UK Tentative List of Potential Sites for World Heritage Nomination: Application form

Please save the application to your computer, fill in and email to: UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk

The application form should be completed using the boxes provided under each question, and, where possible, within the word limit indicated.

Please read the Information Sheets before completing the application form. It is also essential to refer to the accompanying Guidance Note for help with each question, and to the relevant paragraphs of UNESCO's *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, (OG)* available at: http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines

Applicants should provide only the information requested at this stage. Further information may be sought in due course.

(1) Name of Proposed World Heritage Site

The Great Western World Heritage Site: The Genesis of Modern Transport

(2) Geographical Location

Name of country/region

England, United Kingdom

Grid reference to centre of site

1°07'85''W/Lat 51°30'91''N London-Bristol, England

Please enclose a map preferably A4-size, a plan of the site, and 6 photographs, preferably electronically.

(3) Type of Site

Please indicate category:

Natural ☐ Cultural ☒ Mixed ☐ Cultural Landscape ☒

(4) Description

Please provide a brief description of the proposed site, including the physical characteristics. 200 words

The Site proposed is multifaceted and is best described as a string of pearls loosely linked by the line of the railway containing further beads which provide context but not forming part of the Site itself. At either end Paddington Station, London and Temple Meads, Bristol, Brunel's magnificent railway termini and the Great Western Dock with the SS Great Britain in Bristol's Floating Harbour.

The railway line itself includes 8 pearls:

Paddington Station, London
Warncliffe Viaduct, Hanwell
Maidenhead Bridge
Swindon Railway Works and Village
Box Tunnel & Middle Hill Tunnel
Landscape section through Bath
Approaches to and Temple Meads Station, Bristol
Great Western Dock with SS Great Britain, Bristol

Between these 'pearls' are fine beads such as:

Impressive Sonning Cutting
Graceful bridges over the Thames at Basildon and Moulsford
The Great Western Railway Centre, Didcot
Ornamental viaduct and massive embankment through Chippenham
River and road bridges, Bathford
Tunnels at Brislington

Throughout, and especially west of Swindon even the minor structures – bridges, retaining walls, cuttings, embankments, and tunnels are of thoughtful design and detailing. Other Brunel features include in Bristol's Floating Harbour, the Underfall Yard and Cumberland wrought iron swing bridge and, above the Avon Gorge, the Clifton Suspension Bridge.

(5) History

Please provide a short summary statement of any significant events in the history of the site. 200 words

On 7 March 1833 a Committee of Inquiry into a railroad from London to Bristol appointed Brunel to survey a route, beginning two days later. On 27 August 1833 Brunel was appointed Chief Engineer.

On 31 December 1833 the GWR's prospectus was published, followed by a Bill for the 'divided route' (London to Reading and Bath to Bristol) presented to Parliament on 20 February 1834. This was defeated in the Lords on 25 July 1834.

On 25 February 1835 a Bill for the entire route was published which was given Royal Assent on 31 August 1835.

On 29 October 1835 Brunel's proposal for Broad Gauge was sanctioned.

In early 1836 construction began at two locations; between Bristol and Bath, and Reading and London.

The first public service ran from Paddington to Maidenhead on 4 June 1838, with the line between Bristol and Bath opening on 31 August 1840.

On 30 June 1841, following the completion of Box Tunnel, the GWR opened from London to Bristol.

In 1842 Queen Victoria made the first royal rail journey.

26 July 1845 saw the SS Great Britain's maiden voyage to New York.

In July 1846 the 'Act for Regulating the Gauge of Railways' was passed giving 4'8½" as the standard, replacing Broad Gauge.

(6) Why do you think this site should be inscribed as a World Heritage Site? Give reasons. 200 words

The creation of mass transport was key to worldwide industrialisation and was pioneered by the development of steam railways and steam-powered ocean vessels. Railways were one of the most important elements of these new innovations and are argued to be Britain's major contribution to the development of world commerce in the 19th century. The Great Western, of all the early mainline railways, has to be considered one of the most ground breaking, reflecting the genius of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. To this day it remains one of the most complete and still in everyday use. Together with the SS Great Britain, Brunel's immense iron-hulled ship, the Great Western swept the world to a new era.

