

6 - Cultural Significance

6.1 - Basis of Assessment

The identification of cultural significance in this section is an assessment based on the recommendations in James Semple Kerr's *The Conservation Plan* (1996) and the general guidelines in the Heritage Lottery Fund's *Conservation Plans for Historic Places* (March 1988). It permits judgements of significance to be tailored to a place, individual structure, feature or large complex object, by applying the most appropriate criteria. These have developed out of a thorough understanding, rather than by employing a formulaic check-list. It is a logical progression from the previous sections on understanding the ship and the site.

The system employed here is the result of extensive collaboration and debate between Matthew Tanner, the Curator of the *Great Britain*, and Jo Cox. It assesses the elements of the ship and site on the basis of their ability to demonstrate philosophies; customs; designs; functions; techniques; processes; styles; their formal and aesthetic qualities and associational links for which there may be no surviving evidence in the fabric.

The assessment is a different approach to that of statutory protection. Listing, for example, gives blanket protection at a particular grade to a whole building or structure and its curtilage. Judgements about the relative merits of individual elements only come into play for listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments when physical changes are proposed. They are then decided on a case-by-case basis at the point of prior advice or in the act of giving or refusing consent. Neither listing nor scheduling provides an owner or manager (or anybody else with a *locus* in the process) with much detailed information on what kind of merit different parts of a building or structure might be considered to have. This is both their strength (the assessment of merit changes with time and allows consent for change to be given or refused on the basis of knowledge/opinion when the change is proposed) and a weakness, since managers can be left in the dark about how to retain significance and where limited resources should be spent on conservation.

The evaluation has been rendered here first as bullet point general statements. These summarise, in a form intended to be brief and relevant, the cultural significance of the ship and site, as an *aide memoire* to decision-makers and managers.

The general statements are followed by a more detailed table of graded elements. This has the intrinsic imperfection of any inventory. It does not cover every item of fabric. This does not mean that fabric that is not mentioned is not significant. It tends towards losing sight of the wood for the trees by plucking out elements that make up the whole. This is mitigated by a separate grading for grouped elements and recognising that the whole, in some cases, is more than the sum total of its parts.

The system is designed to assist positive priorities - retardation of fabric decay, the focus of limited budgets, presentation issues - on this site. It is not a manifesto for change, or intended to put at risk elements assessed as having 'some' or 'little' cultural significance. It has no legal weight and is not intended to supersede or challenge statutory or other existing systems for evaluation. Well-established systems already operate for the buildings on the site. When completed, the National Historic Ships Committee Research Project at the University of St Andrews, which is looking at models for ship and ship project evaluation, will give a broader and more comparative context for the *ss Great Britain* and the *ss Great Britain* Project (see Appendix 2). This Conservation Plan is very different and intended to be useful in a site-specific context.

The limitations of the system were felt to be substantially outweighed by the usefulness of an exercise which applied a demanding and relatively sophisticated set of criteria to the structures in order to identify significance as closely as possible. This should mean that the policies and strategies that ensue can be justified, generate good quality debate and make the best possible use of energy and funds.

6.2 - General Statements of Significance

The *Great Britain* is of exceptional significance because of

- the combination of technical innovations in the original design of the ship: principally the iron hull; her size; the screw propeller; watertight bulkheads.
- the seminal influence of the design on modern ship-building.
- the unique physical connection between a preserved ship and a place built for her design and construction.
- the strong association with I K Brunel who engendered and collaborated on her design and construction.
- her status as a monument to the boldness of early 19th century problem-solving
- the beauty and fineness of her original lines as a fast ship.
- the way in which she and the other first phase elements of the site - the dock, dock office and steamship factory remains, are part of Bristol's maritime history.
- the richness and complexity of information of different periods in her fabric.
- the variety and breadth of commercial and national histories associated with her.
- the variety and breadth of personal human histories associated with her.
- the way in which her fabric expresses risk and danger.

It is difficult to categorise or analyse the emotional impact of the ship on visitors, many of whom may have only a fleeting interest in her engineering story. As a piece of sculpture, her impact is breath-taking and, combined with her battered appearance gives her an intrinsic quality that is not amenable to tabulation. The heroic project to resurrect her from the Falklands (illustrated in photographs displayed on board) is also a great emotional pull on site.

The site of the Great Western Dockyard as a whole is of exceptional significance because

- it includes the remains of the first purpose-built integrated steamship works in the world
- it is the birthplace and present setting of the *Great Britain*
- it is a demonstration of Bristol's maritime and industrial history
- of its industrial textures and materials and the pleasing simplicity and fitness for purpose of the designs of the buildings
- it gives historic meaning to the Floating Harbour and *vice versa*

The Great Western Dock is of exceptional significance because

- it is the birthplace of the *Great Britain*.
- the fabric of the ship and the fabric of the dock were designed for and influenced by one another.
- it is one of the major surviving elements of the first purpose-built integrated iron steam-ship works in the world.
- it is associated with I K Brunel, who advised on its construction
- it is associated with William Patterson, as the ship-builder of the *Great Western* and the *Great Britain*.

- of the pleasing contrast between its vernacular character and the high-tech character and ironwork of the ship.
- it is a surviving example of a 19th century vernacular dock.
- it is a surviving example of one of Bristol's City Docks.
- For its association with particular Bristol-built ships.
- For its association with the neighbouring Albion Dock.

The factory is of exceptional significance because

- it is the birthplace of the *Great Britain* and her engines.
- of the influence of the research and construction within its walls have had on modern shipping.
- it is one of the major surviving elements of the first purpose-built steam-ship works in the world.
- it has archaeological potential.
- for its association with I K Brunel.
- for its association with a series of Bristol industries, tanning, tobacco, and grain warehousing.

The dock office is culturally significant because

- it is a rare survival of a what must have been a commonplace building type.
- of the way in which it demonstrates paperwork as well as manufacture as an essential part of the dockyard operation.
- its front to the Floating Harbour demonstrates the relationship between the dockyard and harbour.
- the pleasing way in which the oriel window expresses the function of the drawing office.
- its interesting interior contrasts between functional and fancy detail.

The Jefferies range is culturally significant because

- it is representative of the buildings required by a small-scale ship-repair outfit of its date
- it is a visual demonstration of the altered status of the dockyard in the early 20th century
- of its pleasing industrial character and textures
- it reveals the adaptability of simple buildings to different functions

The range of buildings north of the dock is culturally significant because

- it is representative of the buildings required by a small-scale ship-repair outfit of its date
- it is a visual demonstration of the altered status of the ship-yard in the 20th century
- of its pleasing industrial character and textures
- it defines an historic boundary between the dockyard and the towpath and Floating Harbour
- it reveals the adaptability of simple buildings to different functions

Timber yard buildings, excluding the factory and dock office. The timber yard buildings have cultural significance because

- their use, at the time of writing, is a reminder of the importance of the timber industry to the Floating Harbour.
- They contribute to the industrial character of the site.

Fences, walls etc, delineating existing boundaries

The south boundary wall of the timber yard is culturally significant because

- its east portion is probably part of the first purpose-built iron steamship works in the world
- the use of Pennant stone links it to the dock and factory
- for its archaeological potential
- as signifying the value of what lay inside during the active dockyard era of the site by providing security

6.3 - Tabulated levels of Significance

The grading system employed here is as follows. An upper case letter indicates an overall grade for a major element or area. These are sub-divided into smaller elements which are given lower case grades. There is not a mathematical relationship between the grading of smaller elements and larger elements or areas of which they may form a part. Post-1970 re-created elements are not usually included in the system, since they are judged to have no cultural significance relative to that of fabric from the pre-heritage life of the site and ship. This does not necessarily mean that they are intrusive. Where they are listed, it is where it is suspected that genuine confusion might arise regarding what is post 1970 and what is not, and they are not graded. Where they are intrusive and it would be desirable to remove or amend them, they are noted as 'int'.

