



# AMENDMENT/PROPOSAL

<b>Agenda Item</b>	Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front), Belgium, France
<b>Draft Decision</b>	<b>45 COM 8B.52</b>
<b>Submitted by the Delegation of....</b>	
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<b>Date of submission</b>	

## TEXT

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/23/45.COM/8B.Add and WHC/23/45.COM/INF.8B1.Add,

2. Inscribes **Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front), Belgium, France**, on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi)**;

3. Takes note of the **provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**<sup>[GP1]</sup>;

### Brief synthesis

The funerary and memory sites selected form the component parts of the series proposed for inscription. They bear witness to an entirely new relationship to the death of the soldier in combat. For the first time, these soldiers were mobilised civilians on a massive scale, from every social class and in every country. The unprecedented loss of life, due to the industrial and total nature of the First World War, profoundly transformed funeral rites. Only a new cult of the dead, whose individual identity was recognised by all for the first time, provided a human and universal response to the inhumanity of war. This new funerary memory is expressed in cemeteries made up of individual graves repeated in very large numbers. Their uniformity reflects equality in the face of death above all other considerations, while respecting individual beliefs. The inscription of names on mausoleums and memorials is primarily a response to the desire to keep alive the memory of combatants whose bodies have not been found or identified. They are the natural complement to these cemeteries.

All the component parts also reflect the international nature of the conflict, whether they are cemeteries or memorials explicitly associated with one of the belligerents or paying tribute to soldiers from all over the world. Funerary and memorial sites range from simple stele to commemorative monument and large national memorials. They bear witness to a completely new architectural movement, specific to each belligerent and which continues today. All keep alive the memory of victims (military and civilian) and bear witness to the suffering and grief of the masses. Although centred on the death of the soldier, these funerary and memorial sites are a constant reminder, through their symbolism, that each fallen man was also a father, a son or a husband. This funerary cult is therefore more than a combatant cult; it is a civil and humanist cult that invites us to reflect and then, gradually, to reconcile and make peace.

**Criterion (iii):** The funerary and memorial sites of the First World War, which make up the series, bear witness to the establishment and spread of a new tradition of worshipping the war dead. For the first time in history, each victim was commemorated and recognised individually, on a universal scale, and without distinction as to social or cultural background. Individuals who die in combat are recognised first and foremost for themselves, while respecting their religious or philosophical convictions.

Each body is buried in an individual grave. If the deceased is identified, his or her name is engraved. Individual graves are generally grouped together in military cemeteries or in dedicated enclosures in civilian cemeteries. The remains of unidentified soldiers are sometimes grouped together in ossuaries. For those who have no identified individual grave, monuments to the missing are erected. In most cases, ossuaries and monuments to the missing bear the names of individuals engraved in the form of vast alphabetical lists.

This practice of recognising all victims individually and equally became a tradition for conflicts after the First World War.

**Criterion (iv):** The funerary and memory sites of the First World War, which make up the series, bear witness to the creation of a new typology of decorative, architectural and landscape elements of exceptional quality. Created and organised according to cultural sensibilities or national styles, the attention paid to aesthetics is universal.

They offer a new, large-scale example of the construction and creation of sites organised to commemorate all those who died in battle. By their size and number, they express the unprecedented scale reached by the destructive force of a total and global war. By their location, generally around the sites of major battles, and combined with the presence of elements that bear direct witness to the conflict, they form a landscape of remembrance.

The typology of military cemeteries, ossuaries and war memorials of the First World War has been taken as the standard for all subsequent conflicts.

**Criterion (vi):** The funerary and memory sites of the First World War, which form part of the series, by virtue of the unprecedented degree of destruction and mass death, respond to the desire to perpetuate the individual identity of the war victim and to re-humanise societies traumatised by the disappearance of a large part of their population.

The shared remembrance of the war dead is both contemporary and dynamic. Millions of visitors from all generations and from all over the world visit these sites. They take part in collective commemorations, international, national or local events organised by institutions or associations, as well as private pilgrimages and individual or family visits. In these places, the history of remembrance takes on exceptional value.

