



## 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

City of York: sub-surface archaeological deposits.

### (2) Geographical Location

Name of country/region

United Kingdom

Grid reference to centre of site

SE60455178

**A map of the proposed World Heritage Site boundary and 6 photographs are attached as .pdf files.**

### (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

York, one of the largest, deepest, most complicated and best-preserved archaeological sites in the UK, is a compact 85ha walled city plus ancient suburbs (total World Heritage Site area 318ha). The proposed World Heritage Site lies wholly within the Area of Archaeological Importance and includes all of the Central Historic Core Conservation Area. Set where the rivers Ouse and Foss cut the York moraine, York has natural water and land routes which self-select it as the centre for north-east England. The city, intensively occupied for 2000 years, has generated thick archaeological deposits, many preserved in anoxic conditions, which provide a uniquely representative and well-preserved record of human urban settlement over two millennia. Around the city are ancient burial grounds, including a possible gladiators cemetery, which both preserve and have provided demographic data on the urban population. A thriving modern city, York has a high proportion of well-preserved historic buildings set within a street and property pattern mostly 1000 to 2000 years old. Amongst these are a near-complete set of stone defences, two castles, a Gothic cathedral, four medieval guildhalls, 20 ancient churches, the King's Manor, 18<sup>th</sup> century architectural masterpieces, and the UK's first Mansion House.

### (5) History

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

York emerged as an urban centre when in AD71 a Roman legionary fortress, *Eboracum*, was built. A focus of Roman administration, from which the construction of Hadrian's Wall was planned, *Eboracum* became capital of *Britannia Inferior*, where emperors Septimius Severus and Constantius I died and where Constantine the Great, who established the foundations of western Christendom, was proclaimed emperor in July 306.

A focus for Anglo-Saxon settlement in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was the place of conversion to Christianity of King Edwin by Paulinus in AD627. The church he established has been the seat of a bishopric or archbishopric ever since. Its monastery produced Alcuin, scholar of European importance at the court of Charlemagne, and the city became the centre of Northumbrian culture.

From AD866 York was the chief city of a Viking kingdom with a succession of Viking kings ending with the death of Eric Bloodaxe in AD954. Chief city in the north and second city of England, it was captured by William I in AD1067. For the next 1000 years York has remained at the centre of political, military, ecclesiastical, economic, social and cultural affairs and has been associated with many of the prominent personalities of English medieval, post-medieval, and modern history.

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

Give reasons. 200 words

York is a continuously inhabited 2000-year-old city with a central role throughout British history. Uniquely it combines a key Roman legionary fortress, colonial capital, Anglo-Saxon metropolitan cathedral city, Viking capital and medieval regional capital and cultural focus, any of which might command World Heritage listing.

The number, quality, variety and architectural and historical importance of its buildings, the universally significant artistic works they contain, their state of preservation, conservation, documentation and association with important events and people of world or national significance make York exceptional on a world scale.

Critically, however, York lies in a limited European zone where wet ground conditions, combined with intensive human occupation, have produced anoxic burial environments that produce exceptional preservation of organic materials. The deep, extensive, well-preserved, frequently anoxic archaeological deposits below York provide a unique resource of organic remains and environmental data about two millennia of urbanism. This cultural layer of the 1st-20th centuries is a unique archaeological monument.

City of York Council has developed sensitive and effective policies to manage these outstanding archaeological deposits. Private, charitable and public organisations within the city are world-leaders in archaeological research, conservation, public presentation and community involvement. There is overwhelming public and political support and commitment for inscription as a World Heritage Site.



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

The presence within a compact urban area of deep, well-preserved, artefact-rich archaeological deposits (including anoxic deposits and burials) dating from the Roman period to the 20<sup>th</sup> century provides a unique and unparalleled academic, educational and cultural resource. Combined with this are outstanding surviving Roman monuments, an unbroken span of buildings of all periods from the 11th century to the present, well-preserved ancient urban plan forms, associated architectural and cultural masterworks, extensively preserved ancient archives and an exemplary modern documentation. There is a well-developed commitment within the city to the preservation and study of these outstanding resources and to the promotion of scientific and public understanding and interest in heritage. This is expressed through the extensive published and unpublished archival information, the development of large-scale publicly accessible excavations and research projects (eg Coppergate 1979-81, the Hungate Research Project 1999-2012), and the development of innovative and exemplary museums, interpretation facilities and academic bodies (eg the Yorkshire Museum opened in 1830, the Jorvik Viking Centre, 1984, now with 16 million visitors). The University of York and the York Archaeological Trust are exemplars of outstanding archaeological research, conservation expertise, and public involvement.