- A* Elements of international significance
- Aa Elements of exceptional significance
- Bb Elements of considerable significance
- Cc Elements of some significance
- Dd Elements of little significance
- int Elements that are intrusive
- det Elements that have a level of cultural significance but detract from elements of greater significance.
- () Brackets are used for explanations where considered necessary.

Although tabulated and based on as full an understanding of the site as could be gleaned in the available time, it should be underlined that the degrees of significance are open to review and it is expected that they will be reviewed. Elements that are recognised as relatively poorly understood at the time of writing and await more information turning up, better interpretation and/or archaeological recording have generally been assumed to have a high degree of significance until it can be proved otherwise. This is a safety net.

The site as a whole with the ship	A*				
The ship as a whole	A*				

The Great Britain

Associational Links

The Great Britain has extensive associations, some demonstrated in physical evidence, some not.

She is associated with:

I K Brunel and via him with the Floating Harbour, Clifton Suspension Bridge and Temple Meads Station in Bristol;

the *Great Western* and *Great Eastern*, as I K Brunel's other two ships;

Thomas Guppy; William Patterson; Marc Brunel; Robert Stevenson; James Nasmyth; personal and clique networks in engineering and business;

Coalbrookdale

transatlantic passenger liners and communications;

emigration to and the development of Australia, including the impact of the gold rush;

the Crimean War;

the Indian Mutiny;

Liverpool as a maritime city;

Falkland Islands culture;

Prince Albert & Queen Victoria.

The Hull

The hull is of international significance, demonstrating size and the use of metal that made the ship a watershed in design. The wrought iron plating is wasted and repaired in places since 1970 with fibreglass and steel and the frames are also wasted and patched. A proper measured survey will enable a more refined discrimination between individual plates and frames to be made than is contained in this schedule.

The hull	A*				
plating (excepting fibreglass and steel repair)	a				
frames (excepting post 1970 repair)	a				
double bottom (although a replacement of the Phase 1 fabric, this preserves the design of longitudinal strength critical to the development of ship size)	a				
keel (added 1852)			c		
docking keels	a				
stern post	a				
stem post	a				

The transverse bulkheads

These are mostly compromised by the extent to which they have been re-created since 1970

focsls bulkhead		b			
forward boiler room bulkhead		b			
after engine room bulkhead		b			
bulkhead aft of the lifting propeller space	a				

Forward

Forward of the focsls bulkhead

The area forward of the focsls bulkhead is of especial interest for the survival of Phase 1 & Phase 3 fabric that is rare elsewhere on the ship, along with rare and significant domestic fittings. There is visual public access to the focsls, but the lower tiers are accessible only via ladders and hatches.

Forward of the focsls bulkhead	A				
The Focsls	A				
wrought iron stanchions to deck-head	a				
angle iron beams to deck-head	a				
king beam (post 1970 replacement)					
diagonal struts to deck head	a				
timber stringers to port and starboard	a				
iron plate brackets to the renewed shelf stringers	a				
bulkhead to upper deck			c		
bulkhead to WC ('heads) area		b			
hawsepipes (first phase)	a				
hawsepipes (1882)			c		
breasthook brackets and plate over		b			

The wc ('heads') area	A			
timber bow lining	a			
both timber seatings to hawse pipes with their straps and bolts		b		
timber beam in floor forward of the bulkhead (one of a series of timber transverse beams, probably Phase 1, demonstrating that the ship was both timber and iron)	a			
The Lower Focsele	A			
diagonal struts to the deck head	a			
timber stringers	a			
flat shelf stringers to port and starboard		b		
diagonal struts from flat shelf stringers to beams		b		
wc pipes		b		
angle iron beams	a			
king beam	a			
hammock hooks		b		
The Focsele Store	A			
diagonal struts to the deck head	a			
timber stringers	a			
flat shelf stringers		b		
deck planks			c	
angle iron beams	a			
king beam	a			
The Fore Peak	A			
diagonal struts to the deck head	a			
iron plate tank top		b		
angle iron beams	a			
king beam	a			
The Fore Peak Tank	A			
iron bar breasthooks	a			

Focsele Bulkhead to Forward Boiler Room Bulkhead

This section of the ship has not been restored, with the exception of the upper deck. It remains, relatively speaking, as when the ship was rescued from the Falklands apart from some archaeological losses and some new steel beams fitted for access to the hull. It is therefore far easier to read the historic fabric and structural detail than amidships or above the after saloon deck. As it stands it is a spectacular space, giving an impression, through the missing portions of the decks, of the scale of the hull in a way that cannot have been paralleled even when the ship was under construction. It is also a moving reminder of the deterioration of the ship and the wear and tear she has undergone. The space is accessible to the public from a viewing platform at the forward boiler room bulkhead at promenade deck level. There are difficulties of close access to the hull, especially at the level of the saloon deck.

Focsle bulkhead to forward boiler room bulkhead	A				
Lower cargo deck	A				
remains of iron deck	a				
remains of angle iron diagonal struts to former deck head and iron plate behind	a				
slender wrought iron stanchions standing on keelsons		b			
stanchions welded to tier above (compromised by post 1970 alterations)			c		
angle iron beams	a				
steel beams (post 1970)					
timber mast partner		b			
timber packing pieces round foremast housing			c		
Upper Cargo Deck	A				
diagonal struts (although possibly not Phase I fabric, but later replacements, this has yet to be proved and these preserve the design of the Phase I strengthening system to the decks)	a				
iron stanchions (demonstrate in their two-tier form the removal of the saloon deck for additional cargo space, 1881/82)		b			
iron web stringers to deck head	a				
cargo hatch		b			
flat shelf stringers to port and starboard		b			
steel braces to frames 143 & 141				d	
Forward Saloon deck	A				
diagonal struts (see Upper Cargo Deck)	a				
stanchions supporting deck head		b			
flat shelf stringers to port and starboard		b			
angle iron beams	a				
Butterley beams		b			
housing of foremast in deckhead		b			
Forward Promenade Deck	A				
angle iron beams	a				
diagonal struts	a				
flat shelf stringers to port and starboard		b			
box stringer		b			
tripartite bulb beams (so far as is understood, these were customised for the ship at a time when patent bulb beams were available. They demonstrate technology adjusted to the ship and probably incorporate Phase I angle iron fabric)	a				
cargo hatch		b			
forward stoke hatch		b			
viewing platform (preserves deck level)				d	

Amidships

This part of the ship is very varied in character and in the level of restoration it has undergone. The boiler room, currently inaccessible to the public, is the best space in which to grasp the transformation to a sailing ship with the introduction of stanchions and Butterley beams to make up for the loss of the boilers in an otherwise largely empty space. The engine room, containing the impressive re-created engines, visible from above, has been much altered to accommodate them. Decks flanking the engine space at saloon deck level contain on-board lavatories (port side) and a service area for functions (starboard side), the latter inaccessible to the public. The upper boiler space, now the Hayward Saloon is the least ship-like space on the *Great Britain*, re-designed without visual access to the hull and used as a conference/social room. At promenade deck level, the space forward of the engine is used as an exhibition area, with displays of objects, most of which could be displayed as well elsewhere. Visitors can look down on the engine while leaning against the rail around the engine space. Fund-raising boards obscure parts of the hull.