Brunel's vision in the fields of architecture, structural, civil and mechanical engineering cannot be underrated. His achievements in the transport revolution have left an enduring mark across the British landscape and a worldwide legacy. Brunel is the true embodiment of Victorian engineering prowess and vision, pushing the boundaries and setting him apart from his contemporaries. It is these significant innovations that the Great Western World Heritage Site seeks to recognise, together with the true genius and vision of Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

(7) Please say why the site has Outstanding Universal Value and specify the main features which underpin its importance. 200 words

Unlike earlier or contemporary railways the Great Western, has been operating as a mainline railway for 170 years, with the majority of the buildings and features in their original condition. In addition the Great Western was the creation of just one individual – Brunel. He dealt with all aspects of design and detail – acting as surveyor, civil engineer, mechanical engineer, architect and planner. At the time it was the longest railway contemplated at 118 miles.

The Site would include architectural details such as those found in the offices and boardroom of Temple Meads Station, elegant yet bold bridges, elaborate and ornate tunnel portals, a uniquely theatrical landscape in Sydney Gardens or the incomparable SS Great Britain in dock in Bristol. It also demonstrates tremendous feats of engineering in features such as Box Tunnel.

Through these unique features, designating the Great Western as a World Heritage Site would ensure recognition and appreciation of the achievements of the past and the evolution of the railways through to the modern transport system we see today. Unlike most sites the old and the new sit side by side demonstrating just how innovative Brunel's creation was, and how it can continue to be in the future.

(8) Outstanding Universal Value

Please state which of the 10 UNESCO criteria for Outstanding Universal Value the proposed site meets, and describe briefly why the criteria were chosen. Please see criteria note at the end of the form.

UNESCO criterion	☒	**Why was this criterion chosen?** 100 words
(i)	☒	The site represents Brunel's engineering genius through the design and build of a transport system on a scale not previously seen, especially through work such as Box Tunnel, Maidenhead Bridge and the SS Great Britain. Despite the massive engineering undertaking he created elegant designs to his building and structures such as his viaducts, bridges and stations.
(ii)	☒	The site represents the opening up of many parts of the world through developments in transport and civil engineering – industrialisation which was one of Britain's major contributions to the world. It led to developments in station architecture, civil and mechanical engineering which had a

UNESCO criterion	☒	**Why was this criterion chosen?** 100 words
		great impact on both rural and urban landscapes. The increase in travel speed had a profound impact on society
(iii)	☐	
(iv)	☒	The site represents an outstanding ensemble of both buildings and structures within landscapes, from the earliest surviving great main line terminus (Temple Meads) to probably the finest London terminus (Paddington). The section of railway from Box Tunnel to Bristol demonstrates railway engineering at its most sophisticated and the SS Great Britain is the mother of modern day ocean travel. These developments and structures effectively created the modern industrial landscape thus their historical significance is vast. The structures were exceptional when first constructed and their survival has rendered them even more so.
(v)	☐	
(vi)	☐	
(vii)	☐	
(viii)	☐	
(ix)	☐	
(x)	☐	

(9) Authenticity (for cultural or mixed sites only)

Authenticity concerns the current state of conservation of a cultural or mixed site; especially whether its importance, its Outstanding Universal Value, is still obvious from its physical condition. Please outline the condition of the site. 200 words

It is believed that the proposed Site fulfils the criteria for authenticity in relation to World Heritage Sites. There is exceptional pictorial and archival documentation for the Site. Brunel's original design notebooks have been archived with the original worked up drawings (in the possession of Network Rail) having been designated as scheduled artefacts by the Railway Heritage Committee. Electronic copies are still used for operational purposes for maintenance of the structures. In addition J C Bourne's 'History and Description of the Great Western Railway' (published 1846) also provides a good pictorial archive. This ensures that the information on which authenticity can be judged is reliable.