Today, the funerary and memory sites of the First World War have become places of meditation and celebration of the memory of the dead, whose symbolism exalts peace and reconciliation.

### **Integrity**

The overall integrity of the proposed series is broken down into several major axes and concepts in order to illustrate as fully as possible the different aspects of outstanding universal value.

In the diversity of its component parts, the series reflects the common desire of governments to respond to the expectations of populations to see the sacrifice of their loved ones recognised. This desire is expressed by a vast international movement to create cemeteries with individual graves and memorials listing those who have died in combat. The series

presents a selection of the most emblematic burial sites of this new cult of the fallen on the Western Front of the First World War (France-Belgium), as part of a group of several thousand cemeteries and monuments.

The series reflects the memory of the nations and peoples who took part in the fighting, and bears witness to the incredible diversity of the belligerents, fully justifying the term First World War. Through its component parts, the series presents a very complete picture of the nations and peoples involved in this conflict, implying a high degree of respect for the international testimony of the fallen.

The series is based on the different areas of the Western Front and the different phases in the history of the war. The general cartography expresses this dual spatial and chronological balance. The series aims to respect and illustrate the historical extension of the Western Front.

Over and above this new cult of the dead, the elements making up the series express the diversity of the cultural references of the different belligerents. The series represents all the architectural, decorative and landscaping trends that were expressed both by the diversity of those involved and throughout the history of cemeteries and memorials. It therefore expresses as fully as possible this stylistic and typological diversity of funerary and memory buildings.

It is also a memorial tradition that has evolved over time and is still alive and well today, on a large scale. The proposed series takes account of these different timeframes in the construction of the sites, as well as their current cultural and symbolic importance.

All the elements making up the serial property individually have good structural integrity, as memorials, necropolises, organised military cemeteries or monuments. Almost all of them were conceived from the outset as coherent monumental and landscape ensembles expressing remembrance values through their structure and form. Their construction followed the canons of a funerary art defined as much by the cultural context of the inter-war years as by the cultural and mental weight of the memory of the war. Plant elements (lawns, trees, ornamental beds) are designed to visually enrich the monumental or territorial element. The component parts are all of great symbolic significance, which is still perceived today. They are living sites of both the memory of war and the values of reconciliation and peace that they subsequently promoted. On their own, these component parts express a high integrity of intangible testimony and its transmission over generations, particularly since the disappearance of the last eyewitnesses to the First World War.

### Authenticity

The sites selected to form part of the serial nomination are cemeteries and funerary monuments used exclusively for the worship of the dead. They comprise a group of sites developed to fulfil a funerary and memorial function that has been carefully preserved to the present day. They are complementary places of remembrance linked to the events of the First World War, expressing the different national, historical and territorial aspects as well as the structural, architectural and decorative variants. These funerary and memorial sites have been preserved and maintained in accordance with their original purpose.

Cemeteries for fallen soldiers were created as soon as the war itself began, reflecting the widespread adoption of the new cult of the fallen. In particular, during the war, individual graves and cemeteries were created for the burial of fallen soldiers. After the armistice, the systematic search for the dead began, with the identification and grouping of remains. This led to the organisation of cemeteries and necropolises, as well as ossuaries for unidentifiable human remains. The creation of funerary sites, some of them very large, followed organisational logics and traditions specific to each nation. A number of wartime cemeteries have had their remains exhumed and have subsequently been abandoned. But their memorial function has generally been respected, giving some of them an archaeological dimension. Some cemeteries were affected by the events of the Second World War, and some were rebuilt in the aftermath, but in keeping with their original funerary vocation. The same is true of the funerary monuments, which generally include long individual lists. They have had a parallel history to cemeteries, and are frequently associated with them. They were sometimes created during the war itself, but more often than not were designed during the inter-war period, in direct connection with the commemoration of the fallen. Some of these monuments were reconstructed in the post-Second World War period, and sometimes even in relatively recent times. However, all of them have retained their original purpose since their creation and any restructuring that may have taken place. With very few exceptions (the monument at the former German military cemetery

in Sedan), these sites are well maintained by the national or local authorities responsible for them. They are therefore individual testimonies to a high degree of authenticity of the new widespread cult of the fallen. Taken together, they form a very complete and carefully-constructed selection of the monumental, decorative and landscape typologies that make up the cult and give expression to it today. An expression that can be described as perfectly authentic and that bears witness to a rich and complex history of the cult of the dead between the start of hostilities and the present day.