Amidships		B		
Lower Boiler Space		B		
iron web stringers to deck head	a			
4 Butterley bulb beams		b		
restoration phase beams over former cargo hatch				int
angle iron stringer		b		
stanchions (excepting post 1970 stanchions)		b		
trunking for modern services				int
salvage repair of crack in starboard side				int
Engine Room		B		
stanchions (compromised by mostly having been moved since 1970)			c	
Butterley bulb beams		b		
longitudinal bulkheads, post 1970 and obstruct access to the hull				
The Hayward Saloon and flanking decks (saloon deck level)			C	
diagonal struts	a			
stanchions		b		
Butterley bulb beams		b		
Butterley bulb beam with patent stamp (to date this is the only Butterley patent stamp that has been noticed)	a			
re-created footprint of funnel (post 1970)				
Promenade Deck Level amidships		B		
iron web stringers to deck head	a			
diagonal struts	a			
tripartite bulb beams	a			
box beams		b		
box stringer		b		
stanchions		b		
boards listing donors to the restoration				int
railings round engine space			d	

Aft

The tank top area (inaccessible to the public) has had little cosmetic change since 1970, but a good deal of structural alteration (e.g. 1880s stanchions moved to accommodate the planned recreation of the screw shaft and to ensure structural stability.) The shape of the space with the convex frames aft is striking. There is intrusive service trunking associated with functions on board. A number of important features survive: a casting in the stern and a massive housing under the iron floor adjacent to the after engine room bulkhead. The saloon above is wholly re-created, with no historic fabric visible. The promenade deck over has re-created cabins (obstructing access to the hull) but the deck head with angle iron beams is intact and there are pleasing views aft to the restored transom windows. Behind the false cabin partitions there is a service room on the port side and a 'back door' out onto the dock as an emergency exit and for use of staff involved with functions.

Aft	A			
Tank top from after engine room bulkhead to stern	A			
diagonal struts	a			
stanchions (compromised by having been moved since 1970) - exclude post 1970 stanchions			c	
Butterley bulb beams		b		
steel beams				d
plating to tank top	a			
3 transverse timbers (unless it can be established that they are not Phase I)	a			
timbers against hull in stern	a			
mounting under double bottom with curved frames and timber housing	a			
casting in stern (probably part of the Phase I stuffing box)	a			
service trunking				int
Saloon (leaving aside the A* structure of the hull, there is nothing pre-restoration visible in this space. However, stanchions & Phase I angle iron beams survive).	A			
Space for lifting propeller	A			
timber posts projecting through deck (until better understood).		b		
Promenade deck including ladies' boudoir	A			
flat iron plates to deckhead	a			
diagonal struts	a			
angle iron beams	a			
transomed windows to stern	a			
carlings and coaming of 1882 hatch		b		
curved trimmer for round skylight	a			

The Upper Deck

The upper deck is largely a re-creation but is a critical part of the character and, in the re-created rigging, the external form & aesthetics of the ship. The open space allows visitors to move about freely and there are prized views of the surrounding site, the harbour and Bristol. This is probably

the space where visitors can feel most 'on-board'. While the form of re-created elements is faithful to research, the lifeboats and joinery are let down by bland textures.

Upper deck			C		
bulwarks (compromised by extensive restoration)		b			
windlass		b			
bilge pumps			c		
forward cargo hatch	a				
capstans	a				

Items removed from the ship and stored on the dockside, in the dock or under cover in the yard. The following grades apply until they have been individually assessed. The significance of some larger items, below, is partly understood					
built lower masts (dates still uncertain)	a				
Trotman Patent anchor	a				
1857 rudder & lifting screw frame	a				
WC bowls from 'heads'		b			
bilge pumps (until date is established)			c		
plating removed during restoration		b			
iron tiller		b			

Land-Based Buildings

The Dock

Associational Links

The dock is associated with:

the *Great Britain*;

the *Great Western*;

I K Brunel;

William Patterson;

the *Demerara*;

gun and mortar boats built for the Crimean war;

numerous ships built in her (research here still needs to be done);

the Floating Harbour and the Corporation's involvement with it;

Charles Hill and the Albion dock;

Prince Albert;

World Wars I & II;

The Dock	A				
masonry of the cradle-shaped profile	a				
slots in wall at W end including timber stubs in one of the slots	a				
masonry & flat flooring associated with kink (until it is understood better)		b			
concrete cladding and concrete alterations to masonry walling				d	
timbers to dock floor	a				
caisson of 1928			c		
pump house				d	
timber steps set in east end			c		
culvert			c		
platform				d	
dock furniture (critical to an understanding of the dock as a place of work)			C		
berthing blocks			c		
bollards (until the sequence has been established)			c		
timber posts (probably Phase I cut-down scaffolding)	a				
railings round dock				d	
mooring rings			c		
Scotch derrick on south side of dock			c		
pair of small derricks on north side of dock			c		
fittings for swing bridge			c		

The Factory

Associational Links

The factory is associated with:

I K Brunel & is the place where he and the other members of the building committee of the *Great Britain* researched technologies that were included in her design;

Nasmyth;

the French navy via Dupuy de Lôme;
civilian and naval iron steamship works;
local Bristol industries, e.g. tanning; tobacco, grain storage, timber;
the Great Western Railway;
the Harbour Railway;
the Floating Harbour;
Prince Albert;
World War II in Bristol.

The Factory	A				
exterior masonry walling	a				
interior crosswall	a				
breeze block patching (the breeze blocks are intrusive as a material, the archaeological evidence may be for a former opening, which is significant)					int
blocking of front doors			c		
bullnose brick detail			c		
tannery floor (While this has some significance as part of the tannery phase history, it detracts from the value of what it may be concealing)			c		det
Lower floor level in factory (at N end)	a				
Belfast roof trusses				d	
Roof covering				d	

The Dock Office

Associational Links

The dock office is associated with:

the Floating Harbour;

The GWSSC?;

William Patterson;

dock offices as a building type;

other surviving 19th century offices in general.

The dock office		B			
W block			c		
E block		b			
S side lean-to to east block			c		
sash windows		b			
high transomed windows			c		
roof covering		b			
chimneys		b			
flag poles				d	
drawing office, including all joinery, chimney-piece and oriel window	a				
E block joinery excepting drawing office		b			
E block c1905 chimneypieces			c		
E block c.1905 screen/parquet flooring			c		

The Jefferies Range

Associational Links

The Jefferies range is associated with:
small-scale ship repair.

Jefferies Range			C		
brick office including front lean-to			c		
former fitting shop east of office			c		
modern panelled door with Gothick detail to former fitting shop					int
fuel tanks against former fitting shop				d	
brick platform (excluding replica lifeboat) against former fitting shop				d	
smith's shop			c		
Bristol Blue Glass workshop			c		
shed at east end of range				d	
lavatory at west end of range					int

Range of Buildings North of the Dock

Range of buildings north of the dock			C/D		
the entrance-cum-shop				d	
post 1970 canopy on north side					int
the cafeteria (this has particular formal merit)			c		
flower bed and planting west of cafeteria					int

Timber Yard Buildings

The following schedule covers buildings above ground. There is potential for below-ground archaeology in the timber yard, especially below sheds 4 & 5.

