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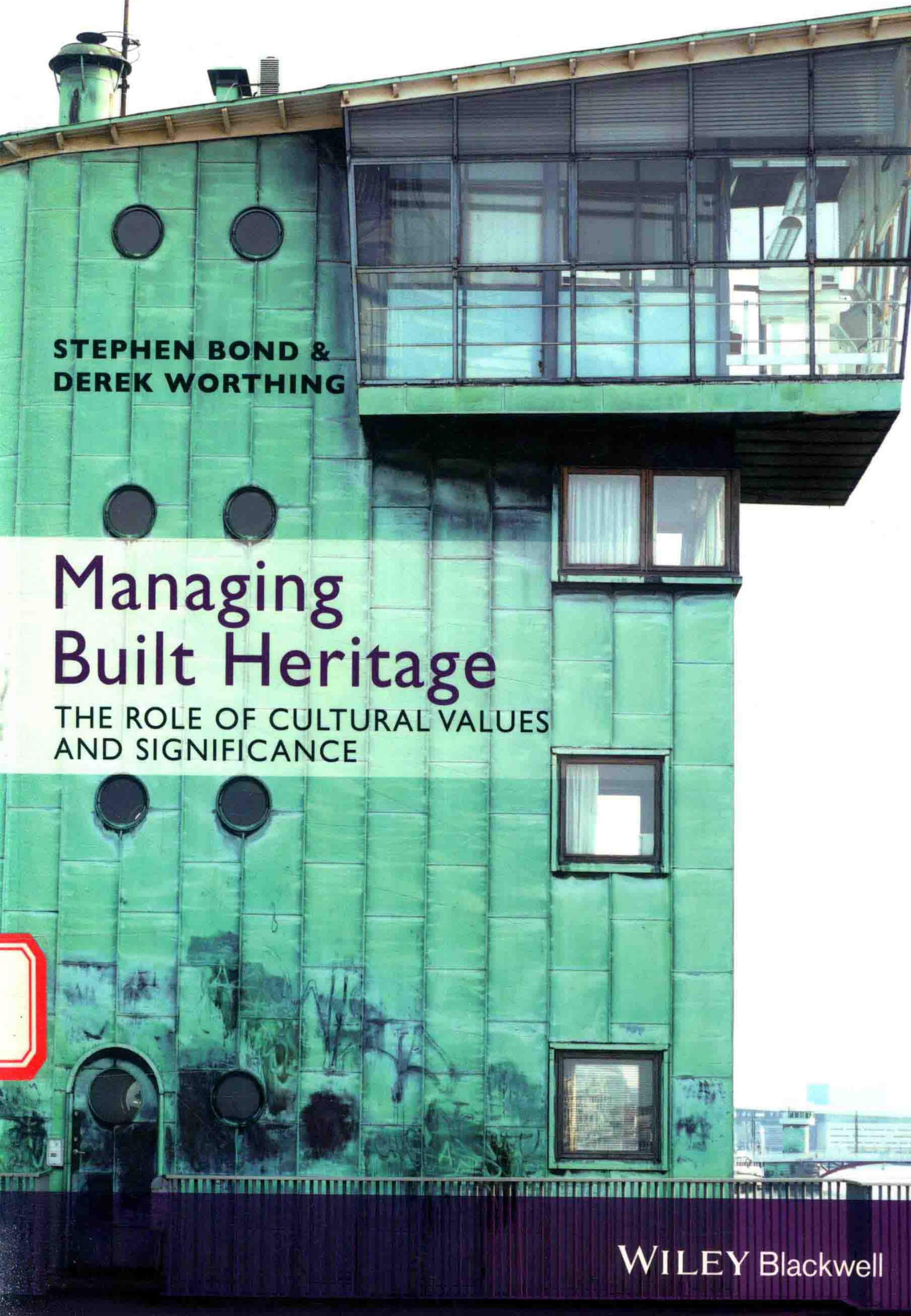

STEPHEN BOND &
DEREK WORTHING

Managing Built Heritage

THE ROLE OF CULTURAL VALUES AND SIGNIFICANCE

WILEY Blackwell

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The Role of Cultural Values and Significance

