

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

WORLD HERITAGE LIST

N° 371

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Ironbridge Gorge

Location : Shropshire

State Party : United Kingdom

Date : December 23, 1985

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I, II, IV and VI.

C) JUSTIFICATION

The Industrial Revolution, a worldwide phenomenon, emerged in 18th-century England before spreading to other nations and fostering, in the 19th century, some of the most far-reaching changes in human history, is embodied in the remarkable Ironbridge Gorge site located in the county of Shropshire, some thirty kilometers northwest of Birmingham.

The site spreads over 3.6 kilometers in the narrow Severn Valley upstream from its confluence with the Caldebrook River in Coalbrookdale. It is an extraordinary concentration of mining zones, foundries, factories, workshops and warehouses which coexists with an old network of lanes, paths, roads, ramps, canals and railroads as well as substantial remains of traditional landscape and housing : forests of Severn Gorge, the ironmasters' houses, the workers' living quarters, public buildings and infrastructure equipment of the 18th and 19th centuries. Ironbridge Gorge is wanting neither in outstanding monuments (with Ironbridge being the most famous), in examples representative of the main techniques of the industrial age, nor in a socio-professional backdrop which is still alive. Thus, this industrial valley is both unique and symbolizes an era. Since 1968, the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust coordinates actions in the areas of discovery, conservation and exploitation of the valley's heritage in addition to providing sound management of museums, monuments and sites thereby acting as a pioneer in the field of industrial archaeology.

In the area which is nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List, there are five major areas of interest. Moving from west to east they are :

Coalbrookdale. This is where in 1709 the Quaker Abraham Darby I developed the coke iron production technique which began the great 18th-century steel revolution. In the 19th century the Coalbrookdale foundries were highly prosperous, exporting their production as far as New Zealand and the Hawaiian Islands. There still remains a high concentration of 18th- and 19th-century dwellings, warehouses, churches and chapels in the town. The Great Warehouse contains an iron museum.

Ironbridge. The locality, where mining and metallurgical activity began in the 17th century, draws its name from the iron bridge erected in 1779 and which also serves to designate the entire region of the Severn Gorges. At the far east end of the locality there still exist the remains of two 18th-century blast furnaces, the Bedlam Furnaces, which were built in 1757.

Hay Brook Valley. Downstream from Madeley in the low valley of this small tributary of the Severn River, a large open air museum was set up on Blists Hill covering 20 hectares. Extraction galleries, shafts with their head-frames, and blast furnaces have been preserved near the Shropshire Canal, which was linked to the Severn River via a gigantic inclined plane known as the Hay Inclined Plane, fitted with ramps.

Jackfield. This small town located on the south bank of the Severn made its living from coal mining, clay production and navigation. It was the valley's port of registry (87 barges in operation in 1756).

Coalport. This town is located at the far east end of the protected zone on the north bank of the Severn, which is spanned by a metal bridge from 1780-1818. The high point of this town is the porcelaine manufacturing plant founded by John Rose at the end of the 18th century and which closed down only in 1926. Today it is a porcelaine museum presenting not only the valley's other porcelaine manufacturers, such as Caughly, but also other producers of ceramics in Ironbridge Gorge (tileries, pipe factories, etc.). Furthermore, the wall and floor tile business is presented at Maw's Tileworks, a plant founded in 1850.

ICOMOS recommends the inclusion of the Ironbridge Gorge ensemble on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria I, II, IV and VI.