Timber yard buildings				D	
timber sheds against south boundary wall of timber yard				d	
5 timber stores (formal merits of staggered layout)				d	
incinerator and associated brick structures off store no 2 (counting from W to E)				d	
boundary and gateway W of store no 1					int
portacabin					int
n.b. section of walling projecting off boundary wall dealt with under boundaries					

Small structures on site

Bristol Dock Company boundary posts			c		
bollard on the west side of the former factory (until better-understood)		b			
iron latrine			c		
garages					int
viewing pulpit					int

Boundaries

2-phase (at least) masonry boundary on south boundary of timber yard, including walling containing arch, projecting off boundary wall at right angles (former shipyard boundary and possible remains of a GWSSC building or structure)	a				
brick walling containing two unglazed windows on east boundary of timber yard with Gas Ferry Road				d	
fabric of timber yard boundary to Gas Ferry Road; former towpath and along south side of dock W of the caisson				d	
fabric of iron netting boundary to the Albion Yard on south side of dock, W of caisson					int
S boundary of existing ss Great Britain Project site. (The recycled railings supporting the fencing are of some interest & the boundary is associated with items of significance, e.g. lights and iron latrine. The boundary detracts from an appreciation of the dockyard site as a whole)				d	det/ int
existing east boundary of dock consisting of brick wall round the nose. (While this has some architectural and practical significance while the dock and former shipyard buildings in the timber yard are in divided occupation it is a major intrusion between the original surviving elements of the GWSSC period.)				d	det
post 1970 timber and netting boundaries on north side of the dock and round the south side, W of the caisson. While these have safety functions, they are visually inappropriate (too flimsy) for an industrial site				d	

Structures against existing south boundary of the ss Great Britain Project site

concrete platform					int
portacabin					int
gas main shed					del
enclosure for gas bottles					del

Lighting

lamp post with lamp box formerly lighting towpath on south side of dock			c		
lamp post on boundary with the timber yard, W of caisson				d	
pair of lamp posts against south boundary of ss Great Britain Project (these are incomplete)				d	

Post 1970s troughs of flowers/rubbish bins/seats

troughs of flowers					int
existing design of rubbish bins					int
'garden' design of seats					int

7 - Defining Issues

The defining issues in this section draw on the general guidelines recommended in the Heritage Lottery Fund's *Conservation Plans for Historic Places* (March 1998). As recommended, the vulnerability of significance is the main focus. Other, more positive defining issues have also been included and all the issues have been grouped under headings appropriate to this Conservation Plan for the *ss Great Britain* and her dockyard site.

7.1 General Issues

- **International Significance**

This is a place of international interest and importance for the surviving elements of the GWSSC dockyard of 1839-1852 in conjunction with the preserved ship. Given the presence of the *Great Britain* too, this is an intense site, immensely rich in significance for the productions of one short period. The remains of the Great Western Dockyard deserve to be treated with the utmost care.

7.2 - The Site and Buildings

- **An Evolved Site**

The later overlays on the site, the Jefferies range and the range on the north side of the dockyard are pleasingly ordinary and representative of the 20th century maritime activity in Bristol's city docks.

- **Industrial Character**

The surviving fabric of the ship-yard site is industrial in character. It preserves industrial textures and industrial forms. It is not pretty. Historic photographs show that in use as a dockyard it was also untidy, the dockside cluttered with timber. It has never been maintained to a level that would be expected from a domestic or religious site and some textures of its fabric are those of 'maintenance only when necessary'. It has been subject to the kind of shifting sand of alteration, amendment and adaptation that characterise industrial structures as technologies and economies, large and small, change. It has always had real labourers on it. This is a character that is particularly difficult to sustain in a heritage context.

- **Present Use & Community Value**

The Project currently occupies the area within the c.1903 boundary of the dock. The site contains an entrance-cum-shop; a cafeteria, the Project offices, repair shops and storage space. It also includes the Bristol Blue Glass works. Although this has nothing to do with ship-building it is a hot trade on site, within a long tradition of hot trades here, and is enjoyed by visitors who can see the works in action. The hire of parts of the ship for functions means that the site is used for parties coming and going from weddings and social occasions. These community uses are valued and make the site 'belong' to the local business community and Bristolians in general.

The present use of the site & ship includes a broadly-defined 'museum use' including visits from school parties and the disabled. At present, public access is limited to the site leased by the Project - the dockside, the bottom of the dock and the ship. There is visual access to the front of the Jefferies range, used as Project offices and repair shops and internal access to the east building in the range, where visitors can see Bristol Blue glass being made.

The factory and dock office, at the time of writing, are in timber yard occupation and there is visual access only to the east wall of the factory from Gas Ferry Road, but no indication of what the building is and it is probably 100% unrecognised for what it is. The dock office north & south elevations are visible to visitors. The project is in the process of acquiring a lease on the dock office and timber yard, currently in use as an office and timber yard, and has purchased the factory.

• External Constraints (See Appendix 1)

Statutory Constraints

The dock office and dock are both listed Grade II*, the high grades reflecting association with the *Great Britain*. This means that any proposed alterations that would affect their character or fabric require Listed Building Consent. The question of how much else of the site might be considered to be listed as part of the curtilage of these structures is a legal grey area. Wapping Wharf, including quays and bollards, is listed Grade II and Listed Building Consent would also be required for any proposed alterations that might affect the fabric or character of the wharf, quays or bollards. The local planning authority identifies the range north of the dock as 'western dry dock workshops' and one of the harbourside buildings considered 'worthy of retention where practicable' ('Bristol Harbourside Regeneration: Planning Brief Implementation Phase', approved 8 July 1998)

The whole site falls into the Bristol City Docks Conservation Area. Any building or structure, whether listed or not, proposed for demolition within the Conservation Area would require Conservation Area Consent.

Non Statutory Constraints

The description of the area in the Conservation Area Enhancement Statement for City Docks (Bristol City Council, Planning, Transport and Development Services, November 1993) includes a number of statements directly relevant to the site and to any proposed development. The general enhancement objectives include:

- improvement of pedestrian safety and access
- the conservation of the principal historic buildings characterising the historic docks area
- the need for proposals for improvement or redevelopment to include the retention and preservation of the traditional quay walls, quays themselves, original dock furniture and industrial machinery adjacent to the area.
- the need for new development to be referenced to historic context; to enhance & retain existing views and to be in keeping with forms and materials utilised in the traditional dockside areas.

'Bristol Harbourside Regeneration: Planning Brief Implementation Phase' (approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance to Bristol Local Plan, 8 July 1998) is a current key framework document to which the Project should refer regarding any proposed changes on site. It identifies the land use framework, the movements and access framework and principal public spaces and protected views in the harbourside area.

• The Context of the Floating Harbour

If history has de-activated the Floating Harbour as a working, rather than leisure place, it is still a defining element of the site. The site is an offshoot of the harbour and connected to it on numerous physical and historical levels. Along with the neighbouring Albion Yard, the Great Western Dockyard is the last surviving enclave of the City Docks.

There is ferry access with a landing stage to the site from the floating harbour but at limited times and restricted seasonally. The ferry appears to be under-used. Bristol City Council have pledged to establish cross-harbour ferry services (Bristol Harbourside Regeneration, 8 July 1998, 6.7). A major new pedestrian link, the 'Millennium Mile' is proposed by the Council between Brunel's Temple Meads Station and the ss *Great Britain* (Bristol City Centre Strategy, revised January 1998, Section 1, 11).

At present it is possible to walk from the Industrial Museum (or take an energy-efficient public bus on rails, or from time to time, a steam train) to the site without having to cross a road, making the Floating Harbour accessible as an area to be enjoyed.. It is also the Council's objective to create a waterside walkway through Harbourside (Bristol Harbourside Regeneration, 8 July 1998, 6.8). The existing walkway is obstructed by the present arrangements on site which close off the part of the route which remains to be opened up from Gas Ferry Road to Mardyk. The loss of the swingbridge (probably during World War II) must have contributed to the loss of access via the old towpath. The obstruction to the waterside walkway limits a Bristol amenity and effectively ring-fences the ship from the wider Bristol community

The Council expects new development to redefine and enhance the walkway along the water frontage with appropriate surfaces, furniture and lighting, in a way which encourages the movement of pedestrians (*ibid.*)

• Immediate Neighbours

The area of Harbourside round the former dockyard site is in a state of metamorphosis at the time of writing. Opposite the site, on the north side of the Floating Harbour, the former gasworks will be redeveloped, probably for residential use. Further east is the site of Bristol 2000. On the south side of the Floating Harbour, a new residential development to the east, just behind the old boundaries of the east portion of the site is under construction. Immediately south of the dockyard site and abutting its boundary is the former malthouse and brewery erected in 1895 and now in a poor state of repair. The brewery complex was erected on a wedge-shaped piece of land between the Albion and Great Western dockyards. Various small-scale activities including architectural salvage take place in parts of the building and in sheds and a derelict house to rear. At present these are all very much part of the working texture of the place. It is likely that the site will be redeveloped in the near future.

