



THE NATIONAL TRUST



ENGLISH HERITAGE

*Working in partnership at
Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal*

World Heritage Site Plan Update Newsletter

Issue 3, February 2008 www.fountainsabbey.org.uk



Welcome to the third edition of the World Heritage Site Plan update newsletter.

This issue will:

- introduce the main ideas for the new Vision for the site
- update you on the revision of the Statement of Significance
- present the updated 30 year management objectives
- summarise the contents of the six year action plan

These important documents are central to the new management plan and provide guidance for everyone who cares about the site. The action plan will be supported by a series of sub-plans (to be updated or written over the course of the next six years), like the Conservation Plan, which will give more detail about the management of the garden and parkland. Consultation throughout 2007 has given us lots of ideas, raised many questions and enabled the challenges and opportunities for the site for the next six years to be discussed openly.

The full World Heritage Site plan will available in the Spring at www.fountainsabbey.org.uk for a three month consultation period.



Vision: Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is a place where....

- all strive to conserve and enhance the historic and natural environment to exemplar standards
- sustainable management is understood and demonstrated whilst adapting to the challenges of climate change
- the historical, cultural and natural significances of the site, and its setting in the wider landscape, are valued
- the estate's wonderful stories are shared and celebrated and all can participate in research and engage in opportunities to access and join in the work of the site through volunteering, learning and activities
- neighbours, the local community, government, heritage, environmental, economic and educational partners and UNESCO work together to raise the profile of the site in Yorkshire, enhance its position in Yorkshire's economy and ensure it remains a place to be enjoyed and valued by all



Statement of Significance

The Statement of Significance tells us what is important about a site and to whom. Visitors, volunteers, members of the local community, partners and other stakeholders were asked why they love Fountains. This, and a detailed factual update, has helped us to refresh the Statement. During the last few weeks, UNESCO and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport have asked us to produce a short Statement of Significance and a 'Statement of Outstanding Universal Value'. All World Heritage Sites have been asked to do this to help UNESCO update their records showing why each site was originally designated. Fountains will continue to have a full version of the Statement of Significance in the management plan which reflects the outcomes of the consultation and presents:

- a more detailed explanation of the significant features and why they're valued
- more information about the social, cultural and economic values of the site including its importance as a place of learning and recreation

Updated 30 Year Management Objectives

There are twenty-four long-term (30 year) management objectives for the site. They have not changed significantly during this process but have been updated to reflect new challenges, such as climate change. Collectively these objectives provide guidance for the site into the future. The objectives are divided into four themes and these are shown below.

MANAGEMENT POLICY, FINANCING OUR FUTURE AND INVESTING IN PEOPLE

- A. Ensure holistic and sustainable management to achieve the vision for the site
- B. Retain the distinctiveness, sense of historical continuity and peaceful beauty of the site
- C. Ensure adequate and sustainable financial and human resources to achieve the vision for the site
- D. Achieve the desired standards of maintenance of the whole estate, including the infrastructure, through long-term planning and allocation of adequate resources.
- E. Protect the landscape setting, ensure the boundaries of the World Heritage Site (WHS) include the area that give the site its universal significance and establish a buffer zone to protect the WHS overall
- F. Examine the impact of climate change on the management of the site and adopt a strategy for accommodation and adaptation
- G. Minimise the impact of the pheasant shoot on access, the historic and natural environment and woodland management
- H. Develop awareness of the WHS status amongst key partners, the local community and visitors
- I. Develop a research programme to improve the understanding of the site and to inform its' management

CONSERVATION POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

- J. Ensure the highest standards of conservation management and enhancement of the whole site
- K. Ensure the long-term conservation and improve the standards of maintenance of the designed landscape
- L. Complete the first-time consolidation and continue the conservation of the monastic remains
- M. Develop, with partners, long-term solutions to recurrent problems affecting the water features that arise from the catchment area
- N. Ensure the long-term conservation of the many features of the historic environment
- O. Ensure the long-term conservation, and maximise the opportunities for enhancement, of the natural features of the site and improve the standards of monitoring
- P. Enhance the environmental performance of the site through improved environmental practices incorporating environmental compliance, reduced energy use, water conservation measures and sustainable resource use

Updated 30 Year Management Objectives continued...

ACCESS, ENJOYMENT AND UNDERSTANDING

- Q. Implement a comprehensive and sustainable access policy for all incorporating intellectual access and learning, physical access, social, economic and cultural access opportunities
- R. Promote enjoyment, understanding and engagement to deepen the relationship with supporters and develop a dialogue with them to share information and estate stories
- S. Develop the learning experience for all through engagement with current and potential new audiences
- T. Inspire support and encourage active involvement through volunteering, financial support and repeat visiting

LOCAL COMMUNITY LINKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- U. Strengthen links with the local and other communities of interest, responding to feelings of ownership of the site and to people's love of the site
- V. Continue to develop contacts and partnerships with the local authorities, statutory bodies and other key organisations, individuals and adjoining landowners
- W. Build understanding of the impact of the site on the local / regional economy and optimise its impact as an employer, regional marketing asset, visitor attraction and supporter of local producers



Key Topics and Six-Year Action Plan (2008 to 2013)

The 30 year management objectives form the framework for the six-year action plan. A major part of the consultation involved exploring five key topic areas in the wider consultation meetings and in smaller focus groups. This helped to formulate the content of the six-year action plan. Here follows a summary of each key topic area and a selection of the actions that are planned to help the site respond to these core issues, and work towards achieving the 30 year objectives.

