

TICCIH and the World Heritage List: a strategy for advising on industrial and technical cultural properties

Background

TICCIH is being urged to set out a programme and timetable for completing the series of contextual guides that it initiated for ICOMOS in 1996 for the evaluation of industrial and technical candidate for the World Heritage List.¹

Introduction

In 1994 TICCIH produced a report on what were viewed as the 25 key industrial archaeological sites and landscapes from across the world. This went to the World Heritage Committee and it was felt that more contextual documentation was needed. Since 1996 TICCIH has sponsored and ICOMOS has published five comparative and thematic studies, on canals, railways, bridges, workers' settlements and collieries, in order to provide a context for evaluations of potential World Heritage Sites.

In 2004 ICOMOS published *'The World Heritage List – filling the gaps, an action plan for the future'*². This was a co-ordinated attempt to discover how far the World Heritage List of inscribed properties reflected the Global Strategy of achieving a 'credible, representative and balanced' list. It broke down the inscribed sites according to typological, regional/chronological, and thematic criteria which cross-cut the distribution of properties in different directions, aiming to provide a 'clear overview of the present situation, and likely trends in the short to medium term with a view to identifying under-represented categories.'³

These categories - the 'gaps' in the World Heritage List – turned out to be associated with certain types of cultural property. One of the most consistently underrepresented types of property in all three analyses was that of technological and industrial heritage and its related sites and landscapes. In *'Understanding the Results, Under-represented Categories and Themes'*, the authors specifically identified technological properties as needing more explicit definition, and proposed further collaboration between ICOMOS and TICCIH.⁴ (See Appendix ICOMOS *'gaps' analysis: categories relevant to TICCIH*)

In January this year UNESCO coordinated an expert workshop of World heritage Science and Technology experts in London⁵ to discuss how to inscribe World Heritage Sites of scientific interest. (See Dr Stephen Hughes' report in the Spring 2008 issue of the *TICCIH Bulletin*⁶, Though not central to their meeting, TICCIH's record in providing advice was also examined, and while the quality and usefulness of the contextual reports was praised, questions were asked about the progress of the programme and the need for a timetable to complete studies across a full range of industrial heritage sectors.

¹ Hughes, S, *TICCIH Bulletin*, #40, Spring 2008, p. 10.

² ICOMOS (2004) *The World Heritage List: Filling the Gaps - an Action Plan for the Future: An Analysis by ICOMOS*, ICOMOS, Paris.

³ World Heritage Committee 24th session, Cairns, 2000.

⁴ ICOMOS op. cit., p41.

⁵ World Heritage: Science and Technology, an expert workshop within the framework of the global strategy for a balanced and representative world heritage list, London, 21-23 January, 2008

⁶ Hughes op. cit.

At the end of 2004 Stuart Smith, the Secretary of TICCIH, sent a proposal to ICOMOS indicating ways in TICCIH could help realise the goal of having a List that more accurately reflected the outstanding influence that industry has had in creating the modern world. However, nothing came of this initiative.

Filling the gaps: TICCIH's role

The ICOMOS 'Gaps' report identified two main constraints on achieving a more representative selection of sites. One is a structural constraint, the lack of technical resources in many States Parties that prevents them from preparing their own Tentative Lists. The other is a qualitative one: there are difficulties identifying and evaluating certain themes or classes of cultural property because of gaps in the knowledge base or the absence of research. This evidently includes cultural property related to industrial activity, and that dating from the historical period of industrialisation, from the late-18th century up to today.

The 'Gaps' report points out that a serious problem arises in the context of World Heritage from the absence of information on industrial sites and landscapes precisely in those regions of the world where most gaps exist. Many countries do not even have inventories which could be used to compile a 'global inventory' from which sites could be chosen to make up Tentative Lists.

As ICOMOS's adviser on industrial and technical heritage, how can TICCIH help overcome these constraints, and contribute to filling the perceived gaps in the lists of World Heritage?

One approach might be to continue the industry-by-industry review based on an acceptable thematic division. TICCIH might decide to set out a programme of world-wide single industry studies of those sectors identified in the Thematic Framework, drawing on the collective experience of TICCIH and its network of experts. These can then be used by ICOMOS and individual States Parties to identify sites and landscapes that might fill the gaps and be used to draw up Tentative Lists.