The Albion dockyard, the neighbour on the west, was established in 1820 and has had strong links with the Great Western Dockyard since 1839. The Albion is still a working dockyard. The importance of a working maritime outfit next door cannot be over-estimated. The two sites together represent Bristol's maritime history and the continuity of that history in different forms. As neighbours it should be possible to bolster one another from residential encroachment into what was once a buzzing industrial area.

• Fragmentation

Fragmentation has been part of the dockyard's history. In 1970, when the ship returned to dock, the east portion of the site (about one third) had been in separate ownership for nearly a century, compulsorily purchased for the development of the harbour railway. This part of the site is significant, used as the GWSSC timber yard. However, it was never the heart of the GWSSC operation, and never densely developed with buildings. Most of it is still open space, apart from a cafeteria and the Maritime Heritage Centre. Although the Project has no lease on the east portion, it will have the management of the Maritime Heritage Centre and a *locus* on a part of the site which is expected to remain mostly as open space. Since 1997 the Project has acquired leasehold or ownership of the west two thirds of the site and is in a position to fully reunite the factory remains

with the dock (for the first time since 1855), and enough of an interest and sufficient space to reveal the significance of the former GWSSC dockyard site as a whole, subject to adequate funding.

- **Resources**

The *ss Great Britain* is an independent registered museum with no statutory funding but income from about 100,000 visitors p.a. About 4,000,000 visitors have seen the *Great Britain* in the last 28 years, many making return visits to see the progress of the restoration work. Additional income has been found from active fund-raising and trading. Capital investment is now needed to fulfil the mission statement and objectives within the long-term development plan:

Mission Statement

To preserve the ship, the ss Great Britain, and her building dock for all time for the public benefit of all, and to place the same upon public display as a museum for the enhancement of public understanding and appreciation for her social, commercial, scientific and technological context and significance

The preservation of the ship is a unique challenge and expensive conservation work is urgently required to arrest decay. The Project's enterprise needs to be put on a footing where increased visitor income will generate funds sufficient to maintain a long-term programme of conservation extending beyond a successful HLF bid.

- **Alterations to the site already undertaken for the *ss Great Britain* Project**

To date the resources of the project have been directed towards the re-creation of the ship in her first phase, rather than to the site. The conversion of the buildings on the north perimeter of the dock to a cafeteria and entrance -cum-shop have been sensitive to their industrial character and little has been done to the site to damage its character. Intrusive elements that have arrived since 1970 can be removed or replaced with more appropriate designs.

- **The site is potentially vulnerable to the loss of its industrial character in the shape of**
- Loss of the textures and forms of small-scale change which might disappear in a Grand Plan.
- Loss of industrial activity and people seen to be working manually.
- Prettification, e.g. flower beds.
- Loss of industrial context outside the boundaries of the site. This affects the visual appreciation of the industrial character of the site, as well as the options for maintaining it - e.g. it is likely to limit noise/delivery of goods on site. The survival of the Albion dockyard as a working dockyard, along with the marina beyond it, is an important prop to maintaining industrial character and active waterside character, as is the railway to the Industrial Museum, and the Industrial Museum itself along with its wharfside cranes.
- Loss of its enclosed character. This has already been eroded in a number of ways. The disappearance of the south boundary of the east portion of the site makes it difficult to read the whole extent of the GWSSC dockyard. On the west portion of the site, the boundary fencing to the towpath has become, bit by bit, less substantial. The reduction of the tall factory to low walls, following World War II bomb damage, has reduced the dominance and protection it gave to the west portion of the site. Improved visitor access might further erode the historic character of enclosure to the west portion of the site.

- **The site is potentially vulnerable as a result of access issues**

Available car-parking space for private vehicles is very nearly inadequate for the present visitor numbers and likely to be more inadequate as visitor numbers rise. There is adequate provision for coaches. Access is commonly by road. The Floating Harbour as an access route, either along or

across, is not much used. The need to accommodate more cars close by could occupy parts of the site that would be much better served for interpretation, display or industry.

- **The site is potentially vulnerable through inadequate statutory protection.**

While the dock and dock office are graded II*, partly for association with the ship & with I K Brunel (which may or may not be the case for the dock office), there is no formal protection, apart from Conservation Area legislation & curtilage protection (a legal grey area) on the ship, factory or the south boundary wall. Until the factory and south boundary wall are formally in the same occupancy, it is unlikely that the curtilage argument would stick in a court of law. In effect, this means that either the factory or south boundary wall could be legally altered (demolition would require Conservation Area consent). More important, it excludes the future of these structures from the public and professional debates that they deserve when change is proposed, which would be generated by the process of applying for listed building consent.

- **The site is vulnerable as a result of inadequate understanding**

This is a fabulously well-documented site from 1800, especially for an evolved industrial place. This does not mean that are not gaps in the record, or gaps in understanding. To date understanding is relatively poor for the:

The south perimeter of the site and the history of GWSSC buildings along it, particularly the section of masonry and brick walling containing an arch, projecting off the S boundary wall.

The GWSSC factory - interior of the N/S range and the external form of the W/E range. The latter is likely to be complex because of the mast-erecting shop, considered to be later.

- **Vulnerability arising from physical condition**

The condition of the dock is intimately connected with the condition of the ship and especial vigilance is required to avoid any failure. The dock was constructed in 'elastic spongy ground'. The habit of dock walls to 'walk in' is well-known. Although it is suspected that neither the construction of the south side kink between 1855 and 1872, nor the west end extension of the dock in c.1903 was the result of structural failures, it is possible, and there is evidence of some slumping on the south side of the dock. The condition of the dock is assessed in the report by Eura Conservation (see vol 2) relating to risks to the ship. Of the other buildings on site the dock office is probably the most fragile, with a leaking roof. This is neglect that can be put right.

- **Vulnerability arising from problems of interpreting and presenting the factory**

Having identified the exceptional significance of the factory remains in this conservation plan, including its archaeological potential, the question arises of how it should be presented when occupied by the Project. The factory is a ruin that has been re-used and its re-use as a timber store has resolved the problem of what to with it up until now. Its roof construction is considered unsafe (SSGB, Whicheloe and Macfarlane's 'Report on a preliminary inspection of existing buildings on the Wickham and Norris timber yard adjacent to the ss *Great Britain* site in Bristol carried out on the 2 September 1998', 4500/S). The surviving walling deserves careful treatment and the need to avoid damage to below-ground archaeology must be a defining factor in any proposals for re-use.

7.3 - The Ship

- **International Significance**

The ship is of international significance in her own right. This is intrinsic and would be the case wherever she was. It is intensified by her location in her own birthplace.

- **The major conservation issue for the Project is the long-term conservation of the ship.**

This is not just a question of her fabric, but also her character and context. The ship is the most important element on site.

- **The iron fabric of the ship is suffering from erosion and corrosion**

Corrosion and erosion of the ironwork is not just a cosmetic but a structural problem. The *Great Britain* is probably the largest and most important wrought iron monument in the world. The nature of the problem is at the cutting edge of the Burra Charter definition of 'preservation' - 'maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration'. Until or unless new techniques for the preservation of deteriorated wrought iron emerge, her iron fabric cannot be maintained in its existing state. Every effort to retard deterioration should be made.

- **The conservation of the ship's timber is at risk from decay**

The conservation of the structural and other timberwork in the ship is at risk from decay and may have requirements that are in conflict with the conservation of the ironwork.

- **Past Use**

The ship was designed for sea voyages and everything about her was to that end.

