

UNITED KINGDOM

Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey, and St Martin's Church

Brief description

Canterbury, in Kent, has been the seat of the spiritual head of the Church of England for nearly five centuries. Canterbury's other important monuments are the modest Church of St Martin, the oldest church in England; the ruins of the Abbey of St Augustine, a reminder of the saint's evangelizing role in the Heptarchy from 597; and Christ Church Cathedral, a breathtaking mixture of Romanesque and Perpendicular Gothic, where Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered in 1170.

1. Introduction

Year(s) of Inscription 1988

Agency responsible for site management

- Mailing Address(es)
Canterbury World Heritage Site Management
Plan Coordinating Committee
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2. Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C (i) (ii)

Justification as provided by the State Party

The Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's Church provide the visual record of the introduction of Christianity to Britain. St Martin's preserves, in whole or in part, the building in which Bertha and subsequently Augustine and his followers first worshipped, the Cathedral stands on the site where Augustine first established his Cathedra and the ruins of the abbey include the remains of the monastery where his monks lived and worshipped and where the Kentish kings and first archbishops were buried.

Architecturally St Martin's preserves evidence of Roman and Saxon construction, with later

additions. The excavated remains of the abbey conserve some of the most important Saxon remains in the country and the cathedral outstanding examples of Romanesque, Early Gothic and Late Gothic craftsmanship, notably the great crypt with its carved capitals, one of the earliest (if not the first) Gothic choirs in England, the lofty Perpendicular nave and the finest surviving collection of 12th and early 13th century stained glass in Britain.

Historically Canterbury is the cradle of English Christianity, and has been associated with the development of the Christian church in Britain from the 6th century onwards. Since the 11th century it has been the seat of the primate of all England. In medieval times, following the martyrdom of St Thomas, it became one of the three most popular places of Christian pilgrimage. Today it is to Canterbury that all Anglican churches throughout the world look as their spiritual home, and to Canterbury that some 2.5 million visitors come every year to worship, to re-live the past and to enjoy the beauty of the present.

UNESCO Criteria 5a) (i), (ii), (iv) and (vi).

As provided in ICOMOS evaluation

Criterion I. Christ Church Cathedral, especially the east sections, is a unique artistic creation. The beauty of its architecture is enhanced by a set of exceptional stained glass windows which constitute the richest collection in the United Kingdom.

Criterion II. The influence of the Benedictine abbey of St. Augustine was decisive throughout the High Middle Ages in England. The influence of this monastic centre and its scriptorium extended far beyond the boundaries of Kent and Northumbria.

Criterion VI. St. Martin's Church, St. Augustine's Abbey and the Cathedral are directly and tangibly associated with the history of the introduction of Christianity to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

Committee Decision

Bureau (1988): the Bureau recommended inscription of the site and suggested that the Cathedral, St. Augustine's Abbey and St. Martin's Church be included in one and the same protection area.

- Statement of Significance adequately defines the outstanding universal value of the site
- The Statement of Significance is included in the management plan. The State Party will discuss and agree a revised Statement of outstanding

universal value which will be submitted in due course for consideration by the World Heritage Committee.

- No change required to UNESCO's official description of the site

Boundaries and Buffer Zone

- Status of boundaries of the site: adequate
- Buffer zone: no buffer zone has been defined
- A buffer zone to protect the immediate setting of the WHS is proposed in the management plan. The State Party will submit this in due course for consideration by the World Heritage Committee

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage site values have been maintained

3. Protection

Legislative and Administrative Arrangements

- Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI); Canterbury City Conservation Area; Canterbury (St Martin's) Conservation Area; Scheduled Ancient Monuments; Listed Buildings; Care of Cathedrals Measure; Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Order 1994; Canterbury District Local Plan 1998
- The protection arrangements are considered highly effective

4. Management

Use of site/property

- Visitor attraction, religious use, rural landscape. Other: education: school and University College