SECOND EDITION

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Managing Built Heritage

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Stephen Bond runs the UK-based consultancy, Heritage Places, providing advice on the historic environment to national and local government, management and institutional clients, and charitable trusts. In the 1990s, he undertook a seven-year secondment to Historic Royal Palaces, initially as its Surveyor of the Fabric, and subsequently as Director of the Tower Environs Scheme – a major regeneration scheme focused on the urban setting of the Tower of London. Today he works throughout the UK and on international projects, most recently providing heritage input into area-wide plans and capacity building programmes in Africa, Asia and Europe. He was involved with the Master's Programme in Conservation of the Historic Environment at the College of Estate Management for more than 20 years, lectures widely on heritage matters, and holds an honorary doctorate from De Montfort University.

Derek Worthing has a professional background as an academic and a Chartered Building Surveyor. Until recently he was Head of the School of Land and Property Management at the University of the West of England, Bristol, where he was also co-director of the Centre for the Study of Sustainable Buildings in the Faculty of the Built Environment. He has carried out consultancy work in relation to the built cultural heritage for a number of national UK heritage organisations and has published research papers in relation to conservation plans and the maintenance and repair of listed buildings. He now works as a consultant and as a Visiting Professor at Uppsala University in Sweden where he has carried out research on the sustainable management of built cultural heritage as well as work on conservation plans for the Swedish Heritage Board.

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Introduction

In recent years, increasing focus has been placed upon the identification of heritage values that are enshrined in our built environment and in cultural landscapes. This is based on the notion that all buildings and spaces, whatever their age and however modest, make some form of contribution or have value to society.

This book is primarily concerned with how heritage is managed in order to protect and enhance it. Although it focuses on built heritage, we believe the principles and processes that we discuss are applicable to many aspects of cultural heritage. The book brings together our experience of research, consultancy and practice over a number of years, and integrates this with current thinking on approaches to the management of built heritage. It inevitably, and deliberately, does this within the context of a discussion of the benefits and the value of conserving heritage. In our view, this remains a much-needed publication. More than seven years after the first edition, surprisingly little has been written and published on the practical application of heritage values and its importance to the management of heritage assets. This is disconcerting, given that the need to assess significance and use it to manage change is being 'written in' to heritage policy in an increasing number of countries around the world.

This book is chiefly about the important role that effective management plays in protecting and enhancing the historic environment. It concerns itself with what has now become known in some quarters as 'values-based management', but which we have referred to generally as 'significance-based management'. Essentially the book is concerned with the need to identify and assess what is important about a heritage asset, and with devising management strategies, processes and actions that focus on the need to protect and enhance those values.

The collection of values associated with a heritage asset is generally referred to as its 'significance'. The idea of significance has been around for some time, but it was perhaps clearly articulated for the first time, and more importantly

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linked specifically to the management of a heritage asset by the original Burra Charter, dating from 1979 (Australia ICOMOS, 1979). The idea was developed in several later versions of the charter, with the latest (at the time of writing), being the 2013 edition (Australia ICOMOS, 2013). Building from that, modern conservation planning says that, by understanding the particular significance that a heritage asset holds for society, informed and better management decisions can be taken that will respect and potentially enhance that significance.

The basic premise behind this 'significance-based management' approach, then, is that in order to manage and protect a heritage asset, one has first of all to be able to identify and articulate why it is important and which of its different elements contribute to its importance – and how they do so. That is, we are concerned with determining why a heritage asset is valuable and what embodies and represents those values. This may seem like a simple and rather obvious concept – that you cannot protect something unless:

- You understand why it is important; and
- You know what it is about it that contributes to that importance.

Yet, until recent years, this was not an explicit approach. However, if we accept that as English Heritage (2008) observe: 'Change in the historic environment is inevitable, whether caused by natural processes, through use, or by people responding to social, economic and technological advances', then the key challenge in conservation is essentially about managing change to an asset while protecting, and hopefully enhancing, its significance. In order to meet this challenge, it is vitally important that heritage values are clearly identified and assessed.

If heritage values and their interrelationships can be identified and fully comprehended, this knowledge can then be used to assist in taking management decisions now and in the future that will strengthen and enhance the benefits that accrue to society from that asset. The sense is that there needs to be an understanding of the significance of an asset to be able to articulate and justify its designation, but it can also be, and in fact should be, both a focus and driver for managing the asset.