- **Present Use**

Her first phase use cannot be reinstated in her present condition. She is too fragile, as shown in the 1997 'Report on the Hull, State and Status of the ss *Great Britain* Ship' by Eur. Ing. L.F. Porter, C.Eng., F.I. Mar.E (SSGB, 29 December 1997) and has no motive power. Her present use is the result of her history since 1886/87 and her condition. She is now both a museum (fully registered in April 1998), a museum object and a 'preserved ship' somewhat in the manner of a preserved building in an open air museum, but with a uniquely significant relationship to her site. She is also used for seminars and hired out for functions.

Her present museum use with the public access it provides, is compatible with her international significance. To be fit for her present museum use she needs to be accessible and presented to the public. The conservation philosophy for the *Great Britain* should be tailored to her present, not her past use.

Her use for corporate hospitality, weddings, seminars etc has impacted on the historic fabric in the provision of services, lavatories, kitchens and the like, with intrusive service trunking, outlets and holes cut in her side. There are safety implications to the services involved, e.g. risk of explosion or fire from gas. This use also excludes day-to-day visitors from some areas, e.g. in order to protect the carpet and decor in the saloon. However, the chance to hire the ship for private functions is a community benefit and, perhaps better than any other use, has made the ship the possession of a broad spectrum of people in Bristol, both in their commercial and private lives. This has conservation benefits that cannot be measured. If this benefit ceases on board, it should be mitigated by other community benefits on site to maintain the 'ownership' of the ship by the people of Bristol.

If it remains on board the operation needs thorough review to reduce intrusive elements and any risk to the fabric of the ship.

- **Long-term Future Use**

The importance of conserving the international significance of the ship's fabric places a heavy responsibility on her caretakers. They have to work within the context of what is now possible, given the current condition of the ironwork, the current understanding of the ship, available funds and the heritage culture of which they are a part. Nevertheless, what must be done now will influence the options that future caretakers inherit and those options should be left as open as possible.

Historically and visually the ship is part of a place and derives some of her significance from her relationship to the open air, linked to the factory, dock and floating harbour which are the original context of her construction and, in her relationship to the water in the Floating Harbour, to the medium for which she was designed.

There may be long-term conflicts between the need to preserve the ironwork of the ship and her significance as derived from her relationship with her present context. The priority in any such conflict must be the preservation of the ship. Her long-term future might require a cradle for her support, for example, or a structure to protect her from the weather. The design of any supporting or covering structure would need to pay the closest attention to minimising the impact on the significance of the ship's relationship with her context.

- **Present Location**

In theory, the ship could be moved to another site (although probably not on her own bottom and not necessarily by water), or into a building on this site, if this were the only solution to preservation. In practice an operation to move the ship would be a major risk to her fabric. Her present location in her dock is wholly appropriate and enhances her significance, which would be reduced if she were moved.

The existing site boundary on the south side limits visual access to the ship, with limited visibility of the structure as a whole and her relationship to her whole historic site.

- **Human intervention since 1970 has caused loss of iron & timber fabric & loss of understanding.**

Human intervention prevented the *Great Britain* from rusting to bits in the sea off the Falklands. Subsequent human intervention has resulted in loss of fabric.

The ship was rescued in 1970, nearly ten years before the Burra Charter was framed and before systematic recording and analysis had been extensively applied, even to standing buildings. The ambition of the rescue project and the degree of difficulty encountered and heroically overcome, should not be underestimated. When the ship was returned a philosophy of recording works to the ship and the careful storage of elements that were removed and identified as important, was established. However, systematic archaeological recording of every detail to 1999 standards was not possible in the context of the first phase of restoration. As the project has developed and the operation grown more complex, the significance of the historic fabric of the ship has had to compete with other issues. Work has been undertaken by enthusiasts and volunteers as well as professionals. The programme of post 1970 intervention in the historic fabric is acknowledged to have resulted in losses that were unmitigated by detailed systematic recording.

Some losses are easily identifiable, e.g. the removal of the 1857 rudder and lifting frame and associated alterations to the stern plating and shape to make way for a re-creation of the original rudder and the removal of probable 1882 stanchions to make way for the re-created original engines. Other works, e.g. moving stanchions about to ensure a firm footing for them, or the introduction of two steel decks, were undertaken for structural reasons or to give safe access to visitors. Patching up frail ironwork and holes in the hull with fibreglass or steel replacement has obscured assessment of the condition of the ironwork (see volume 3 of this plan). Although contracts exist for the major works, they are not always accompanied by useful drawings. This has blurred archaeological understanding. The installation of re-created fittings has also made some parts of the fabric inaccessible for inspection and maintenance, e.g. the framing of the hull alongside the engines and behind the re-created cabins aft.

The appointment of a professional curator in 1997 was an important step forward in the process of reconsidering the whole approach to the conservation of the ship. It was recognised that to continue restoration work on the existing scale and according to a philosophy founded in 1970 would jeopardise the authenticity of the Great Britain and the survival of her cultural significance. All intervention in her fabric has been halted pending the outcome of the Conservation Plan.. A new philosophy of minimum intervention in the historic fabric of all her phases is recognised as essential, along with a broader range of conservation advice.

- **Lack of Statutory Protection**

The ship has no formal statutory protection of her own, although, ironically, the dock and dock office are both graded II* for association with her. It could be argued that the ship is listed Grade II* as curtilage to the dock and dock office, but this is a legal grey area. The absence of clear, formal protection can be partly explained by the legalistic definition of what constitutes 'land' and only 'land' can be listed, but has as much to do with the isolation of historic ships from building conservation, its philosophies and systems. Absence of statutory protection has circumscribed the debate about the treatment of her fabric, which would otherwise have been discussed more widely in the context of applications for consent.

- The iron fabric of the ship is inadequately protected from the floating harbour by the caisson as a single line of defence
- Some of the best-preserved parts of the ship are inaccessible to visitors

8 - Conservation Policies

8.1 Guiding Principles and Definitions

- Understand the site and ship
- Understand the fabric
- Significance should guide decisions
- Do as much as necessary, as little as possible
- Keep thorough records
- Do everything in a logical order

The purpose of the conservation policies set out in this section is to provide a guide to the development and care of the ship and GWSSC Dockyard in a way which retains its significance. Such policies are framed to:

- retain the character and quality of the ship, buildings and immediate setting;
- permit adaptations and new works which are compatible with the above and which will make the place more effective in its principal intended use as a museum
- identify elements which adversely affect the ship and buildings and which are in need of modification or removal;
- provide an approach to the replacement of deteriorated fabric;
- draw attention to the need for co-ordination and continuity of conservation or curatorial decisions.

The following definitions have been used.

Fabric means all the physical material of the site and ship.

Conservation means all the processes of looking after the site & ship so as to retain cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may, according to circumstance include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these.

Maintenance means the continuous protective care of the fabric, contents and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction and it should be treated accordingly.

Preservation means maintaining fabric in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

Restoration means returning EXISTING fabric to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

Reconstruction means returning the site and ship as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric.

This is not to be confused with either re-creation or conjectural reconstruction.

Adaptation means modification to suit proposed compatible uses.

Compatible use means a use which involves no change to the culturally significant fabric, changes which are substantially reversible, or changes which require a minimal impact.

8.2 Conservation Policies.

The following policies have developed out of the previous sections of the conservation plan. Where the vulnerability of significance has been identified in the section on defining issues above, policies have been developed to answer those vulnerabilities. Policies have also been framed to retain and reveal cultural significance as defined in this conservation plan.

The policies are set out in italics and arranged in clusters. Minimising the vulnerability of significance extends through all the clusters of policies.

1 - Vision

Policy 1.1

The future development of the site should include general planning and development parameters to achieve, firstly, the conservation of the ship, secondly, the retention or enhancement of the industrial character of the site, and thirdly the enhancement of the visitor interpretation and education facilities.

