



## UK Tentative List of Potential Sites for World Heritage Nomination: Application form

Please save the application to your computer, fill in and email to:  
[UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

The application form should be completed using the boxes provided under each question, and, where possible, within the word limit indicated.

Please read the [Information Sheets](#) before completing the application form. It is also essential to refer to the accompanying [Guidance Note](#) for help with each question, and to the relevant paragraphs of UNESCO's *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, (OG) available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>

Applicants should provide only the information requested at this stage. Further information may be sought in due course.

### (1) Name of Proposed World Heritage Site

Chester Rows

### (2) Geographical Location

Name of country/region

England: North West Region

Grid reference to centre of site

SJ405662

Please enclose a map preferably A4-size, a plan of the site, and 6 photographs, preferably electronically.

### **(3) Type of Site**

Please indicate category:

Natural  Cultural  Mixed  Cultural Landscape

### **(4) Description**

Please provide a brief description of the proposed site, including the physical characteristics. 200 words

Chester is a settlement of Roman origin that preserves a unique historic system, known as the Rows, which comprise buildings fronting the city's four main streets, with upper level public walkways continuously running through them. Research demonstrates that they existed as a fully integrated system by 1300, and the form has survived for over 700 years. The walkways pass above shops at street level and give access to a second level of shops with domestic accommodation set behind and on the floors above.

The Rows are contained within buildings of exceptional quality, many containing important medieval fabric, behind facades of varying dates and architectural styles. Whilst their origins depend on several factors peculiar to Chester, the essential motivation was trade: by trading at two levels, the merchants who built and occupied the properties doubled their commercial potential and thus increased the prosperity of the town.

From an early date the Rows served as public thoroughfares incorporated into private property. This right of access was strictly enforced by the civic authorities: although the buildings evolved along characteristic lines to meet the needs and aspirations of successive generations, the system has preserved intact its spatial arrangements and its structures which are typical of successive stages in its history.

### **(5) History**

Please provide a short summary statement of any significant events in the history of the site. 200 words

The evolution of the Rows reflects Chester's history as a centre of international trade. The city's origins as a Roman fortress and its subsequent prosperity as a maritime port influenced the development of this unique urban morphology. Critical to this story is Chester's use as a military base for Edward I's Welsh campaign, when the city was host to an army of skilled craftsmen and engineers, the builders of the World Heritage Site Welsh Castles. This created a reservoir of expertise in construction and a period of prosperity that lasted until the mid C14 during which the Row system was established.

Further periods of prosperity occurred in the C17, when new Row buildings were erected, and the C18 when Cheshire gentry improved their town houses for seasonal visits to the city. In the Victorian and Edwardian periods antiquarianism spawned a new era of inventive timber framed buildings incorporating galleries.

From the late 1960s Chester established an international reputation for its pioneering conservation programme, inspired by the celebrated Insall report, that included preservation and enhancement of the Row buildings, and the archaeological research that has confirmed their outstanding importance. This enterprise was rewarded with 2 Europa Nostra Awards.

**(6) Why do you think this site should be inscribed as a World Heritage Site?**

Give reasons. 200 words

Chester is an international heritage destination. Recent research indicates that 72% of visitors come because of the city's exceptional character and 67% are attracted by its historic buildings. Many combine visits to the WHS Castles and City Walls of Edward I in North Wales (inscribed 1986), with which the city has such close historical links. The Rows are the city's unique attraction, and WHS recognition would engender an enhanced understanding of their special qualities, highlight the connection with Edward I's Welsh campaign and promote a sense of civic pride. This in turn would encourage greater appreciation of the cultural heritage of the site and a shared responsibility for its care and management.

For whilst management responsibilities for the Row thoroughfares are established in law, the wider duties of ownership are complex and not always clearly understood. Their fragmented ownership and varied appearance is part of their character, but it also causes difficulties in management of issues such as fabric condition, commercial

pressures, fire protection and interpretation. By focussing attention on the outstanding universal value of the Rows and the need for collective action, inscription would help to preserve the Rows for future generations of citizens, students and international visitors.

