

**ICOMOS-UK WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE SITE VISIT TO HAYLE,
Cornwall & West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage site**

17TH March 2008

Present:

ICOMOS-UK

Barry Joyce, Vice Chair, ICOMOS-UK World Heritage Committee
Stuart Smith, Member, ICOMOS-UK World Heritage Committee
Susan Denyer, Secretary, ICOMOS-UK

Penwith Council:

Staff:

Jeremy Content
Penny Stokes

Hayle Town Council:

Councillors:

John Coombe (Mayor)
John Bennett (Deputy Mayor and also Penwith Councillor)
Brian Capper
Graham Coad
John Pollard

Cornwall County Council

Staff:

Nick Johnson

Purpose of visit:

To respond to Penwith Council's request for advice as to whether the proposed developments at Hayle harbour would impact adversely on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage site (WHS). The report has been written on behalf of the ICOMOS-UK World Heritage Committee.

Context of visit:

Hayle is one of the ten discrete areas that make up the serial cultural landscape, Cornwall and West Devon Mining landscape, inscribed on the World Heritage (WH) list in 2004.

Hayle was chosen to reflect a key element of the structure of the overall mining industry that brought such prosperity to Cornwall: the export of copper ore and the import of coal and timber.

In its evaluation ICOMOS (ICOMOS international advises the UNESCO World Heritage Committee on WH nominations) described Hayle as follows:

On the north Cornish coast, this was the main port for the Cornish mining industry. Large amounts of coal and timber were imported through the port, and copper ore exported. Extensive quays and wharves survive largely intact in a dramatic open estuarine setting flanked by villas for managerial classes and terraced housing for workers. Hayle also includes the remains of two iron foundries, Harvey's, where the largest mine steam engines in the world were produced, and the Cornwall Copper company. Both generated substantial, distinguished urban buildings. The port was served by a Copperhouse canal constructed in 1769/87, and a railway constructed from 1834 with a bridge of 1837 and a swinging bridge across the canal.

On the issue of protecting setting, the ICOMOS report stated:

No buffer zone has been identified for any part of the nominated areas. Where nominated areas are set within land that is protected, for instance as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that controls development, the lack of a Buffer Zone could be said to be justified as the setting is protected. Where, however, there is no such designation, for examples around Camborne and Redruth, Hayle and Tavistock, protection is needed for the setting of the nominated areas and it is considered that a buffer zone should be in place.

However in response to assurances from the State Party, the WH Committee decision included the following

Notes the statement of the State Party specifying that, according to paragraph 106 of the *Operational Guidelines* (2005), a further buffer zone is not required due to the comprehensive mechanism of conservation which shall protect the **Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape** from large scale development that might impinge on its integrity and value;

In terms of threats from development, the ICOMOS report stated:

Certain urban areas, Camborne, Redruth and Hayle Harbour, have been designed as priority areas for economic regeneration areas by the government, which has had the effect of rapid development of industrial areas around Redruth. Given the lack of specific protection (see above) there is concern that in some cases the need for heritage led regeneration may give way to commercial pressures. There is a positive commitment to the former in the management plan, but as yet no case studies to show how unsuitable development will be turned down without added protection.

A major development planned for the centre of Hayle Harbour could be the test case. On 31st March 2006, the State Party submitted details of a £25 million scheme for 54,000 sq ft of industrial units, 23,000 sq ft of wavehub building, marina, over 800 residential units, shops, pubs, restaurant, two hotels, and leisure facilities. This planning application is apparently to be determined before the World Heritage Committee and has the support of English Heritage and the State Party. This very large development is justified on the grounds that it will bring much needed development. It does however go beyond the minimal development needed to support restoration and regeneration. The scale and scope of the project would mean that, if built, the new structures would dominate the harbour and compromise its integrity as the main port for the Cornish mining industry.

And under authenticity, the ICOMOS report stated that

The main threat to authenticity is in terms of development that might compromise the spatial arrangements of areas such as Hayle harbour or the setting of Redruth and Camborne.

And in its conclusion, ICOMOS noted:

ICOMOS considers that the proposed development at Hayle harbour would not be consistent with the importance of Hayle as the main port of the mining industry and thus a key part of the nominated cultural landscape.

Proposed development:

ING, part of a Dutch bank, own much of the core of the WHS north of the railway – that is the harbour and its environs. Their ownership is part of what Peter de Savary bought when the Harvey Foundry Company was sold (the Harvey Foundry having taken over the Cornwall Copper Company estates).