2 - Adoption of the Conservation Plan

Policy 2.1

The future Conservation and development of the site should be undertaken in accordance with the guiding principles above.

Policy 2.2

The statements of cultural significance and the assessments of individual elements in this document should be accepted as one of the bases of future planning and works.

Policy 2.3

The policies recommended and options discussed throughout this document should be endorsed as a guide to future planning and works.

The Conservation Plan may need to be modified by new understanding.

Policy 2.4

Future works on the dockyard or the ship will be undertaken according to the statutory controls that exist at the time.

3 - Broad Aims

Policy 3.1

The fabric of the ship and GWSSC phase of the buildings should be treated in the light of international significance. The long-term impacts of any intervention should be thought through in the light of the responsibility to leave long-term options open for future caretakers.

Policy 3.2

Strategies to protect the ironwork of the ship should be the first priority. If the strategy of a protective structure over the ship is the best way of accomplishing this, it should be pursued, although it will affect the significance of her relationship to her context.

Policy 3.3

In spite of the importance of the 1839-1852 phase it would be undesirable to attempt to return the ship or the whole site to the GWSSC period. Later periods have good levels of significance and should be respected.

- Article 16 of the Burra Charter

The contributions of all periods to the place must be respected. If a place includes the fabric of different periods, revealing the fabric of one period at the expense of another can only be justified when what is removed is of slight cultural significance and the fabric which is to be revealed is of much greater cultural significance.

4 - Condition of the Ship

Policy 4.1

To seek the best understanding of the ironwork of the ship by technical analysis and monitoring its condition.

Policy 4.2

The ship should become the focus of expert debate about the conservation of wrought iron.

With facilities for conferences and seminars the ship is an appropriate site for this and should benefit from raising the level of debate about the conservation of wrought iron.

Policy 4.3

Remedial treatment to the historic ironwork is always to be preferred over any replacement.

Policy 4.4

Any remedial treatment to the iron fabric should be well-understood and fully-tested before widespread use.

Policy 4.5

Consideration must be given to the impact of any remedial treatment to the iron fabric on the ship's historic timbers.

Policy 4.6

To provide a second line of defence additional to the caisson to protect the ship should the caisson fail.

Policy 4.7

Consideration should be given to minimising the impact on the fabric, and the risk to it, from using the ship for hire.

This might require re-locating this function partly or wholly off-board, or making alterations to the way in which it is undertaken on-board.

Policy 4.8

To commission a detailed measured and analytical survey of the ship.

This would:

- clarify the fabric sequences on the ship and therefore priorities for conservation, maintenance, preservation, restoration and reconstruction, as defined in the Burra Charter
- function to identify precisely where future work is undertaken and record that work

- form a part of the interpretation of the structure to the public
- mitigate anticipated loss resulting from corrosion and erosion.
- contribute to the full documentation of the collection

Policy 4.9

Consideration should be given to developing indicators and monitoring systems in order to establish environmental thresholds relevant to this site, e.g. the effects on the ship of wear and tear from visitors; monitoring the impact of visitors on site and the transport systems employed in getting to and from the site.

e.g. to identify a precautionary threshold for visitor numbers at any one time for both ship & site; to analyse the nature of any functions taking place on board to ensure that they will not lead to physical damage; to take an active role in encouraging levels and types of access that are sustainable both on site and in the context of Bristol.

The Philosophy towards Significant Fabric

5 - Retention & Recording

Policy 5.1

The conservation of the historic fabric of the ship is the priority for the ss 'Great Britain' Project.

Policy 5.2

Any proposal to remove original or significant fabric from the site or the ship should be checked in advance by the curator and appropriate heritage professionals to ensure that there is no appropriate alternative.

Policy 5.3

Any alterations to significant fabric should include an appropriate archaeological recording element, prior to any detailed plans. The results of recording and analysis should guide decisions on any change or development. Any service trenches or works below ground should automatically be accompanied by an archaeological watching brief.

Policy 5.4

When significant fabric is removed from the ship or the site, it should first be recorded in situ with its location and the items catalogued and stored safely against possible future replacement or relocation in a space of appropriate character.

This applies to items large and small, including, say, loose stanchions, timber and iron plates lying about the ship, dock furniture, door and window furniture as well as doors, tiles etc.

Policy 5.5

Copies of all reports and drawings arising from recording and analytical work commissioned should be dated and archived in the Project Archives to be easily retrievable with copies deposited with Bristol City Council

6 - Maintenance

Policy 6.1

Supervision of maintenance work on ship and site should be consistent and individuals undertaking maintenance work should be competent to undertake the work.

Policy 6.2

The maintenance programme on the ship e.g. painting the ironwork, should be subject to appropriate conservation advice at all times.

Policy 6.3

Appropriate conservation methods & surface treatments should be sought from the curator and appropriate professionals and should be employed in maintaining significant fabric in the buildings and in the ship.

Policy 6.4

Maintenance of the buildings should be based on an 'as found' or an appropriate substitute basis as regards significant fabric.

Policy 6.5

Maintenance of the buildings should take account of the patchy industrial character of any clad buildings on site and avoid total re-cladding at any one time.

Policy 6.6

The ship should be kept clear of litter and rubbish. Maintenance tools, machinery and treatments, e.g. paints etc. should be stored off the ship.

Policy 6.7

*The location of all elements that are no longer *in situ* but are lying about in the ship, e.g. wrought iron stanchions, loose plates, timber wedges and timber planks, including those used for scaffolding walks, should be recorded and their locations *in situ* investigated via oral history. If they cannot be reinstated they should be catalogued and stored safely against future replacement in a space of appropriate character or for future display.*

7 - Revelation of Significance & minimising its vulnerability

Policy 7.1

All existing and proposed conservation and re-creation projects on the ship should be reconsidered in the light of this conservation plan with especial reference to Vol 2

This is particularly relevant to the proposal to make the parts of the re-created engine move. This should be put on hold until there is no shadow of a doubt that it will not jeopardise the historic fabric of the ship.

Policy 7.2

At present the site is part museum and part industrial. Its industrial character should be retained by maintaining and extending elements of compatible industrial activity where possible.

Policy 7.3

The significance of the GWSSC phase should be revealed by retrieving the physical links between the ship, factory and dock.

Policy 7.4

The circulation of visitors round the site should make use of known historic entrances and routes and avoid the creation of new entrances.

Policy 7.5

Any redevelopment should respect a balance between open spaces and buildings that has characterised the site since 1839.

Policy 7.6

The visual relationship between the ship, factory, dock, floating harbour and dock office should be maintained & enhanced. This might conflict with policy 1.1 if the ironwork of the ship requires the protection of a structure over, partially over or under the ship.

Policy 7.7

Any redevelopment of the site of the former W/E range of the factory, as shown on maps, should either be designed not to disturb below-ground archaeology or should be guided by the results of archaeological investigation, commissioned in advance of plans and using appropriate archaeological professionals.

Policy 7.8

Any proposal to add fabric to the ship should be checked to ensure that it does not involve the removal, damage, potential damage (e.g. by preventing ventilation) or permanent concealment of any historic fabric. If it does conceal historic fabric it should be designed to be easily removable.

Policy 7.9

Any fabric added to the ship whether for presentation purposes or for structural reasons should be distinguishable from original fabric in some way.

Policy 7.10

The design of any re-created features should be attentive to the historic textures of the ship & buildings and use appropriate surface treatments.