Key Issue 1: The Future Restoration of the Garden and Parkland

The water garden and parkland are fundamental to the WHS designation and Studley Royal is recognised as one of the most spectacular water gardens in England. This update has provided the opportunity to reflect on the future direction of the restoration and conservation of this landscape which is very important culturally, historically and for its wildlife value.

Actions include:

- Develop a dynamic vision for the garden and parkland that is guided and inspired by the highpoint of the Aislabies' design in 1781
- Research and produce a Conservation Management Plan for the whole site. This will include advice on best practice for its management and conservation.
- Define exemplar standards for conservation and presentation in the garden and parkland for the water features, garden buildings and ornamental planting
- Complete the first time consolidation of the abbey ruins and the precinct wall
- Complete a programme of restoration works for key features and structures in the garden and parkland
- Survey and monitor habitats and species by completing a bio-diversity survey and a tree survey. Integrate the outcomes into the management of the site
- Maintain a healthy and robust landscape to facilitate the natural world to adapt to climate change

Key Issue 2: Water and Climate Change

The quality and flow of the River Skell is important for both the aesthetics of the Water Garden and to support wildlife in the valley. Climate change is likely to increase the number of flooding events experienced as a result of warmer, wetter winters and conversely cause more incidences of low flows during the anticipated hotter, drier summers.

Actions include:

- Work with partners and landowners to implement actions that will help to manage the water flowing from the catchment through the gardens
- Reduce the impact of floodwater on the infrastructure of the whole site
- Work pro-actively with the Ripon Multi-Objective Project (MOP) that is seeking to reduce the impact of flooding through new land management techniques (The Ripon MOP is a partnership of organisations including the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Nidderdale AONB)

Key Issue 3: Environmental Policy and Practice

Taking action to reduce the site's overall impact on the environment is a high priority. The main areas for concern are energy use, water use and sustainable resource use. This means taking action to reduce the site's reliance on fossil fuels and to become more energy efficient. Plans include investigating ways to use water more efficiently in the Visitor Centre and the restaurant and to reduce and recycle the amount of waste produced in the office, restaurant, shop and holiday cottages.

Actions include:

- Implement the recommendations of the Carbon Trust following their audit of energy use in the Visitor Centre
- Investigate the potential to exploit renewable energy, such as hydro-power
- Continue to develop and implement the estate-wide recycling strategy
- Monitor water use on the site and identify and adopt ways to use water more efficiently; including developing the potential to recycle rainwater
- Assess options for introducing greener transport to, and around, the site



Key Issue 4: Engaging People

Over 300,000 visitors come to the abbey and gardens each year including international visitors. The site is loved locally, with several generations of local families enjoying visiting, often on a weekly basis. The site is valued as place to come for a day out, or for a walk, and to learn about the history of the abbey and gardens that make the site special. Over 300 volunteers help run activities such as leading guiding tours, gardening and stewarding at events. Finding new ways to involve everyone who visits, or who has a special interest in the site, in conservation work and estate activities is a continuing priority.

Actions include:

- Develop the access strategy to enhance physical access and access to information about the site
- Develop an engaging, informative and accessible website for the WHS

Engaging People continued...

- Share with visitors the 'people and estate' stories about the whole site that help to bring it alive
- Write and produce an inspiring, high quality, guidebook for the WHS and its setting
- Continue to develop and implement the Learning and Interpretation Plan and provide a range of activities for all age groups
- Develop heritage and conservation skills for all
- Build on links with local schools and continue to develop opportunities for children, at all key stages, to learn about the natural and historic environment

Key issue 5: Sustainable Development

Ensuring the site has sufficient funds to support the amount of conservation work that is required in the garden and parkland has been a key focus of the update. A sustainable development plan has been proposed which will help the site to be financially secure in the medium to long term. This plan is summarised below.

Actions include:

- Develop partnerships and raise awareness of World Heritage Site status to work towards the attainment of the objectives and, where possible, to meet the strategic aims of partner organisations
- Develop the fundraising strategy to identify and actively pursue new and established funding streams
- Implement the new strategy for sustainable development to generate funding for conservation projects. The strategy includes:
 - Development of a local food offer
 - Development of the plant sales area
 - Conversion of the disused farm buildings at How Hill to create new holiday cottages
 - Enhancements to the Visitor Centre, including the re-location of the office, improved admissions point, visitor route and improved facilities



Working Together...

The actions presented on the preceding pages are necessarily only a summary of the full action plan but give you a flavour of some of the areas of work that will be contained in the updated management plan. Throughout the process of updating the plan it was clear that meeting many of the long term objectives will only be achieved by working with our partners, neighbours and with the support of the local community and visitors to the site. Significant steps have been taken during this update to raise awareness of the World Heritage Site status of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal. The updated plan will be the next stage in a collaborative approach to conserving all of the aspects of the site that make it unique and loved.



Next Steps...

- For further information contact Dawn Jackson, see below
- The full World Heritage Site plan will available in the Spring at www.fountainsabbey.org.uk for a three month consultation period
- The plan is submitted to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for approval before publication
- The action plan covers a period of 2008 and ends in 2013
- For further information about World Heritage Sites visit www.unesco.org or www.icomos-uk.org

This newsletter is available in large print.

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