

## **(Extract from ‘The Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Management Plan, Third Review 2014’)**

### **Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

Maritime Greenwich, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (C 795)

#### **Brief Synthesis**

Symmetrically arranged alongside the River Thames, the ensemble of the 17th-century Queen’s House, part of the last Royal Palace at Greenwich, the palatial baroque complex of the Royal Hospital for Seamen, and the Royal Observatory founded in 1675 and surrounded by the Royal Park laid out in the 1660s by André Le Nôtre, reflects two centuries of Royal patronage and represents a high point of the work of the architects Inigo Jones (1573-1652) and Christopher Wren (1632-1723), and more widely European architecture at an important stage in its evolution. It also symbolises English artistic and scientific endeavour in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Greenwich town, which grew up at the gates of the Royal Palace, provides, with its villas and formal stuccoed terraces set around St Alfege’s church, rebuilt to Hawksmoor’s designs in 1712-14, a setting and approach for the main ensemble.

Inigo Jones’s Queen’s House, as the first Palladian building in Britain, was also the direct inspiration for classical houses and villas all over the country in the two centuries after it was built.

The Royal Hospital, laid out to a master plan developed by Christopher Wren in the late 17th century and built over many decades by him and other leading architects, including Nicholas Hawksmoor, is among the most outstanding group of baroque buildings in England.

The Royal Park is a masterpiece of the application of symmetrical landscape design to irregular terrain by André Le Nôtre. It is well loved and used by residents as well as visitors to the Observatory, Old Royal Naval College and the Maritime Museum.

The Royal Observatory’s astronomical work, particularly of the scientist Robert Hooke, and John Flamsteed, the first Astronomer Royal, permitted the accurate measurement of the earth’s movement and also contributed to the development of global navigation. The Observatory is now the base-line for the world’s time zone system and for the measurement of longitude around the globe.

**Criterion (i):** The public and private buildings and the Royal Park at Greenwich form an exceptional ensemble that bears witness to human artistic and creative endeavour of the highest quality.

**Criterion (ii):** Maritime Greenwich bears witness to European architecture at an important stage of its evolution, exemplified by the work of great architects such as Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren who, inspired by developments on the continent of Europe, each shaped the architectural

development of subsequent generations, while the Park exemplifies the interaction of man and nature over two centuries.

**Criterion (iv):** The Palace, Royal Naval College and Royal Park demonstrate the power, patronage and influence of the Crown in the 17th and 18th centuries and its illustration through the ability to plan and integrate culture and nature into a harmonious whole.

**Criterion (vi):** Greenwich is associated with outstanding architectural and artistic achievements as well as with scientific endeavour of the highest quality through the development of navigation and astronomy at the Royal Observatory, leading to the establishment of the Greenwich Meridian and Greenwich Mean Time as world standards.

### **Integrity**

The boundary of the encompasses the Old Royal Naval College, the Queen's House, Observatory, the Royal Park and buildings which fringe it, and the town centre buildings that form the approach to the formal ensemble. All the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are included within the boundary of the property. The main threats facing the Property are from development pressures within the town that could impact adversely on its urban grain and from tall buildings, in the setting, which may have the potential to impact adversely on its visual integrity

### **Authenticity**

The ensemble of buildings and landscapes that comprise the Property preserve a remarkably high degree of authenticity.

The Old Royal Naval College complex, in particular the Painted Hall and Chapel, retains well its original form, design and materials. The Royal Observatory retains its original machinery and its associations with astronomical work. The management of the Old Royal Naval College as a single entity now allows for coordinated conservation of the buildings and surrounding spaces. The Observatory, Queen's House and high-quality 19th-century buildings are all managed as elements of the Maritime Museum. .

The landscape of the Royal Park retains its planned form and design to a degree with some ancient trees still surviving.

The stuccoed and slate-roofed terraces of the town that form the approach to the formal buildings and the Park retain their function as a commercial and residential centre. The coherence and conservation of buildings within the town is good although there is a need for some refurbishment and repair to the urban pattern within the property, where disrupted by World War II bombing and subsequently reinstated.

### **Protection and management requirements**

The UK Government protects World Heritage Sites in England in two ways. Firstly individual buildings, monuments, gardens and landscapes are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act and secondly through the UK spatial planning system under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Government guidance on protecting the Historic Environment and World Heritage is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Circular 07/09. Policies to protect, promote, conserve and enhance World Heritage Sites, their settings and buffer zones can be found in statutory planning documents.

The Mayor's London Plan 2011 provides a strategic social, economic, transport and environmental framework for London and its future development over the next 20-25 years and is reviewed regularly. It contains policies to protect and enhance the historic environment including World Heritage properties. Further guidance is set out in London's World Heritage Sites – Guidance on Setting and The London View Management Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance which protects important designated views, some of which focus on the property. The London Borough of Greenwich Unitary Development Plan (UDP) contains guidance to protect and promote the Maritime Greenwich which have been saved and will remain in place until the UDP is replaced by the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). There are also policies to protect the setting of the World Heritage property included in the current statutory plans for the neighbouring London Boroughs of Lewisham and Tower Hamlets.

The Property is protected by a variety of statutory designations: the Hospital, Queen's House and Observatory buildings are Grade 1 listed buildings together with statues, railings and other buildings of all grades; and the surrounding residential buildings of Greenwich town centre lie within a Conservation Area. There are a number of scheduled monuments in the Park which is itself a Grade 1 registered park and garden and elements of the park are considered important for nature conservation.

The Royal Park is owned, managed and administered by The Royal Parks, a Crown Agency. The Queen's House and associated 19th century buildings and the Royal Observatory are in the custodianship of the Trustees of the National Maritime Museum. All elements are in a good state of conservation. The Old Royal Naval College is in the freehold of Greenwich Hospital, which remains a Crown Naval charity. The buildings are leased to Greenwich Foundation for the Old Royal Naval College, also a registered charity whose objectives are to conserve, maintain and interpret the buildings for the public. The Royal Courts are leased to Greenwich University and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance to form the Maritime Greenwich University Campus. Greenwich Foundation also retains and maintains a number of key buildings. Commercial activities in the town centre are coordinated by a town centre manager.

The management of the Property is guided by a Management Plan approved by all the key partners which is regularly reviewed. A World Heritage Coordinator is responsible for production and implementation of the Management Plan and overall coordination for the whole Property; this post reports to a World Heritage Executive Committee made up of key owners and managers within the Property. A World Heritage Site Steering Group made up of key local stakeholders and national organisations monitors implementation of the Management Plan. The history, value and significance of the property is now explained to visitors through Discover Greenwich, a recently opened state-of-the-art visitor centre which helps orientate visitors who then disperse through the property.

The Royal Park, like any designed landscape evolving over time, is vulnerable to erosion of detail and its maintenance and conservation form part of a detailed plan that sets out the design history of the

Royal Park, and the rationale for its ongoing maintenance and future restoration of the historic landscape, in particular the way avenues and trees are managed and re-planted.

A number of high-profile annual events are held within the Royal Park some of which have several millions of spectators worldwide. For all events, appropriate safeguards were put in place to ensure there is no adverse impact on the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, in particular on the Royal

Park trees, on underground archaeology or on the surrounding buildings. The events generate worldwide interest in, and publicity for, the World Heritage property.