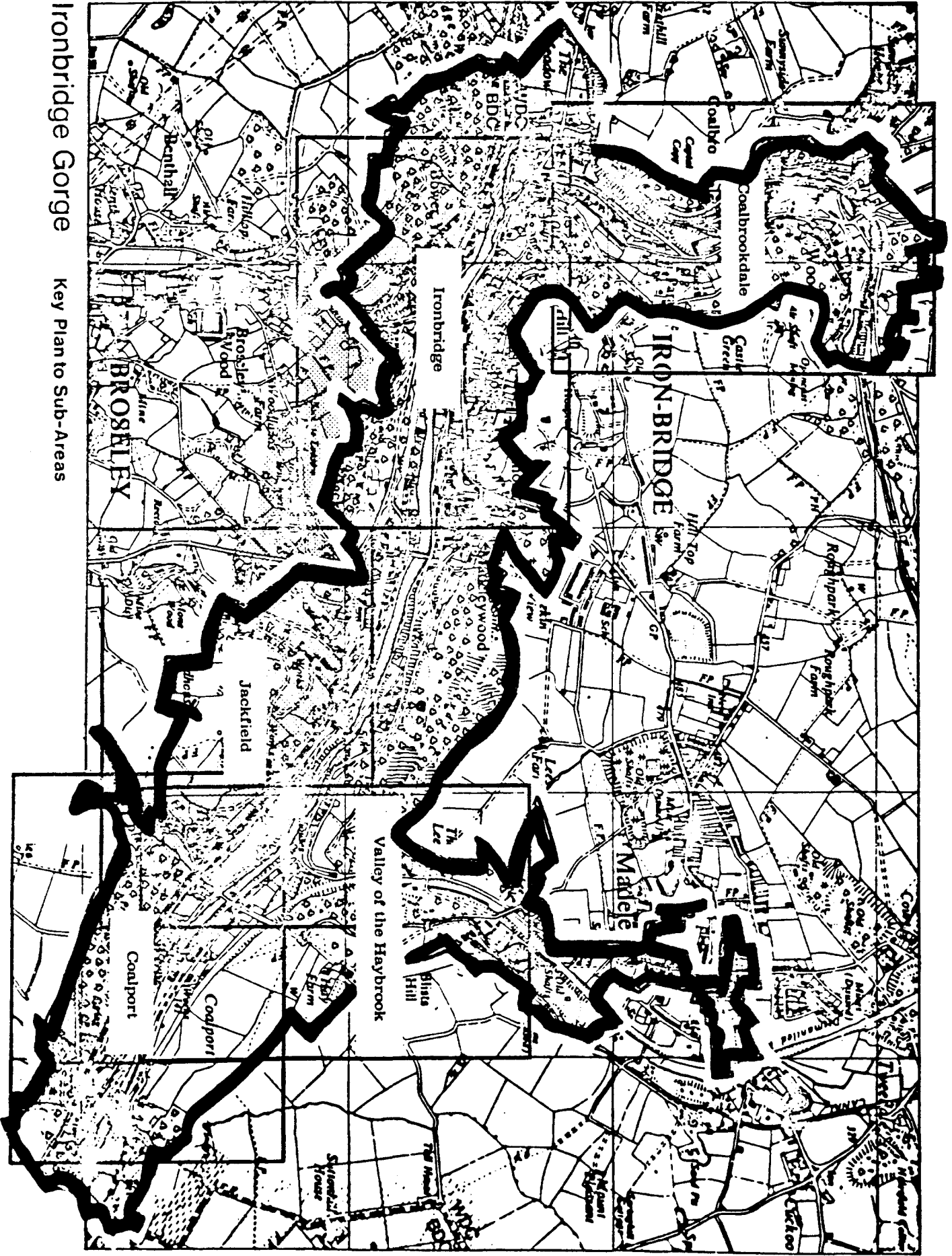
Criterion I. The Coalbrookdale blast furnace perpetuates in situ the creative effort of Abraham Darby I who discovered coke iron in 1709. It is a masterpiece of man's creative genius in the same way as Ironbridge, which is the first known metal bridge. It was built in 1779 by Abraham Darby III from the drawings of the architect Thomas Farnolls Pritchard.

Criterion II. The Coalbrookdale blast furnace and Ironbridge exerted great influence on the development of techniques and architecture.

Criterion IV. Ironbridge Gorge provides a fascinating summary of the development of an industrial region in modern times. Mining centres, transformation industries, manufacturing plants, workers' quarters, and transport networks are sufficiently well preserved to make up a coherent ensemble whose educational potential is considerable.

Criterion VI. Ironbridge Gorge, which opens its doors to 300,000 visitors yearly, is a world renowned symbol of the 18th-century Industrial Revolution.

ICOMOS, April 1986.



Ironbridge Gorge

Key Plan to Sub-Areas



11. Courtyard, China Works at Coalport



**The Great Warehouse at the Coalbrookdale Ironworks-
(1838)**



IRONBRIDGE. Le pont de Coalbrookdale.