**(7) Please say why the site has Outstanding Universal Value and specify the main features which underpin its importance. 200 words**

The Rows are of outstanding architectural and archaeological interest. Beneath them lies visible archaeology relating to the prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods; within them is superb intact historic fabric from the medieval period onwards. The later C19 and early C20 Vernacular Revival buildings form an exceptional testimony to the development of a local architectural style in an age of increasing standardisation.

The continuous system of galleried buildings has existed as a unique urban typology for over 700 years. Its realisation was based on commercial factors, coupled with the engineering expertise within Edward I's entourage, and resulted either from an imposed planning scheme, or from a collective undertaking by the increasingly independent citizens. Whilst two-level commercial buildings have existed in other British and European towns, Chester differed in adopting this common form along all its principal streets, allowing a continuous system to evolve. That the system has survived is due to the unique and long standing planning tool of public thoroughfares incorporated into private property.

Celebrated for many centuries for their convenience and protection from the weather, the Chester Rows were adopted as a model for C20 multi-level retail developments in Britain and throughout the world, and remain in active use.

## (8) Outstanding Universal Value

Please state which of the [10 UNESCO criteria for Outstanding Universal Value](#) the proposed site meets, and describe briefly why the criteria were chosen. Please see criteria note at the end of the form.

UNESCO criterion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Why was this criterion chosen? 100 words
(i)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(ii)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Chester Rows constitute a unique system of galleried buildings that have survived and evolved over more than 700 years through the exercise of a municipally established planning system, responding to the collective interests of the local community. The system, which continues in active retail use, has served as an exemplar for C20 multi-level shopping centres in Britain starting with Coventry and has subsequently influenced town planning practice throughout the world.
(iii)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Rows are a testimony to the development of a remarkable urban typology in the late C13 and early C14. This reflected the collective values of the medieval merchant community which, by the exercise of its powers by the City Assembly, and through the influence of the Freemen and Guilds of the city, has continued to ensure the survival of the system up to the present day. The Rows have been used historically as a venue for Chester's celebrated Mystery Plays and Mid Summer Watch celebrations, which continue as strong manifestations of cultural and community engagement to the present day.
(iv)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Rows are a unique urban form of galleried buildings along the city's four principal streets. They constitute one of the greatest concentrations of medieval town houses in the UK and contain visible prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval archaeology of exceptional interest. The buildings, which have evolved along characteristic lines reflecting the changing course of trade and domestic life in Chester, preserve intact the spatial arrangements and structures that are typical of successive stages of their history.
(v)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(vi)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(vii)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(viii)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>UNESCO criterion</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Why was this criterion chosen?</b> 100 words
(ix)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(x)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**(9) Authenticity (for cultural or mixed sites only)**

Authenticity concerns the current state of conservation of a cultural or mixed site; especially whether its importance, its Outstanding Universal Value, is still obvious from its physical condition. Please outline the condition of the site. 200 words

With the exception of Lower Bridge Street, where the Row walkway was largely enclosed in the late C17 and C18 (and where the archaeological evidence remains for the former layout), all the buildings within the proposed site have retained their authenticity to a very high degree. Even properties built in the second half of the C20 contain a gallery within their design. In Lower Bridge Street there are still sections of galleries contained within a number of the buildings, and in most others the floor heights and proportions reflect the level of the lost walkways. The buildings mostly remain in their original retail use. A rich source of documentary evidence relating to the properties survives from the Middle Ages to the present day, and this is supplemented by recent archaeological investigation, and to the English Heritage sponsored Chester Rows Research Project archive and publication.