The component parts also reflect an architectural and decorative movement that began at this period in history, and is closely linked to its symbolic values. The cemeteries express a convergence towards new values, common to all the belligerents, of recognising the fallen, while their architecture and statuary reveal national attitudes to remembrance. In addition, memorials to the war and its dead were erected close to the old front lines, as well as in the villages and towns of the nations and peoples involved in the fighting. The most imposing memorial monuments in the series mark out the extent of the front line visually and symbolically. Beyond this, the symbolic art, memorial monumentalism and landscape of the cemeteries express a profound desire for peace. All the component parts bear witness to these tangible and intangible values with great authenticity. **The entire series expresses** the living and ongoing nature of this tribute, now a century old, as well as its evolution towards the search for peace and reconciliation.

In conclusion, the sites selected to form the component parts of the series have, almost as a rule, a high level of maintenance and conservation, respecting both their material authenticity and their symbolic value. The serial property strongly expresses the authentic and living nature of the cult of the fallen, who are recognised as individuals.

#### **Protection and management requirements**

All the sites making up the serial property are or will be protected in the short term. To achieve this, each partner has used its own legislation. The Belgian partners (Flanders and Wallonia) have chosen to apply heritage legislation systematically and to protect all the sites. Classification is both a recognition of heritage value and a safeguarding tool.

In Wallonia, **some of the sites concerned have been are all** protected as monuments or sites, while for others the procedure is underway and should be finalised before the World Heritage Committee makes its decision. The buffer zone is established using another heritage tool: the protection zone, whose definition is similar to that of the buffer zone. In two cases, the heritage quality of the surrounding area has also conferred the status of classified site on the buffer zone.

In Flanders, the sites in the series are all protected as monuments. This is the highest possible level of heritage protection. The buffer zones around the sites have all been defined in consultation with the partners involved. The buffer zones are based on heritage tools and spatial planning tools. In accordance with Flanders' heritage law, these buffer zones come into force when the site is listed as a World Heritage Site, even though the area around most of the sites has already been protected or recognized as an urban or landscape site.

In France, all military cemeteries are protected under the 1919 law. In addition, for the sites in the series, this basic protection has been supplemented by various instruments of a heritage nature (historic monument, inclusion in the inventory, site), of an environmental or spatial planning nature.

The priority in managing the serial property is to conserve the component parts, and to preserve its outstanding universal value and the attributes on which it is based. Communicating and sharing this outstanding universal value with as many people as possible, both locals and visitors, is another important aspect of management.

The sites in the series are spread over the territory of 2 States (Belgium, France) and are presented by 3 independent and autonomous institutional partners in terms of heritage (Wallonia, Flanders, France). In addition, the maintenance, management and conservation of these sites fall within the remit of specific structures created during or just after the war by the main belligerents. The objectives of these structures are much the same: to create military cemeteries and ensure their upkeep and management. These missions are not limited to Belgium and France, but to the whole world.

The management plan therefore takes account of this complexity and is based on a structure that brings together representatives of the institutions behind the project (Wallonia, Flanders and France) and the site managers (CWGC, ABMC, VDK, DMPA, IV-INIG). The management plan will have to integrate this dual component: serial management of the property and respect for the international models created by the managers on the western front and generalised.

It should also be borne in mind that each institution involved in the project has developed its own legislation or practices concerning the management of the World Heritage sites located on its territory.