**(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	☒	Why was this criterion chosen? 100 words
(i)	X	Masterworks include: the Anglo-Saxon York Helmet; York Minster; the outstanding collection of medieval glass, including the York Minster East window of 1405-08, the finest, largest and most complete story window of its period; the York Assembly Rooms. These masterpieces were conceived within the same urban culture which produced the deep archaeological deposits which form the proposed World Heritage Site.
(ii)	X	The archaeological deposits preserved below the city illuminate successive episodes of town-planning carried out by different cultural groups (Roman, Viking, Norman, Victorian). Uniquely, three of these episodes have produced archaeological deposits which preserve within them the fabric of architectural structures (eg timber houses, plot boundaries, churches, and defences). These episodes have subsequently influenced town-planning in Europe and beyond.
(iii)	X	The archaeological and anoxic deposits which date from the Roman period and from the 9 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> centuries provide an outstanding archaeological record of Roman and Viking town life. York provides an exemplar for the preservation, study, interpretation and management of these archaeological deposits rich in artefacts, environmental evidence and evidence of cultural traditions.
(iv)	X	The preservation of deep archaeological deposits across the city has ensured that the proposed York World Heritage Site preserves evidence of a wide range of domestic and other structures from the 1st century AD onwards. These provide outstanding examples which illustrate the development of urban life over 2000 years.
(v)	X	Urban settlement has characterised European culture for the past two millennia. York, with near continuous occupation throughout, provides the most complete and best archaeologically-preserved exemplar of a number of the main innovations and phases of urban development.
(vi)	X	The urban culture manifested in the deep archaeological deposits of the proposed World Heritage Site is mirrored in the production of artistic, literary, scientific and sociological works and events of universal significance. These include: Constantine the Great, proclaimed emperor in York in AD306, established the foundations of western Christendom; the works of the 8 <sup>th</sup> century scholar Alcuin; the York complete cycle of medieval Corpus Christi Mystery Plays; the observation of the periodicity of the binary star Algol by John

<b>UNESCO criterion</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Why was this criterion chosen?</b> 100 words
		Goodricke in 1782, providing the basis for measurements of the Universe; the publication of Lawrence Sterne's "Tristram Shandy" in 1760-67; and Seebohm Rowntree's pioneering social studies into poverty in 1900.
(vii)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(viii)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(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

The deep archaeological deposits together with anoxic preservation conditions have ensured that minimal degradation of organic materials has occurred. Artefacts, structural features, biological remains and environmental evidence often appear to be as well preserved as when they were first deposited. Metal objects exhibit minimal corrosion and retain their original sheen; textiles and leatherwork remain pliable; insects are perfectly preserved (including a Viking hive complete with bees). The anoxic conditions create the optimum circumstances for ensuring that the form and design, the materials and substance, and the use and functions which underpin the outstanding universal value of the proposed World Heritage Site are authentic and well-preserved.

**(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 proposed World Heritage Site is represented entirely by original materials. The site consists of a series of superimposed layers. Within these layers there are features (eg pits) which have cut through earlier deposits. Similarly earlier structures survive as features into later periods and have been adapted to provide a structural framework for later deposits. Excavations have demonstrated that this complex matrix preserves an almost complete and legible sequence. Those elements which contribute to the outstanding universal value of the site and the relationships and dynamic functions of the townscape are well-preserved and their integrity has not been compromised. It has been pointed out that, for instance, so well preserved and unchanged is

the plan-form of the city, one can use the map drawn by John Speed in 1611 to navigate the modern city.