ING have put in an outline planning application for the development of 1,200 houses, business units, a wave hub and associated flood protection measures, and a detailed planning application for the necessary infrastructure which includes a new bridge over Copperhouse Pool. The development site is north quay, south quay, part of east quay (all within the WHS), land above north quay, and Riviere Fields, to the east of north quay above the villas that fringe Copperhouse Pool.

It is understood that if outline planning permission is obtained, the various parts of the proposals would probably be sold off by ING to smaller developers.

The proposals are:

North Quay: Wave hub infrastructure, business units, 3-6 storey apartments, and multi-story car park

Land above and to the east of North Quay: Houses and dispersed chalets, including 200 houses at Riviere Fields above Copperhouse Pool

East Quay: No detailed proposals apart from ‘land-mark’ building at northern tip

South Quay: Mainly apartments, up to 4 stories max, and possible ‘land-mark’ building at northern tip.

Flood protection: For the development at the three quays to take place, flood protection measures are needed. These are concrete platforms constructed on top of the quayside ‘decks’, 1.85metres above the height of the existing granite stone quay walls, to raise the overall level of the quays.

The applications are being considered by Penwith Council on 24th March. The Council will cease to exist at the end of March, as from 1st April Cornwall County Council will become a unitary authority.

Outstanding Universal Value:

The WHS was inscribed under criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv), and as a cultural landscape. The Committee agreed the justification for these criteria.

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A draft Statement of OUV (SoOUV) has been prepared and submitted by the DCMS to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for approval at its 33rd session in Seville, July 2009. This includes statements of authenticity and integrity. The statement on authenticity states that: *‘The main threat to authenticity is in terms of development that might compromise the spatial arrangements of areas such as Hayle Harbour or the setting of Redruth and Camborne’*. This is based on the text in the ICOMOS evaluation – see above.

The World Heritage Coordinator tentatively identified what was considered to be the ‘OUV’ of Hayle in 2005, but this has not been formally adopted by the WH Partnership. As Hayle does not demonstrate OUV on its own, but rather contributes to the OUV of the serial nomination, through contributing attributes not necessarily present elsewhere, the ‘OUV’ is in effect the ‘attributes’ that Hayle contributes to the overall attributes of the property that carry OUV.

WHSs are now encouraged to develop attributes – mainly physical aspects of the property that need to be managed to sustain OUV.

The Nomination dossier and the ICOMOS evaluation make clear that the inclusion of Hayle in the serial property is essentially because of its role as the principal port for the export of mined raw materials and the import of coal and fuel for the foundries.

ICOMOS-UK considers that the following are the key physical attributes of Hayle:

1. The Port itself:

- The assembly of quays, quay walls, docking areas and quayside platforms or decks where goods were loaded and unloaded
- Tramways and railways; linear track ways in the landscape and townscape and the remains of tracks including granite pad stones which held iron rails for horse drawn ‘tramways’; terminus of railway
- The fishing port
- Large man-made sluicing ponds and sluices, with the associated infrastructure of pond walls, sluice gates etc
- Shipbuilding yard for Harvey’s iron boats
- Estuarine landscape:
 - Narrow funnel exit from harbour to sea; harbour in bowl between sand dunes; strong contrast between industry and surrounding ‘natural’ landscape –with in places abrupt change between the two.
- Overall readability of much of the harbour landscape in terms of spatial arrangements

- Open character and low-height buildings that allow views between the docks, down and across Copperhouse pool, across Carnsew Pool, etc

2. The Foundries and Twin Company Towns

- The location of two iron foundries and remains of buildings
- The twin company ‘new towns’
 - with terraced housing, distinctive terraces facing South quay and Copperhouse pool, and substantial villas, especially north of Copperhouse Pool
- Visual cohesiveness

In order to retain its overall authenticity, the attributes of the WHS must ‘truthfully’ carry the OUV. In order to retain its integrity, the WHS must contain all the key attributes within its boundaries.

Lack of information:

In spite of the fact that this development has had a long gestation, there still appears to be a lack of basic information to flesh out these attributes. For instance there is no overall archaeological appraisal of the North and South quays, no detailed record of the quay walls and their condition, and no easily accessible historical analysis of the evolution of the landscape over the past fifty years, although considerable work has been done on landscape characterisation.