In addition, it will also be necessary to preserve the anchoring of these sites in their territory, their landscape and their history, and to maintain or even strengthen links with the local populations and communities.

In order to respond to this complexity and these different challenges, the management plan for the serial property will therefore combine a transnational, national-regional and local level.

~~2. Refers the nomination of the Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front), Belgium, France, back to the States Parties in order to allow them to:~~

~~4. Requests the states parties to:~~

~~a) Reduce the selection of component parts of the nominated series to focus on funerary sites and exclude the memorials which do not include tangible evidence of the event being commemorated, and are not clearly linked with cemeteries and their design; the component parts that only reflect national values; the component parts that were created for and are associated with different events than the First World War; the component parts that do not contribute to the justification for inscription; and the component parts that exhibit less attributes, or which do not meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity;~~

~~b) Refocus the justification for inscription on the way the ensemble of funerary sites represents a tangible and outstanding response to an event of outstanding universal significance, the First World War, a significant period of human history with longlasting impacts on individuals, communities, societies and nations across the world, under revised formulations for criteria (iv) and (vi);~~

~~e)a) \_\_\_\_\_ Protect all component parts through national designations in accordance with the current heritage legislation,~~

~~d)b) \_\_\_\_\_ Adjust the boundaries of the following nominated component parts as follows:~~

~~i) Belgium:~~

- ~~- Enlarge the boundaries of component part WA02 Robermont Military plots to also include the burial grounds and tombs of the German soldiers,~~
- ~~- Reduce the boundaries of component part WA06 Enclosure of the Executed in Tamines to include only the cemetery,~~

~~ii) France:~~

- ~~- Revise the boundaries of component parts PC03 Canadian National Memorial "Vimy Memorial", PC04 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Canadian Cemetery n°2" and PC05 Commonwealth Military Cemetery "Givenchy Road Canadian Cemetery" and merge them to form one single component part to cover part or the entirety of the Vimy Ridge National Historic Site of Canada,~~
- ~~- Exclude the civil cemetery from component part ND04 German Military Cemetery of la Route de Solesmes and Commonwealth "Cambrai East Military Cemetery" and retain only the two military cemeteries,~~
- ~~- Modify the buffer zone of component parts PC07 French National Necropolis of la Targette and Commonwealth Military Cemetery "La Targette British Cemetery", and PC08 La Maison Blanche German Military Cemetery to include also component part PC09 Czechoslovakian Military Cemetery of NeuvilleSaint-Vaast, as it is part of the same memorial sector, e) Sign and operationalise the Framework Agreement prepared by the State Party of France among all relevant actors for the management of the French section of the nominated serial property,~~

- e)c) ~~Sign and operationalise-Finalize~~ the Framework Agreement ~~prepared by the State Party of France among with~~ all relevant actors for the management of the French section of the nominated serial property
- f)d) Adopt a common conservation and management approach that safeguards the specificity of each component part and reinforces their capacity to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated serial property,
- g)e) Strengthen the transnational coordination and cooperation in management,
- h)f) Develop a common transnational interpretation strategy for the nominated serial property that incorporates narratives related to the tribute paid during the First World War by the nations formerly colonised by European countries;

53. Recommends that the States Parties give consideration to ~~the following:~~

- a) ~~Involving in the conservation and maintenance of the nominated component parts heritage experts and conservators to align maintenance activities with heritage good practices,~~
- b) ~~Establishing protection mechanisms for the wider setting of the nominated component parts to prevent or reduce impacts from energy and transport infrastructure development,~~
- c) ~~Regulating the speed of vehicles where roads run close to nominated cemeteries to reduce risks and disturbance to the experience of these sites,~~
- d) ~~Improving the monitoring of the nominated serial property to reduce and avoid vandalism or theft,~~
- e) ~~Improving collaboration on documentation to develop a coherent system of documentation,~~

~~D~~d) developing a common transnational monitoring system, based on the attributes of the nominated property and on the same set of indicators, that would allow for a joint periodical evaluation of the state of conservation of the nominated serial property

6. ~~Requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.~~