**(10) Integrity**

For cultural or mixed sites, please state how much original fabric is included in the proposed site, and its condition. For guidance on how the test of integrity is met for natural sites under criteria (vii) – (x), please refer to the OG 90-94. Information Sheet 6 also provides help on this point. 200 words

The existing urban fabric dates from the C13 to the C20, with a majority of Row buildings containing medieval structure at the lower levels, many to a very high degree. The historic evolution of the Row system is clearly readable throughout the proposed site, representing the successive stages of its development. As a result of the pioneering conservation programme developed by local authorities from 1968 to the present day, the Row buildings are generally in good condition, and every effort has been made to preserve their historic fabric intact, notwithstanding their fragility and the pressures of continued retail usage.

**(11) Are there other examples of this kind of site already on the World Heritage List?**

Yes  No

If yes, please list. 100 words

No other examples

**(12) What distinguishes this site from other similar sites?**

150 words

There are very few existing sites that represent a particular urban typology, the majority of urban cultural sites being either specific buildings within an urban setting (Durham Cathedral and Castle, Convent of Christ at Tomar) or complete urban centres (Bruges, Prague, Bath, Florence, Salamanca). There are also no sites where the urban form has developed as a result of commercial, or more specifically retail considerations. A third distinguishing factor is the continuum of planning direction that has maintained the Row system as a unique urban structure through seven centuries of political, social and economic change.

**(13) How does the site contribute to meeting UNESCO's priorities for a balanced World Heritage List?**

200 words

The Chester Rows is a type of cultural site that is currently unrepresented in the WHS list. Its evolution as a commercial entity, its creation as an expression of collective endeavour, its outstanding architectural and archaeological interest and its management systems differentiate it from other urban sites. In recent years Chester has actively engaged in transnational co-operation, sharing expertise and building capacity with its overseas partners in the field of historic environment management. This has included acting as lead partner in EC funded projects such as the development of local distinctiveness as a catalyst for economic competitiveness, and the Asia Urbs programme building conservation capacity in the Kathmandu Valley WHS. Chester's willingness to share the expertise developed through its internationally renowned conservation programme (recipient of 2 Europa Nostra Awards) with custodians of other WHS would benefit the global community fostered by the UNESCO World Heritage programme.

**(14) What benefits do you think World Heritage Site inscription would bring?**

Please indicate the main opportunities and benefits.

Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regeneration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe. 100 words.

The principal benefits will be protection and conservation, leading to opportunities for enhanced tourism and educational understanding. At present the Rows are under-recognised, and WHS status would enable improved and co-ordinated management so as better to resist commercial pressures and foster a common culture of understanding and care.

The protection of the Rows also depends on the economic sustainability of Chester which must compete with other retail centres to maintain its heritage assets for the future. Beneficiaries would include the citizens of Chester, visitors to the city, students, building owners and tenants, and the future heritage of the city.

**(15) Are there any known threats to the proposed World Heritage Site?**

Yes  No

Please indicate any proposed developments, or other potential impacts on the site.

<b>Impact</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Please describe.</b> 100 words for each issue.
Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	None
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	None
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	None

**(16) Legal Protection**

Please list any legal and other protections, including cultural and natural designations, which cover the whole or part of the proposed site. 200 words

- County Council Act 1980: contains legal provisions relating to the use, treatment and development of the Rows
- Chester is a designated Area of Archaeological Importance under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act
- The majority of Row buildings are listed, many in Grades I and II\*
- The site is within the City of Chester Conservation Area

**(17) Ownership**

Please list the main owners of the site, where possible.

Cheshire West and Chester Council  
 Grosvenor Estate  
 Diocese of Chester  
 National financial institutions  
 Retail chains and companies  
 Local owners  
 Charitable trusts

(Statements of support attached)

Do the owners support the application? Yes  No

A statement of support from the principle owners of the proposed site should be attached to the application, preferably electronically.

**(18) Local Authority support for the site**

Please list all Local Authorities with an interest in the proposed site.