The concern addressed in this book is the need to develop an approach that guides management planning so as to optimise the benefits that can be gained from an asset without diminishing its value and potential for the future.

In this sense, the management process for a heritage asset is not dissimilar to approaches in other organisational arenas, which effectively ask a series of questions, such as:

- Where do we want to be?
- What have we got now?
- How do we get to where we want to be?
- How are we doing?

In recontextualising this, we can suggest that a coherent approach to the management of heritage assets, whether a single asset, a complex site, an area or indeed a town, will involve:

- Identification and measurement of heritage values;
- Identification of the attributes or elements of the asset that embody and represent those values – so that it is clear what needs to be protected and hopefully enhanced;
- Identification of any factors that may adversely affect heritage values now and in the (measurable) future. That is, in what way are the values vulnerable and what are the processes and situations that may lead to an erosion and loss of those values? Therefore what are the actions that need to be put in place in order to avoid or nullify those threats – or at least mitigate them?
- Identification of opportunities to protect and enhance significance, including by proactively seeking out opportunities for positive changes;
- Identification of 'where are we now?' in relation to matters such as the condition and use of the asset;
- The development of a management strategy and process that link the assessment of heritage values to the operational needs and activities of the asset and to the objectives of the organisation that owns or occupies it (and which integrates built cultural management planning into the general built asset planning on 'mixed' estates). Such a management approach must focus actions, processes and priorities on the protection of built cultural heritage values, i.e. be primarily concerned with the implementation of management practices that maximise protection and enhancement of heritage values;
- The development of evaluation and review processes that address issues of 'how are we doing?' while also considering the continuing validity of (heritage) objectives.

Note

This second edition of the book reflects new international guidance concerning heritage values and significance, as well as developments in national heritage policy in the UK since the first edition was published in 2008. The first edition put considerable focus on the preparation and use of conservation plans in the management of heritage assets. While much of that content has been retained and updated, in this new edition we have felt it appropriate to lay greater emphasis on the process of assessing significance (which, after all, lies at the heart of conservation plan preparation, too) and the use of assessments of significance as a 'plug-in' front end to a wider range of conservation management documents and tools.

Shortly after the completion of the text for this second edition, English Heritage, England's national advisory body for heritage and conservation of the historic environment, was split in two. A new charitable body, retaining the name English Heritage, has taken on responsibility for running the nation's National

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Heritage Collection of historic sites and monuments. The current organisation's wider duties and responsibilities as the UK Government's independent expert advisory service for England's historic environment has been handed over to a new body known as Historic England. This edition of the book retains the name English Heritage where this relates to the published work of the unified single organisation of that name.

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Chapter 2

Heritage Assets: Their Nature and Management Implications

Introduction

The premise running through this book is that management decisions about the care and use of an asset will only prove to be sustainable in the long term if they have been shaped by a coherent understanding of its wider significance to society and the ways in which that significance has, is, or could yet be, compromised by change, misuse or neglect. Planning and management decisions built from any other platform are likely to result in the heritage interest and cultural value of the asset being diminished in some way. A significance-based approach to management can be applied to any kind of cultural heritage or built asset. It is just as appropriate to use an evaluation of significance and vulnerability as a means of developing conservation management policies and consequent strategies for action for an historic area – for instance, the core of a town like Delft or a city such as Baalbek – as it is for a relatively simple historic monument such as Nelson's Column or the Taj Mahal. Indeed, a consideration of significance can be made at sub-regional or even regional levels, permitting this approach to heritage management to be fed beneficially into regional and national planning processes.

Some explanation needs perhaps to be given at this juncture about the use of the word 'asset'. Over recent decades, and particularly since we have begun to consider the nature and role of significance, our appreciation of what is encompassed within the term 'heritage' has expanded markedly. Terms such as 'monument', 'building', 'site' or 'place' are no longer sufficiently inclusive. Strangely, there are few options in the English language that are suitably all-embracing: arguably the only alternatives to 'asset' are 'resource' or 'property' and both these have insuperably specific connotations that rule them out. Asset is the best word that we have to describe and include the breadth of our heritage and it has the advantage of meaning something of value.