Penwith Council:

The Council are anxious to secure development for the town in order to:

- Protect the attributes of OUV
- Secure jobs
- Repair quay walls
- Gain a new fishing port
- Mitigate long-term flooding problems

Impact of development on OUV:

The key issues to be addressed are whether the gains from the development can be justified in view of the substantial change that they will bring to the cultural landscape of Hayle and whether the impact on OUV will be detrimental. ICOMOS-UK considers that the impact of the development should be considered in terms of its impact on the attributes that carry OUV, and in terms of their subsequent ability, or lack of ability, to display that OUV.

Below is a table of what we consider to be the positive and negative impacts on the attributes outlined above:

Positive impact:

- Repair of quay walls
- Renovation of slipways
- Renovation of sluices
- Restoration of stables
- Provision of new harbour

Negative impact:

- Loss of quaysides. i.e. the quayside ‘platforms’ or ‘decks’, which were used for the loading and unloading of raw materials
- Loss of tramway remains and some rail tracks on North Quay
- Loss of visual coherence of quays
- Loss of local distinctiveness through introduction of significant and overwhelming new structures, to accommodate over 1,000 housing units, particularly along the spine of the harbour, south quay, top of east quay and north quay, that will dilute the impact of existing terraces
- Introduction of key features (such as tall, dense blocks and landmark buildings) that distort historic evidence and spatial relationships
- Damage to landscape setting: the interface between historic port town and farmland will be broken down and diluted with chalets and suburban type development.
- Negative impact of weighty concrete bridge on Copperhouse Pool

Implications:

ICOMOS-UK sympathises with the aims of the Council to deliver regeneration to Hayle and to create the means to repair the quay walls. We do however consider that as Hayle is a WHS, the driving force for this regeneration should be the historic cultural landscape that has been given international recognition. As CABE points out in their detailed and critical report – much of which we agree with – the starting point should be an assessment of the strong and distinctive assets that could be capitalised upon in order that development optimises the inherent opportunities of the site.

These assets include all the attributes listed above as well as the proximity to the beaches, the spectacular waterfront and the very fine landscape setting. The scheme currently submitted for outline planning, together with the detailed application for the infrastructure part of the project, are in our view interventions that are too massive for the town and, overall, impact severely adversely on OUV.

In detail, our comments are as follows in order of level of concern:

South Quay:

We have fundamental reservations about the rationale for this part of the scheme. In order to develop the area, the whole quay has to be lifted by some 1.85metres and surrounded by a flood wall. In order to make development viable, the scheme proposes the development of 260 units in blocks of up to 4 stories (13 metres) high. The scale and massing of these blocks would be an overwhelming intrusion into the harbour landscape, would lead to a loss of open quayside space, and adversely impact on its key attributes, filling much of the quayside with buildings that bear little relationship to the attractive and small scale row of double fronted villa houses with front gardens at Penpol Terrace, that characterise the road alongside the current fishing harbour and are a key part of the planned factory town. The height of the development would in effect visually cut the harbour basin in two north of the viaduct and lead to a loss of views from the east part of the town across Carnsew Pool and beyond.

The effect of the development would be to alter fundamentally the strong sense of place of Hayle – away from a port town in its estuarine basin to a predominantly tourist oriented dominant new settlement. It could also alter the focus of the town away from its current heart which has been the subject of successful regeneration projects.

This development would in our view threaten the authenticity of the site and impact adversely on its OUV.

We consider that a smaller scale development that bore some resemblance to the low warehouse buildings that once existed in the centre of the quay could be envisaged on South Quay in a way that would not have these adverse effects.

North Quay:

We consider that this site is suited to the development of the web hub infrastructure and to the development of business units at the northern end where factories have previously existed. However we do note that this element of the scheme alone may require the building of a new access bridge. We also consider that some housing/mixed use blocks could be accommodated but that these need to be set back from the quay – allowing a much wider area of quayside to remain in front of the new flood defences and for there to be a clear cut off point above the buildings that fringe the quay.

Detailed designs need to be produced for the quayside buildings before an adequate assessment can be made. Within or on the edge of a World Heritage site it is essential that the highest standards of design are upheld and ones that are sympathetic to their surroundings We consider that the buildings should read as urban buildings tightly meshed with the landscape and we also consider that they should use a pallet of colours

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that reflect the local materials and should not try and present an assertive and almost strident addition to the landscape, as appears to be suggested by the recently produced Design Guide, dated March 2009.

We consider, however, that it would be very difficult to satisfactorily accommodate a multi-storey car park at North Quay because of the scale of any such building (although it is not clear that this is still part of the scheme), particularly in the location chosen.