Management /Administrative Body

- Steering group formally set up on 01 January 1997: The Committee is formed from Site owners and managers, together with representatives of bodies with an interest in the Site, for example ICOMOS-UK. Its function is to act as a forum for discussion of issues concerning the management of the Site. The Committee meets twice a year
- No site manager but none needed
- Management by site owners and guardians
- Levels of public authority who are primarily involved with the management of the site: national (DCMS); regional (English Heritage, as Guardians of the ruins of St Augustine's Abbey); local (the Canterbury City Council, as site owners of part of St Augustine's Abbey and

with responsibility for the upkeep of St Martin's Churchyard)

- The current management system is highly effective

5. Management Plan

- Management plan is being implemented
- Implementation commenced: April 2002
- 32 projects were identified for implementation within the short term (5 years), medium term (10 years) and long term (15 years). The various owners/partners in the WHS are responsible for driving the projects forward, with coordination as necessary by the coordinating committee
- Very effective
- Responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of the management plan and monitoring its effectiveness: Canterbury World Heritage site management plan coordinating committee

6. Financial Resources

Financial situation

- Even though there is no central funding for a World Heritage coordinator, operating costs for the buildings and landscapes that make up the World Heritage site are provided by many different stakeholders such as owners, managers or local authorities. The funding is adequate to sustain the significances of the site, but not enough to implement all the conservation projects recommended in the management plan
- Funding from English Heritage towards preparation and publication of management plan, 2000/02; Heritage lottery funding towards restoration of monuments in St Martin's Churchyard, 1997; Heritage lottery funding for new museum and visitor centre at St Augustine's Abbey; a number of properties in the Cathedral Precinct and St Augustine's Abbey, and others in the Buffer Zone, have benefited from grant-aid from the Canterbury City Council, Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage
- Funding is sufficient for management but inadequate for the protection and conservation of the site. A number of the monuments require restoration, but presently cannot be funded. Where possible, applications will be made for grant aid in order to complete these projects
- No funding drawn in from World Heritage Fund

7. Staffing Levels

- Number of staff: 0
- Other: stained glass workshops and stonemasons' yard at Canterbury Cathedral. Stonemasonry facilities at the King's School

Rate of access to adequate professional staff across the following disciplines:

- Very good: conservation, management, promotion, interpretation; education; visitor management
- Staff resources are adequate
- Many volunteers help with guiding and other work at Canterbury Cathedral. The running of St Martin's Church depends to a great extent on help provided to the Rector by the congregation and volunteers on the Parochial Church Council. The time that the church can be opened for visitors is limited by the number of volunteers; with more helpers, the opening times could be extended

8. Sources of Expertise and Training in Conservation and Management Techniques

- Staff training: stained glass and stonemasons' workshops at Canterbury Cathedral. Stonemasonry facilities at the King's School
- No training on site management for stakeholders

9. Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics: 1,117,587 visitors in 2004
Trend: slow increase
- Visitor facilities:

Canterbury Cathedral: information desks; wide variety of publications; shop; guided, audio, audio-visual and special interest tours; lectures; full facilities for the disabled

St Augustine's Abbey: modern visitor centre and museum; wide variety of publications; full facilities for the disabled

St Martin's Church: restricted opening hours, but with knowledgeable people on hand to guide visitors; excellent guidebook

Queen Bertha's Walk: a walk in the footsteps of Queen Bertha from the Cathedral via St Augustine's Abbey to St Martin's Church, with plaques set in the pavement and accompanying illustrated leaflets. This is due to be improved and updated

- Visitor facilities are adequate
- Visitor needs: none
- There is a tourism/visitor management plan for the site: There is not a single plan for specifically for the WHS, but there are plans for Canterbury as a whole and for the Cathedral and St Augustine's Abbey

10. Scientific Studies

- There is no agreed research framework/strategy for the site
- Risk assessment, condition surveys, visitor management
- Risk assessment: the owners and guardians of the constituent parts of the WHS carry out their own risk assessments in accordance with current legislation and best practice