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This book aims to consider the notion of significance as it relates to the management of built heritage, internationally, yet all the while providing a specific focus on the situation within the United Kingdom. That presents us with difficulties when we seek to define terms, since these inevitably vary from place to place: indeed, in the UK alone, there are at all times potentially four different sets of heritage legislation and policy that might need to be considered (that is, for each of the four countries that make up the UK). Unashamedly, therefore, in order to move forward, we must make choices. In this book, any reference to heritage assets should be understood to imply buildings, monuments, archaeological deposits, sites, places, areas or historic urban or rural landscapes that, through some meaningful heritage interest, have a degree of significance warranting consideration in the development planning process. This accords closely with, for instance, the definition of heritage assets enshrined in the current national heritage policy of England.

Heritage assets take many diverse forms. This chapter looks at the range of typical heritage asset types and examines in outline the management implications of each. For each asset type, we seek to define:

- Typical values that we might ascribe to such assets today;
- Who or what is likely to be responsible for managing use and change in and around the asset;
- The level at which management policy and action need to be implemented to be effective in the sustainable care of the asset and its value to society.

Some introductory thoughts about heritage assets

Viewed from a heritage perspective, built and other assets in the environment are either heritage assets or they are ordinary assets. As the UK Government's *Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* observes, 'A substantial majority [of assets] have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage interest for their significance to be a material consideration in the planning process' (DCLG, 2014).

Although age sometimes represents a criterion for being designated a heritage asset, in itself, simply being old, being part of an ensemble or area that is, as an assemblage, recognisable as a heritage asset, having a history of use, bearing a similarity to components in the locality that are heritage assets, or conversely being physically distinctive within its setting or wider context do not *per se* transform an ordinary built asset into a heritage asset. Adopting and building from the definition of 'heritage' set out in Historic England's *Conservation Principles* (English Heritage 2008) (that is, 'all inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility'), heritage assets can be distinguished from other components of the environment by the meaning for society that a heritage asset holds over and above its functional utility. So, to be regarded as a heritage asset, an asset must have some meaningful archaeological, architectural, artistic, historical, social or other heritage interest that gives it a value to society that transcends its functional utility. Therein lies the fundamental difference between heritage assets and ordinary assets; they stand apart from ordinary assets because of their significance – the summation of all aspects of their heritage interest.

Sometimes heritage assets are protected for the heritage interest that they hold for society; often they are not, having been overlooked, misunderstood or simply because they fall outside the relevant national or local criteria set for being classified and safeguarded. The absence of national or local classification/protection should never be taken as implying that the value of such heritage assets can be simply and safely ignored in the development planning process. As government guidance in England notes:

> *Some non-designated assets, such as buildings of good local character or sites of archaeological interest, are of heritage significance but not at a level that would pass the threshold for national designation. Such assets can, singularly and collectively, make an important, positive contribution to the environment. The desirability of conserving them and the contribution their setting may make to their significance is a material consideration, but individually less of a priority than for designated assets or their equivalents.*
>
> (English Heritage, 2012)

The foregoing is important also for connecting heritage assets (whether designated/classified or not) with a 'setting'. It is a fundamental principle, internationally, that all heritage assets within the built environment have a setting and that the setting constitutes an integral part of the assets' historical and cultural significance. The concept of setting is seen to encompass both tangible and intangible attributes, so that the protection of a setting may not be just a matter of physical protection. As guidance from Historic Scotland (Historic Scotland, 2010) explains:

> *Monuments, buildings, gardens and settlements were not constructed in isolation. They were often deliberately positioned with reference to the surrounding topography, resources, landscape and other monuments or buildings. These relationships will often have changed through the life of a historic asset or place.*
>
> *The setting of [a heritage] asset can incorporate a range of factors, not all of which will apply to every case. These include:*
>
> - *Current landscape or townscape context;*
> - *Visual envelope, incorporating views to, from and across the asset;*
> - *Key vistas, framed by rows of trees, buildings or natural features that give an asset or place a context, whether intentional or not;*
> - *The prominence of the [asset] in views throughout the surrounding area;*
> - *Character of the surrounding landscape;*
> - *General and specific views including foregrounds and backdrops;*
> - *Relationships between both built and natural features;*