Single industry contextual studies

The methodology that has been used for carrying out these studies has varied, and the non-industrial studies, of rock art or viticultural landscapes, vary even more. Perhaps the most recent industrial report, the 2003 International Collieries Study, provides the best template for further work. Its primary aim was 'to *define criteria* of especial relevance for the selection of colliery monuments for nomination to the List and to *provide international examples* to which the criteria could be applied'⁷ [my italics].

Model for contextual single industry studies

1. Definition of the industry
2. Possible categories of World Heritage site
3. General historical introduction
4. Definition of the functional elements and their evolution
5. Evaluation criteria
6. Areas and values of special significance
7. The criteria applied to major sites and monuments

Possible framework of contextual studies

Adapting one of the widely used sectorial divisions of industrial archaeology (Trinder, 1992), and bearing in mind the 'gaps' identified by ICOMOS, the studies could be separated in the following manner. Those already published are in grey:

1. Extraction
 - 1.1. Coal (Hughes, 2003)

⁷ Hughes, S (2003) *The International Collieries Study*, Occasional Papers for the World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS and TICCIH, Paris

- 1.2. Metal
- 1.3. Non-metal (stone, oil, salt)
- 1.4. Timber
2. Metallurgy
3. Textiles (Watson, draft)
4. Manufacturing
 - 4.1. Food
 - 4.2. Paper
 - 4.3. Glass, ceramics and cement
5. Mechanical engineering
6. Transport
 - 6.1. Railways (Coulls, 1999)
 - 6.2. Roads
 - 6.3. Canals (Hughes, 1996)
 - 6.4. Airports
 - 6.5. Ports, harbours and shipbuilding
 - 6.6. Bridges (Delony, 1997)
7. Communications, post and telecommunications
8. Energy
 - 8.1. Electricity
 - 8.2. Gas
9. Chemicals, oil and plastics
10. Water and waste
11. Industrial settlements (Bergeron, 2001)
12. Industrial architecture

Summary of TICCIH's proposal to ICOMOS

1. Define and adopt with ICOMOS a framework for the single industry contextual studies, based on the accepted sectorial industrial classifications and taking into account the themes identified in the Thematic Framework of the ICOMOS Report. See Appendix 2.
2. Identify experts or teams of experts able and willing to carry out the studies. Discuss possibilities for financing.
3. Each report to include a summary of the world-wide evolution of the relevant industry, during the historical period characterized by industrialisation, so as to define which factors that would give buildings, sites or landscapes from each one an outstanding significance.
4. Reports would provide examples of sites that would meet the criteria of significance established in the previous phase, and that would fulfil the requirements of outstanding universal value laid out by World Heritage Committee. This is more practicable than compiling lists of suitable sites all around the world, though there may be industries, and experts, where such lists are feasible.

Terrassa, Spain, September 2008

Appendix

ICOMOS 'gaps' analysis: categories relevant to TICCIH

- 1) Typological framework⁸
 - a) Cultural Routes (trading routes, roads, canals, railways, etc.) had a 'much lower representation', notably in Latin America and the Caribbean;
 - b) Technological properties (factories, bridges, dams etc., industrial settlements, mines, railways, canals, etc.) were scarce in the Asia Pacific region.
- 2) Chronological/Regional framework⁹

This analysis was not well-suited to clarifying thematic shortfalls such as in industrial cultural property, although it did identify cultures with strong industrial traditions as being under-represented, including northern and eastern Europe.
- 3) Thematic framework¹⁰

Of the three frameworks used by ICOMOS this was best able to detect the relative absence of industrial cultural heritage (see Appendix 1). The six themes included:

 - a) *Expressions of Creativity*, including industrial monuments, 19th/20th century settlements and industrial landscapes.
 - b) *Using Natural Resources* - mining and quarrying with associated manufacturing, and irrigation systems;
 - c) *Movement of Peoples - Routes of Transportation* (canals, railways, highways, aviation, harbours, tunnels and bridges);
 - d) *Developing Technologies* - energy conversion and utilisation, information processing and communication systems, and technology of urban community (infrastructure and transport).

The overlapping analyses highlighted the relative scarcity of sites relating to transport networks (*Movement of People*), and of *Developing Technologies* and the very few industrial landscapes that were inscribed or on current Tentative Lists.

⁸ ICOMOS op. cit., p18.

⁹ ICOMOS op. cit., p23.

¹⁰ ICOMOS op. cit., p30.