff 207
- Other staff include: specialist consultants in conservation (e.g. architects, structural engineers, planning advisors, etc.)

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Very good: conservation, management, promotion, visitor management
- Good: interpretation, education
- Staff resources are adequate

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Staff training: learning centre with no conservation items in it; lunchtime lectures organised by the Royal Armouries and weekly talks/training sessions organised by the Chief Exhibitor at the Tower; in-house lectures, professional qualifications and CPD support provided by Historic Royal Palaces
- Training on site management for stakeholders

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 2,160,000 in 2005 (up 6.9%)
- Visitor facilities: ticketing facilities, welcome centre, toilets, 5 shops, 2 cafes, interpretation, interactive exhibitions, temporary exhibition programme, live interpretation daily, Yeoman Warder guided tours, facilities for disabled visitors – induction loops, Braille information, free wheelchair use. Education facilities: Tower Vaults learning centre with two teaching spaces outside the security and pay perimeter of the Tower, Waterloo Block education centre with a lecture theatre and teaching room within the main precincts of the Tower
- Visitor facilities are inadequate
- Visitor needs: school lunchrooms
- There is no tourism/visitor management plan for the site

10. Scientific Studies

- There is no agreed research framework/strategy for the site
- Studies related to the value of the site, monitoring exercises, condition surveys, archaeological surveys, visitor management, transportation studies
- Conservation plans, OUV, etc; Monitoring of pollution levels and impact on stone – Caramel project; state of the Estate surveys; archaeology as and when possible e.g. Moat Wall; quantitative and qualitative surveys; visitor flow studies
- Studies used for management of site: interpretation for visitors and informing future works on site - e.g.: the south east of moat wall was excavated in 2003/4 when significant archaeology was revealed by a masonry collapse, caused by tree root growth. The results of the excavation (the discovery of the 14th century original wharf build, 15th century basement walls and remains of a Napoleonic

war arms manufactory) will be used to inform how HRP manages the fabric of the wharf and moat, and is currently being used to facilitate a tree management strategy

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, businesses, local authorities. Inadequate: local communities
- There is an education strategy for the site
- Awareness raising: a volunteer strategy is currently being introduced. This will aim to engage local communities in a greater understanding of the site, including its World Heritage status.
- No events on World Heritage status
- Website available
- No local participation

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- World Heritage Committee sessions: 27th (2003); 28th (2004); 29th (2005); 30th (2006)

Conservation interventions

- Conservation repairs to Waterloo Block, White Tower, St Peter ad Vincula Church, Wakefield and Bloody Towers, Inner Curtain Wall (parts), Moat Wall and New Armouries
- Present state of conservation: adequate

Threats and Risks to site

- Development pressure; visitor/tourism pressure
- Specific issues: atmospheric pollution and deposits on stone, fire, tree roots
- Emergency measures: pollution monitoring, automatic fire detection systems and a tree root strategy

Atmospheric pollution – possibly ameliorated by the reduction in vehicle exhausts due to the introduction of the Congestion Charge.

Fire – HRP has installed an L1/P1 automatic fire detection system to maximize the speed of detection of products of combustion (smoke) in all buildings including all private residences

Tree roots – A tree strategy is in genesis. Four large trees have been felled this year to protect archaeology from tree root destruction

Timeframes: various

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme
- Condition of the site, its OUV and presentation to the public are measured through the management structure and processes of Historic Royal Palaces

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: raising awareness
- Strengths of management: major improvements to the immediate setting of the WHS to the west (Tower Hill), providing a new public space of high quality, and greatly improved visitor and education facilities. Within the walls of the Tower the following works: New Jewel House; refurbishment of White Tower including lead roof, all services, stonework on the South face; Representation of Royal Armouries collections in the White Tower; conversion of the New Armouries as a restaurant, banqueting facility and conference venue; two new education centres; major representation of the Medieval Palace; removal of Wharf flood barrier; major fire detection system and fire protection scheme throughout the Tower; stonework repairs to the Waterloo Block, Wakefield Tower and Water Lane; new permanent displays on Prisoners and Torture; ongoing upgrading of major services (gas, electricity, etc.)
- Weaknesses of management: failure to manage the redevelopment of its setting, resulting in ongoing erosion of its 'monumental value', relationship to its setting, and views of and from it

Future actions:

- Development of tall buildings strategy: DCMS working closely with London World Heritage Sites and other agencies to develop a tall buildings strategy to ensure that the continuing outstanding universal value of these sites is not compromised
- Timeframe not yet determined
- No WH Funding is sought