

The City of Bath

UNESCO World Heritage Site

September 2009

What is World Heritage?

World Heritage Sites are 'places of outstanding universal value to the whole of humanity'. There are currently 890 World Heritage Sites world-wide. Famous sites include The Taj Mahal, Pyramids of Giza, Great Wall of China and the Grand Canyon. UNESCO considers adding a small number of new sites each year.

'Outstanding universal value' means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries. This is defined by the extent to which the site meets certain criteria.

The UK signed the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 1984. In doing so it committed to identifying, protecting, conserving and interpreting its World Heritage Sites and passing them on to future generations.

The City of Bath World Heritage Site.

UNESCO added **The City of Bath** as a 'cultural site' to its World Heritage List in 1987. The main reasons for Bath's inclusion are its:

- **Roman Remains** – the Roman Baths and Temple thermal establishment;
- **18th Century Architecture** – neo-classical public buildings and set-piece developments such as terraces, crescents, squares and the Circus by Palladian-inspired Bath architects;
- **18th Century Town Planning** – its innovative and cohesive 'garden city' concept, harmonised with its green landscape setting;
- **Social Setting** – its role as a destination for pilgrimage and the social aspirations of the fashionable spa culture that created the Georgian city.

In identifying these unique qualities, UNESCO also recognised the importance of:

- the **Hot Springs** – the only ones in Britain and the reason for the city's existence;
- the **Landscape Setting** – the valley of the River Avon whose hills provided the stone to build the city and form the backdrop to the city today.

A few key facts.

‘World Heritage Site’ is the correct designation. The term ‘World Heritage City’ is sometimes used colloquially but has no status of its own.

Unlike many other cities that include a World Heritage Site, the whole of Bath and not just its historic core is the World Heritage Site.

Bath contains nearly 5,000 listed buildings, including the highest concentration of grade I and II* listed buildings outside central London.

66% of Bath is designated as a Conservation Area, giving a degree of statutory protection to most of the city and its buildings.

Other UK World Heritage Sites.

There are 28 World Heritage Sites in the UK and 18 in England.

Other UK cities containing a World Heritage Site include **Canterbury** (Cathedral, St. Augustine's Abbey and St. Martin's Church), **Durham** (Castle and Cathedral), **Edinburgh** (Old and New Towns), and **Liverpool** (waterfront, commercial and cultural areas).

Within **London**, Maritime Greenwich, the Tower of London, Westminster Palace & Saint Margaret's Church and Westminster Abbey all have separate World Heritage Site designations.

Hadrian's Wall and the **Antonine Wall** in Scotland are the only Roman World Heritage Sites in the UK. They belong to a **Frontiers of the Roman Empire** group created in 2008.

Other west country World Heritage Sites include Stonehenge, Avebury, the Cornwall and West Devon mining landscape and the Jurassic Coast, the only ‘natural’ World Heritage Site in England.

For more information visit
www.unesco.org.uk/world_heritage
www.bathnes.gov.uk/worldheritage
www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