East Quay:

Few details are provided for this quay other than the suggestion that there might be potential for a ‘landmark building’ at the northern end. We consider that the existing small-scale buildings on this quay, which deserve refurbishment, should set the scene for any further development. A landmark building would be quite inappropriate in terms of conflicting with the sensitive, historic environment, and being unrelated to the use and value of the harbour.

Hill Top and Riviere Fields:

We do not consider that the dispersed chalets at Hill Top between the North Quay development and the cricket pitch are acceptable – they will take away from the strong differentiation between the urban area and the farmland above. For a similar reason, we do not consider that the proposed Riviere Fields housing is acceptable: the farmland (with its Harvey stable which perhaps should have been included within the boundaries of the WHS – in a comparable way to how farms have been included in the Derwent Mills WHS) provides an essential backdrop to the Clifton Terrace villa houses alongside the north of Copperhouse Pond.

Furthermore the majority of the Riviere Fields land is currently identified in the local plan (policy TV 2) as land of landscape value, although we understand that consideration is being given to revoking the protection that it currently has by way of a request to the Secretary of State. We consider that this would be quite unacceptable in terms of the protection that is needed for the immediate setting of the WHS in view of the concern expressed by the World Heritage Committee on the need for protection in lieu of a buffer zone.

Copperhouse bridge:

The need for this bridge is predicated – we understand – on the amount of development at North Quay and Riviere Fields. If a bridge is needed for a smaller scale development, we consider that an altogether visually ‘lighter’ metal structure would be appropriate with ‘open’ rather than solid concrete sides and without pedestrian space as this can be accommodated along the swing bridge. Detailed designs need to be produced before a proper assessment could be made and it would need to avoid impact on the stone approaches to the swing bridge.

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Conclusions:

Overall we consider that the current proposals would have an unacceptable impact on the OUV of the WHS under the terms of the WH Convention. The dis-benefits to the OUV of the WHS are of such a scale that they cannot be compensated for by heritage gains such as the repair of walls and sluice gates.

We do not consider that the current outline application should be considered as one application, and thus neither the current application should be supported, nor the detailed infrastructure proposals that are for the whole site.

For North Quay, we consider that a Master Plan is needed for the area, but excluding Hill Top and Riviere Fields. We suggest that this smaller area has the capacity to provide employment opportunities and some affordable housing but that the current plans need fundamental revision, in order to deliver a scheme that complements the rest of Hayle, sits well in the landscape and has high quality buildings in terms of design and appropriate materials.

We do not consider that the scheme for South Quay is acceptable in terms of its major impact on OUV, and consider that more thought is needed as to how the tip of East Quay might be developed in ways other than with a landmark building.

We appreciate that a smaller scheme for North Quay might not allow for the funding of repairs to the south and east quay walls. It appears to us that the cost of repairing the quay walls, if they are to be surmounted by 1.85 metres of fill and concrete retaining walls, will be far greater than repairing the walls in order to maintain the current quaysides. The possibility of considering an HLF grant for the repair of the South and East Quay walls and the renewal of sluices, allied to an overall landscaping scheme for Hayle harbour, perhaps in collaboration with CABI Space, should be considered.

Given the scale and scope of the proposed development, ICOMOS-UK considers that the current proposals should, in line with World Heritage Operational Guidelines, paragraph 172*, be submitted to the World Heritage Centre before any permissions are given. English Heritage will however be able to provide guidance on this issue.

In summary, we urge the Council to defer these applications, in order that a more appropriate scheme can be developed through a Master Plan for the North Quay. Such a plan should be supported by appropriate research and survey to a level that would properly inform any further proposals, so that development is based on a full understanding of the property. ICOMOS-UK would be pleased to participate further in

any detailed discussions to take forward a scheme that is in harmony with the historic fabric and character of the industrial port, sustains its outstanding universal value and delivers regeneration.

ICOMOS-UK
20th March 2009

**World Heritage Operational Guidelines, 2008, paragraph 172:*

The World Heritage Committee invites the States Parties to the *Convention* to inform the Committee, through the Secretariat, of their intention to undertake or to authorize in an area protected under the *Convention* major restorations or new constructions which may affect the outstanding universal value of the property. Notice should be given as soon as possible (for instance, before drafting basic documents for specific projects) and before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, so that the Committee may assist in seeking appropriate solutions to ensure that the outstanding universal value of the property is fully preserved.