The authenticity of the Great Western World Heritage Site is conveyed through

the characteristics of form, design, use and function. The form and design of its elements can be shown to be very much the work of one mind – that of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. There have been some operational alterations but these have respected the original design and form and the railway remains in use of one of England's main passenger lines. As Brunel intended, it is one of the main arterial railway lines to the South West of England and Wales.

(10) Integrity

For cultural or mixed sites, please state how much original fabric is included in the proposed site, and its condition. For guidance on how the test of integrity is met for natural sites under criteria (vii) – (x), please refer to the OG 90-94. Information Sheet 6 also provides help on this point. 200 words

The Great Western has been in continuous operation as a railway for 170 years. Most the buildings/structures have survived intact. Of the elements proposed for inclusion, Temple Meads Station, the landscaped line through Bath, Middle Hill and Box Tunnels and the Swindon Railway Village are much as built. At the eastern end the Maidenhead Bridge and the Wharncliffe Viadict were sensitively widened at the end of the 19th century when the line was doubled. Paddington Station has been sympathetically restored. In addition other structures, not previously listed, have been identified and added to the statutory list. The proportion of original bridges, both underline and overline is extremely high for an operational railway.

Most structures are statutorily designated so current standards of repair are higher in conservation terms, though there has been insensitive repair work in the past (eg patching masonry with engineering brick). Brunel's Railway Village in Swindon was sympathetically modernised in the 1970s and most Works building have been sympathetically converted to new uses.

The Dry Dock where the SS Great Britain is berthed, although slightly altered and extended over its 150 years use, is largely the same as when the vessel was built and is of considerable international significance.

(11) Are there other examples of this kind of site already on the World Heritage List?

Yes ☒ No ☐

f yes, please list. 100 words

There are currently three similar sites inscribed on the World Heritage List:

Semmering Railway, Austria (inscribed 1998)

Mountain Railways of India (inscribed 1999, extended 2005,2008):-
The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway
The Nilgiri Mountain Railway
The Kalka Shimla Railway

Rhaetian Railway, Italy/Switzerland (2008)

(12) What distinguishes this site from other similar sites?

150 words

The existing World Heritage Sites are all very different to the Great Western Railway in type and magnitude. The existing railways are all built through mountainous landscapes requiring considerable feats of engineering and, with the exception of the Semmering Railway (1848-54) are relatively late. They are very much strategic lines built to exploit raw materials or for political reasons.

The Great Western Railway on the other hand is a major inter-city railway with impressive grand terminal stations transporting millions of people each year. It is representative of the main line railways that made possible large scale industrialisation and urbanisation and joined countries and indeed continents together.

The proposed site also includes the SS Great Britain which represents the extension of the railway line to New York. This was an astounding proposal at that time.

Therefore the proposed site differs from those existing as it represents a transport revolution.

(13) How does the site contribute to meeting UNESCO's priorities for a balanced World Heritage List?

200 words

It has been considered that a wider diversification of nominated sites should be considered in order to create a more balanced list. When considering cultural World Heritage Sites people tend to think of immense classical architecture or ancient monuments. One of the most significant advances is the inclusion of industrial sites as World Heritage Sites in their own right.

The Great Western Site encapsulates not just transport but also virtuosity in civil and mechanical engineering. It pre-dates other railways but also includes steam-powered ocean vessels which would create a unique 'transport' site. It is also unique in that it is the work of just one person, Isambard Kingdom Brunel who sought to combine innovation and style.

However, this sector remains under-represented to this day. Railways form just 0.3% of the total properties (890) and just 0.4% of the cultural properties (689). Railways are wholly under-represented yet they represent development that had an immense effect on mankind. It is therefore considered that the proposed Site will assist in redressing this balance.

(14) What benefits do you think World Heritage Site inscription would bring?

Please indicate the main opportunities and benefits.

Education	☒	Tourism	☒	Regeneration	☐
Conservation	☒	Protection	☒	Other benefits	☐

Please describe. 100 words.