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

Yes

If yes, please list. 100 words

The inscribed World Heritage Sites at Novgorod, Russian Federation, and at Bryggen, Norway, contain deep, anoxic archaeological deposits. The Statement of Significance for Novgorod specifically references the outstanding universal value of the anoxic cultural layer which dates from the 9th-16th century. At Bryggen, only the medieval and post-medieval buildings are noted and the sub-surface archaeological deposits are not specifically referenced in its Statement of Significance.

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

150 words

York differs from these sites in that it includes anoxic archaeological deposits which span 2000 years. York is proposed for inscription because the deep, frequently anoxic archaeological deposits dating from cAD100 preserved under the city illuminate human development through means other than architectural monuments. Archaeological deposits and the archaeological process frequently provide the sole means of understanding the everyday lives of people in the past. The inclusion of York on this basis demonstrates the outstanding universal value of sub-surface archaeological deposits. At present, this approach is almost entirely missing from the World Heritage Site list. In addition, there is significant longitudinal continuity where sub-surface deposits are inextricably linked with outstanding architectural monuments within the historic built environment of the city. This provides remarkable physical and chronological continuity over 2000 years.

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

200 words

The York World Heritage Steering Group has considered this issue during the formulation of this bid. It is clear that the UK government will limit the number of future nominations to UNESCO. This will significantly reduce the number of cultural nominations by the UK. Therefore those nominations which are made must deliver opportunities and possibilities which go beyond the criteria of outstanding universal value and which address the issue of creating a balanced World Heritage List. We believe that York can make a significant contribution to creating a balanced list through knowledge transfer and sharing of experience especially within the areas of: academic research, particularly palaeo-ecology; heritage management; heritage interpretation and presentation; conservation of artefacts, waterlogged wood, and the built environment; and community involvement in archaeological research and heritage management. We believe that York represents a centre of excellence in these areas. We intend to build on this position and develop links which will benefit both prospective candidates and existing World Heritage Sites across the globe.

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

Please indicate the main opportunities and benefits.

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

Please describe. 100 words.

Though York is already a very popular heritage visitor destination, the inscription would confirm the world-class quality of the city's archaeological deposits and its academic reputation, and would be a testament to York's long-standing commitment to enthuse school pupils, students and the public at large with hands-on experience of archaeology in unique surroundings. As a World Heritage Site, York would be an exemplar of how it is possible to operate a successful conservation policy, safeguarding the city's below-ground history for future generations, whilst presenting archaeology in an informative and entertaining way to benefit tourism and the local community. We believe World Heritage Site status will: help to preserve the beautiful city in which we live and work; improve the quality and enjoyment of life for residents and visitors; recognise that York's heritage is world class; increase inward investment, business development and the quality of the visitor experience; encourage a diverse and thriving economy; raise the city's profile globally; build on and safeguard York's tourism successes, currently 7 million visitors a year

who spend £443 million creating nearly 23,000 jobs.

**(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.

Impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Please describe.</b> 100 words for each issue.
Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All cities are subject to constant change. The archaeological deposits located in and under York exist within this dynamic development environment. It will be the role of the Local Development Framework and the World Heritage Site Management Plan to ensure that adequate strategic and operational policies and controls will be in place to manage and mitigate change which occurs through the impact of development. The objective is to ensure that where development is allowed it will have no or minimal impact on the significance or universal value of the buried archaeological deposits.
Environmental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Anthropogenic climate change, variations in soil moisture content, and decay trajectories of different materials within the anoxic matrix all pose potential threats to the proposed World Heritage Site. However, these also represent significant areas for research, understanding and developing management and intervention strategies which can be shared with cultural heritage managers of other World Heritage Sites and archaeological sites faced with similar challenges.
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## **(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

The proposed World Heritage Site is already covered either in whole (1 below) or in part (2-4 below) by statutory designations made under the following Acts of Parliament:

- (1) Area of Archaeological Importance (Part 2, 1979 Ancient Monuments Archaeological Areas Act);
- (2) Eight scheduled ancient monument designations (Part 1 1979 Ancient Monuments Archaeological Areas Act);
- (3) Three conservation Areas (1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act);
- (4) Approximately 1200 Listed Buildings (1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act).

There is also one non-statutory registered Historic Park and Garden within the proposed World Heritage Site.