- *Aesthetic qualities;*
- *Other non-visual factors such as historical, artistic, literary, linguistic, or scenic associations, intellectual relationships (e.g. to a theory, plan or design), or sensory factors;*
- *A 'Sense of Place': the overall effect formed by the above factors.*

In 2015, Historic England issued new guidance on settings, replacing somewhat more detailed guidance published by English Heritage in 2011. Among other things, this advises that:

> *While setting can be mapped in the context of an individual [planning] application or proposal, it does not have a fixed boundary and cannot be definitively and permanently described for all time as a spatially bounded area or as lying within a set distance of a heritage asset because what comprises a heritage asset's setting may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve or as the asset becomes better understood or due to the varying impacts of different proposals; for instance, new understanding of the relationship between neighbouring heritage assets may extend what might previously have been understood to comprise setting.*
>
> (Historic England, 2015)

As the earlier English Heritage guidance made clear:

> *Construction of a distant but high building; development generating noise, odour, vibration or dust over a wide area; or new understanding of the relationship between neighbouring heritage assets may all extend what might previously have been understood to comprise setting ... While many day-to-day cases will be concerned with the immediate setting of an asset, development within the extended setting may also affect significance, particularly where it is large-scale, prominent or intrusive.*
>
> (English Heritage, 2011)

Thus, in considering heritage assets, it is important to understand not just the physical fabric of the asset itself, but also the nature of its wider context, when it was designed and created/built, and how its setting has changed over time. That appreciation may well be of critical importance in attaining a balanced objective assessment of the asset's significance.

Heritage assets and their management implications

Buried archaeology

Buried archaeology, by its very nature, is culturally precious. Physical intervention or investigation leads to its compromise or destruction. As an asset, it is unusual in that, under normal circumstances, its nature and extent cannot be fully comprehended and frequently can only be guessed at. This can make its management and care in the ground complex or problematic.

Buried archaeology consists of the surviving remains of earlier cultures and their environmental contexts. As a result, such deposits may be valued today for a wide range of reasons, including educational, artistic, social or religious significance. Extracting the complete range of cultural values from archaeological remains is a time-consuming and ultimately destructive process and, accordingly, is increasingly regarded with caution.

In the United Kingdom, the legal arrangements for the ownership of property (including land) mean that, in principle, buried archaeology may be the property and hence the management responsibility of individuals, property-owning organisations, local or central government, or the Crown. This remains the case whether or not its existence is known or recognised, and irrespective of any statutory protection that has been given to the asset through its designation as a scheduled monument.

Archaeological remains are vulnerable to both inadvertent and deliberate damage. This may, at least in part, be associated with a failure to understand sufficiently the value of the asset. When the presence of buried archaeology is known or foreseeable, appropriate care to safeguard its value comprehensively necessitates active management to prevent any disturbance or intervention whatsoever. This sets an onerous level at which effective management needs to take place to safeguard the integrity and possibly unknown significance of the buried asset. When this is unavoidable, a watching brief should be kept of development works, and time and funding allowed for investigation and recording of data, as necessary.

Archaeological sites and monuments

In general terms, archaeological sites and monuments consist of a combination of buried archaeology and above-ground structures or, depending upon circumstance, of foundations and superstructure alone. Many such sites and monuments will be protected by legislation, while others will be without protection despite their cultural value. Internationally, a growing number of archaeological sites are inscribed as being World Heritage Sites due to their 'outstanding universal value'.

Inevitably, 'archaeological sites and monuments' covers a wide group of assets, running from the simple burial mound or barrow through multi-building and multi-phase sites such as Fountains Abbey in the UK to complex ruined cities such as Kandahar in Afghanistan or Byblos in Lebanon.

As with buried archaeological deposits, a wide range of cultural values may be ascribed to these assets, ranging from architectural, historical and archaeological values through social, cultural and religious to symbolic and economic values. Numerous archaeological sites and monuments are open to the public and contribute to the local economy through cultural tourism or spin-off enterprises.

In some situations, archaeological sites and monuments are managed actively and positively for their cultural value, but elsewhere their care is of marginal

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