Condition surveys:

Canterbury Cathedral: regular quinquennial inspections are undertaken, under the direction of the Surveyor to the Fabric. The most recent inspection was carried out in 2001

St Augustine's Abbey: English Heritage carries out regular three-yearly inspections. A Conservation Statement has been prepared which will provide the framework for the long-term preservation of the site

St Martin's Church: regular quinquennial inspections are undertaken

The King's School and Christchurch University College: full condition surveys have been carried out and rolling programmes of maintenance and repair put in hand.

- Studies used for management of site: as the basis for planned maintenance and repair and in providing a pleasurable and informative visitor experience

11. Education, Information and Awareness Building

- An adequate number of signs referring to World Heritage site
- World Heritage Convention Emblem used on some publications
- Adequate awareness of World Heritage among: visitors, local communities, businesses, local authorities
- There is education strategy for the site (on Christian faith and heritage education)
- Occasional events and exhibitions concerning the site's World Heritage status

- No website available but individual sites have their own websites. The Canterbury City Council web site has a page on World Heritage Sites under the Conservation & Heritage heading. This includes the Canterbury World Heritage Site designation and statement of outstanding universal value.
- Local participation: not provided

12. Factors affecting the Property (State of Conservation)

Reactive monitoring reports

- N/A

Conservation interventions

- Canterbury Cathedral: ongoing major programme of stone restoration and repair of the Cathedral fabric; major cleaning and restoration programme of the mediaeval stained glass windows, which are of international importance; repairs to the Roman and mediaeval Close (City) Wall; major archaeological excavations underneath the Cathedral floor, revealing the full extent of the Anglo-Saxon Cathedral

St Augustine's Abbey: re-use of principal surviving Abbey buildings by the King's School; Ongoing programme of stone restoration and repair by the King's School; excavations on the site of the new museum, which uncovered the lay cemetery of the mediaeval Abbey; excavations on the site of a new boarding house for King's School have uncovered the remains of the great reredorter of the mediaeval Abbey

St Martin's Church: repair and restoration of gravestones and churchyard monuments; new churchyard wall and railings

- Present state of conservation: good

Threats and Risks to site

- There are no major threats to the site. However, some of the remains of the mediaeval Christchurch Priory within the Cathedral Precincts still require restoration. They are identified as projects in the management plan, but they are dependent on extra funding being available, for example through grant aid

13. Monitoring

- Formal monitoring programme
- The World Heritage site management plan coordinating committee considers a six-monthly monitoring report on the progress of all projects in the management plan. The management plan has a number of objectives that are designed to sustain the OUV, and contains a series of recommendations for policy and action. The coordinating committee has approved these recommendations. The projects identified to fulfil some of the recommendations have specified timescales for achievement: progress is monitored against those timescales

14. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

- Main benefits of WH status: conservation, economic, management. Other: local, national and international recognition of the importance and significance of the site
- Strengths of management: conservation and archaeological interventions; condition surveys and repair and maintenance programmes; visitor and education management plans; formation of the Canterbury World Heritage site management plan coordinating committee; publication of the management plan; construction of the Cathedral's international study centre; construction of the visitor centre and museum at St Augustine's Abbey and the landscaping of the abbey grounds; construction of Harvey House for King's School at St Augustine's Abbey; restoration and conversion of The Priory near St Martin's Church to a conference centre for Canterbury Christ Church University College
- Weaknesses of management: lack of funding for the remaining conservation projects, some of which are important survivals of the mediaeval Cathedral precinct. Some grant aid was available in the past from English Heritage for the conservation of the ancient monuments in the WHS, but this funding is generally no longer available. It is imperative that the need for extra funding is recognized at the national level

Future actions:

- Seek necessary funding to enable the conservation projects to be implemented
- No WH Funding is sought. Timeframe: not known