## **(17) Ownership**

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

The proposed World Heritage Site is large and there are a very large number of individual, public and private corporate owners and occupiers. The most significant public bodies are City of York Council, the Universities of York and York St John, and the York Museums Trust. The most significant private owners based in York are the Dean and Chapter of York Minster, and the York Conservation Trust. In addition private bodies and pension funds have significant property ownership within the proposed World Heritage Site.

Do the owners support the application?            **Yes X**

**Letters of support from these owners and other stakeholders are attached as .pdf files.**

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

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

The site lies entirely within the administrative area of City of York Council (a unitary authority). The Executive of City of York Council formally supported an application for World Heritage Site status on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009 (A copy of the recorded minutes and decision is attached).

Does the proposed site have local Authority support? **Yes X**

**The document “City of York Executive Minutes March 2009” is the formal approval to make an application and statement of support from the City of York Council. It is attached as a .pdf file.**

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

**Yes X**

Please describe. 200 words.

The policy framework within the City of York for the management of the World Heritage Site will be provided by:  
the Sustainable Community Strategy (formulated by the Local Strategic Partnership);  
the emerging York Heritage Strategy;  
the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) documentation (the Core Strategy, the City Centre Area Action Plan);  
Supplementary Planning Documents, one of which will be the World Heritage Site Management Plan.

At present, the bid for World Heritage Site status for York has been identified in the Sustainable Communities Strategy as a priority for action (<http://www.yorkwow.org.uk/meetings/>) and it is a key action in the draft Heritage Strategy. Section 7 of the LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options sets out the approach to safeguarding York's Special Historic and Built Environment including World Heritage Site status ([http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/Local\\_development\\_framework/1331181/](http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/Local_development_framework/1331181/)).

## **(19) Stakeholders**

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

City of York Council;  
Community Organisations in the City of York;  
English Heritage;  
Gild of Freemen of the City of York;  
The Guilds of the City of York;  
Local Strategic Partnership;  
Merchant Adventurers;  
National Railway Museum;  
The Dean and Chapter of York Minster;  
The York Museums Trust;  
The York Archaeological Trust;  
The University of York;  
The University of York St John;  
Visit York;  
York Archaeological Forum;  
York Business Pride;  
York Civic Trust;  
York Conservation Trust;  
York Council for Voluntary Services;  
Yorkshire Architectural and York Archaeological Society;  
York@Large, York's cultural partnership.

**Letters of support are attached as .pdf files.**

**(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

The York World Heritage Steering Committee will be reconstituted to become the York World Heritage Site Management Committee (YWHSMC). The YWHSMC will provide strategic oversight, guidance and advice. It will be representative of the stakeholders, groups and individuals who will have an interest or expertise in the York World Heritage Site. The YWHSMC will facilitate partnership working between City of York Council and other organisations to develop a World Heritage Site Management Plan. A World Heritage Site Officer (WHSO) will be employed through the partnership to project manage the completion of the Management Plan and the delivery of those actions prioritised within that plan. It is likely that City of York Council would host the post.

**(21) Funding: the nomination**

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

The preparatory work carried out to date has been successfully funded through partnerships between City of York Council and a number of private and charitable organisations in the city together with contributions in kind. The report approved by the Executive of City of York Council on 17th March 2009 stated support for officers making appropriate "approaches and investigations to secure partnership funding to facilitate the early appointment of a World Heritage Site Project Officer". This process has already commenced and if York is placed on the new UK Tentative List, finalising this partnership funding will be the first priority for City of York Council.

**(22) Funding: management**

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

Management of the York World Heritage Site would be secured through partnership working arrangements. The York World Heritage Site Management Committee would provide strategic oversight, but the constituent organisations including City of York Council will support the management activity including hosting a dedicated World Heritage Site Officer to take a lead role. The preparation of this nomination documentation has been achieved through partnership working. There is a strong commitment from all parties to continue to work in partnership to support the management of the World Heritage Site.

**Name and Contact Details of Applicant**

Name	Bill Woolley
Status	Director of City Strategy
Address	City of York Council 9 St Leonards Place York YO1 7ET
Telephone	01904 551550
Email	conservation@york.gov.uk
Website	www.york.gov.uk/worldheritage

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.