Education:
The diverse forms of architecture and engineering provides a wealth of educational opportunities from schools to lifelong learning programmes. The associated 'pearls' and 'beads' provide diversity to the history along the route.

Tourism:
The ability to travel the breadth of southern England on an original historic route by a sustainable means of transport, encouraging visitors not just to main sites but also others between.

Conservation & Protection
World Heritage Site status would confer a certain level of protection. As the proposed Site does not include modern day tracks and infrastructure it is not considered that this would affect modernisation.

(15) Are there any known threats to the proposed World Heritage Site?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Please indicate any proposed developments, or other potential impacts on the site.

Impact	☒	**Please describe.** 100 words for each issue.
Development	☐	
Environmental	☐	
Other	☒	Electrification of the Great Western Railway line has recently been announced. The method chosen and the infrastructure thereby required would dictate the impact on the various structures along the route. Clearly overhead gantries will have an immediate visual and possible structural impact (especially in such sensitive landscapes such as Sydney Gardens), however there are other less intrusive methods such as the third rail which could be used. Whether World Heritage Status is conferred or not, most structures along the route are statutorily designated and therefore such issues would still have to be considered.

(16) Legal Protection

Please list any legal and other protections, including cultural and natural designations, which cover the whole or part of the proposed site. 200 words

The 'pearls' of the proposed Site are all listed (see below). However most of the structures on the route (tunnels, bridges, viaducts, embankments, etc) are also listed and too numerous to list.

Paddington Station		Grade I
Warncliffe Viaduct		Grade I
Maidenhead Bridge		Grade I (upgraded from II*)
Swindon Railway Works & Village		Grade II* and Grade II
Box & Middle Hill Tunnels		Grade II*
City of Bath	Sydney Gardens	Grade II*
	Bath Spa Station	Grade II*
	Twerton Tunnels	Grade II
Temple Meads Station		Grade I
Great Western Dry Dock		Grade II*

In addition the section through Bath is within the City of Bath World Heritage Site, though not directly covered by the inscription (which is for the Georgian and Roman importance). The status, however, would be taken into account. The route is also covered by various Conservation Areas.

(17) Ownership
Please list the main owners of the site, where possible.

Network Rail own the railway structures.

SS Great Britain Trust own the SS Great Britain and Dockyard

Do the owners support the application? Yes ☐ No ☒

A statement of support from the principle owners of the proposed site should be attached to the application, preferably electronically.

(18) Local Authority support for the site

Please list all Local Authorities with an interest in the proposed site.

Westminster City Council
London Borough of Ealing
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Wiltshire Council
Bath & North East Somerset Council
Bristol City Council

Does the proposed site have local Authority support? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please attach a statement of support from each one in relation to the application.

Please indicate whether the site is included in the local plan/s by specific policies.

Yes ☐ No ☐ Partly ☒

Please describe. 200 words.

Bath & North East Somerset Council no, but is mentioned in general and would be covered by existing WHS policies if inscribed.

Others not known

It should be mentioned that all Councils are currently going through a local plan development process so any existing policies may change in the near future.

(19) Stakeholders

Please list the main parties with an interest in the site. 100 words

Owners and local authorities as listed above and FirstGreatWestern the rail operator.

(20) How will the Site be managed?

Please outline the management arrangements for the proposed World Heritage Site, including where the responsibilities lie. 200 words

See attached report

(21) Funding: the nomination

Please indicate how the preparation of the nomination would be funded. 100 words

See attached report

(22) Funding: management

Please outline how the future management would be funded. 100 words

See attached report

Name and Contact Details of Applicant

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Completed applications should be forwarded, preferably in electronic format, to the World Heritage Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport at the following email address: UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk

Any material that cannot be sent electronically should be sent to the following address:

World Heritage Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
London
SW1 5DH

The closing date for applications is 11th June 2010

UNESCO’s criteria for the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value
(para 77 of the Operational Guidelines)

(i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

(ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

(iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

(iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

(v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

(vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

(vii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

(viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

(ix) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

(x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.