Cheshire West and Chester Council

(Statement of support attached)

Does the proposed site have local Authority support? Yes  No

Please attach a statement of support from each one in relation to the application.

Please indicate whether the site is included in the local plan/s by specific policies.

Yes  No  Partly

Please describe. 200 words.

- Saved policies of Cheshire Structure Plan, 2006 and Chester District Local Plan, 2006 (which will in time be replaced by Cheshire West and Chester Local Development Framework)

A number of specific policies in the Retail, Housing, Environment and Transport chapters of the Local Plan are relevant to the Rows, in particular those relating to Urban Design, Archaeology, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Advertisements, Illumination, Blinds and Canopies.

- The following Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents produced by the former Chester City Council are of relevance to the Rows:

Planning for Community Safety SPD

Sustainable Development

Advertisements and Banners

Lighting Design Strategy for City Centre

A Guide to Shopfronts and Advertisements

The Rows of Chester: A Guide for Occupiers

Chester Al Fresco: A guide to encourage outdoor cafes in Chester

## **(19) Stakeholders**

Please list the main parties with an interest in the site. 100 words

Cheshire West and Chester Council  
Chester Renaissance  
Chester City Management Partnership  
Visit Chester and Cheshire Tourist Board  
City of Chester Conservation Area Advisory Committee  
Chester Heritage Forum  
Chester Civic Trust  
Chester District Housing Trust  
Diocese of Chester  
Grosvenor Estate

## **(20) How will the Site be managed?**

Please outline the management arrangements for the proposed World Heritage Site, including where the responsibilities lie. 200 words

A detailed Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Rows has been prepared under the guidance of a Steering Committee consisting of representatives of Chester Renaissance, the NWDA and English Heritage. The CMP has been discussed in a number of stakeholder workshops and revised in accordance with the feedback received. The Council is currently in the process of approving and adopting the CMP.

The CMP includes an analysis of significance, vulnerability issues, and policies necessary to address these problems. Specific design and operational issues are also identified, together with a structure within which the policies might be applied.

It is intended that the management plan will be supplemented by a design guide for use by owners and tenants, and will be implemented under the direction of a stakeholder Steering Committee with a dedicated WHS Officer. In advance of adoption of the CMP, the Council has appointed a dedicated Row caretaker to deal with day to day management and janitorial issues. Chester is being used as an exemplar in association with English Heritage in the development of fire protection methods for historic towns.

### **(21) Funding: the nomination**

Please indicate how the preparation of the nomination would be funded.  
100 words

The nomination will be overseen by the Chester Heritage Forum, a partnership of stakeholders serviced by the Council. The professional lead will be provided by a dedicated World Heritage Site Officer to be appointed by the Council should this application be successful. The Council has identified resources up to £400,000 to be deployed to take the bid forward through the various stages to final scrutiny by the World Heritage Committee.

### **(22) Funding: management**

Please outline how the future management would be funded. 100 words

The Council has recently committed a substantial increase in funding to improve standards of management of the city core, including the appointment of a dedicated team of community enforcement officers, strengthened cleansing regime and fire protection services, together with a dedicated Rows Caretaker.

The Council is currently in the process of approving and adopting the Rows CMP, and will be making appropriate budgetary provision to fund the recommendations set out in the document.

Continued commitment from the authority will secure enhanced partnership working, and the partnership will consider all additional funding opportunities that emerge in the future.

### **Name and Contact Details of Applicant**

Name	Charlie Seward
Status	Director of Regeneration and Culture
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Telephone	
Email	

Completed applications should be forwarded, preferably in electronic format, to the World Heritage Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport at the following email address: [UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

Any material that cannot be sent electronically should be sent to the following address:

World Heritage Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
London  
SW1 5DH

The closing date for applications is 11th June 2010

## UNESCO's criteria for the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value (para 77 of the Operational Guidelines)

- (i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- (v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- (vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.
- (vii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (ix) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- (x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.