Policy 7.11

Interpretation should build on themes relevant to all the phase of the ship & site and develop the history of ordinary people associated with them. Plans for interpretation should complement the redevelopment of the Bristol Industrial Museum as the Museum of Bristol. Close contact should be maintained with the Museum.
e.g. (just a selection)

- Watersheds in technology & the people behind them
- Conditions of labourers and mechanics in the 1840s
- Technologies of the 1840s employed in the ship's construction, e.g. not only some of the machinery known to have been used, but explanations of hoisting and moving heavy weights; forging etc.
- Dock construction
- How a caisson works
- Transatlantic communications through the ages
- The processes of the ship's construction and refits

- Domestic Life on board at different periods for crew & passengers, food, entertainment, bodily functions etc.
- The Floating Harbour
- I K Brunel's three ships
- The Australia run phase/the social history of emigration
- The sailing ship phase (extensive fabric survives in the boiler room)
- Bristol ship-building & ship builders
- Bristol industries associated with the site e.g. shot manufacture; tanning; tobacco, warehousing

Policy 7.12

The site should be employed to house, display and interpret, in appropriate conditions, the elements of the ship that are no longer in situ, cannot sensibly be returned to the ship, and are vulnerable to the elements, e. g. the rudder, the masts, and the iron fabric currently in store under tarpaulins rear of the Jefferies range.

Policy 7.13

Interpretation should include the conservation challenge of the ship's ironwork. If consistent with health and safety requirements, any physical works to the ship's fabric should be visible to visitors and long-term conservation works on site should be revealed in workshops to which visitors have visual access.

Policy 7.14

Display and information boards in the interior of the ship should be kept to a minimum in order to avoid distraction from the ship herself.

Policy 7.15

Consideration should be given to the removal or substitution (subject to statutory approval where required) of elements identified in the Conservation Plan as intrusive. Where intrusive elements fulfil a practical function their removal may have to wait for an appropriate alternative to be found.

8 - Access and Visitors' Comfort

Policy 8.1

The project should play an active part in Bristol City Council's policies for access to harbourside as set out in 'Bristol Harbourside Regeneration: Planning Brief, Implementation Phase' (8 July 1998).

Existing access by public transport should be encouraged by advertising, e.g. at Temple Meads Station; with leaflets encouraging the use of the loop bus, the dockside railway, Park and Ride schemes and tram services along the dockside. Consideration should be given to providing a secure cycle park for visitors. The Project should actively encourage use of the Floating Harbour as an access route within the City, and raise with the City Council the desirability of a cross-harbour link directly to the site.

Policy 8.2

Equal access for all to all parts of the site and ship where possible should be a goal.

Options:

- Traditional gangway access (with ramping) to the ship at deck level.
- internal walkway round the hull forward at different levels, with visual access through the focsle bulkhead to the spaces forward of the bulkhead.
- lift access via the space occupied by the former funnel.
- visual access, at least, to the re-created engines at their level - from the boiler room.

Policy 8.3

Better access to parts of the ship currently inaccessible should be considered.

Policy 8.4

The safety standard of all boundaries between the site and the dock and Floating Harbour should be checked.

Policy 8.5

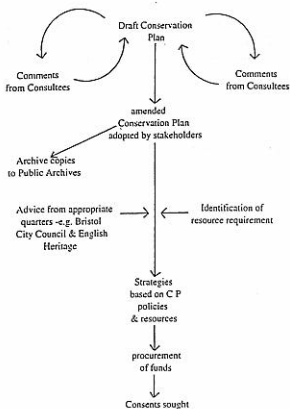
Fire exits and access for emergency services must be carefully retained at all times on the ship and the site as a whole.

Policy 8.6

Better toilet facilities satisfying the needs of all visitors should be provided.

9 - Implementation & Review

The Conservation Plan will go the governing body of the *ss Great Britain* Project for ratification and final adoption. Archive copies will be deposited with the RCHME, Swindon; the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Bristol Record Office. Adoption of the plan will be followed by the formulation of strategies founded on the Conservation Plan and keyed to its policies. After an accurate identification of the resource requirement, appropriate funding will be sought from the HLF followed by procuring consents for the proposed works. The following diagram shows the processes, including the consultation process that has been completed for the draft plan.



The Conservation Plan will be reviewed after seven years. The review should be carried out as a co-operative exercise between the Project and an individual or body outside the organisation. The review should be an honest assessment of the usefulness of the plan and its shortcomings in the light of the assessment of significance; the extent to which the policies in the plan have underpinned strategy and if they have not, why?, and whether an amended plan is required. New information that has come to light on the site and ship should be properly referenced as an addendum to the primary sources volume supplied by Keystone to the *ss Great Britain* Project archive, or incorporated in a re-write. The review should check that the *ss Great Britain* Project is wholly up-to-date with any changes to statutory and non-statutory controls and the version of the Bristol Local Plan current at the time of review.

If the plan is radically altered a draft should be circulated to consultees and formally adopted by the governing body of the *ss Great Britain* Project.

Appendix 1

Statutory and non-Statutory Controls

There are statutory and non-statutory controls on the site within which the *ss Great Britain* Project must work. This appendix selects the most relevant aspects of those controls to the Project. Key reference documents on which this appendix is based and to which the managers should refer for additional information are:

Department of the Environment, *Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment* (Sept 1994), usually known as PPG 15

(This sets out Government policy on planning issues & contains guidance that may be material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals)

Department of the Environment, *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning* (November 1990), usually known as PPG 16

(This sets out Government policy on archaeological remains on land)

Bristol City Council, *The Bristol Local Plan: Adopted Local Plan Policies: December 1997*
(this is the basis for Bristol City Council's planning decisions)

Bristol City Council, *Bristol City Centre Strategy: Section 1 Introduction and Summary & Section: Functions and Themes*

Bristol City Council, *Bristol Harbourside Regeneration Planning Brief, approved 8 July 1998 as supplementary guidance to the Bristol Local Plan.*

Bristol City Council, *Harbourside Development Planning Brief* is a pending document that should be referred to when published.

Bristol City Council, *Conservation Area Enhancement Statement for City Docks* (November 1993)

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services 'Archaeological Desktop Study of Bristol Harbourside Development for the Sponsors Group of Landowners for Harbourside' (February 1995)

Copies of all these documents (excepting the pending *Harbourside Development Brief*) are held by the SSGB. It is important the Project keeps abreast of reviews and revisions to any of these documents that may occur before the Conservation Plan is revised.

1.1 Listed Buildings

There are three individually listed buildings relevant to the GWSSC Dockyard, the Great Western Dry Dock; 'Premises occupied by Wickham and Norris (timber importers)' - this is the building described in this document as 'the dock office' - ; & 'Prince's Wharf and Wapping Wharf, quay and bollards'. Wapping Wharf is the name given to part of the south quayside of the Floating Harbour, including the area north of the range described in this document as 'the range of buildings north of the dock'. Part of Wapping Wharf, at present, lies within the boundaries of the site occupied by the *ss Great Britain* Project.

What Listing Means

The dock and dock office are both graded II*, Wapping Wharf is graded II. These buildings and their curtilage have statutory protection under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Once a building is listed, section 7 of the Act provides that consent is normally required for its demolition, in whole or in part, and for any works of alteration or extension which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. It is a criminal offence to carry out such works without consent, which should be sought from the local planning authority.

Controls apply to all works, external and internal, that would affect the special interest of a building, irrespective of its grade, and whether or not a particular feature concerned is specifically mentioned in the list description. Consent is not normally required for repairs, but where repairs involve alterations which would affect the character of a listed building, consent is required. What constitutes 'alteration' must be determined in each case.

The dock and dock office are graded II*. This is a higher grade than II and identifies their outstanding architectural or historic interest. Although statutory controls apply equally to Grade II and Grade II* buildings, consent sought for alteration on Grade II* buildings has a higher profile than consent sought on most Grade II buildings and is more likely to involve English Heritage in addition to the Local Planning Authority, especially for consent for demolition. The amenity societies, listed in PPG 15, are also more likely to comment on applications for consent for Grade II* buildings than for Grade II buildings.

The question of what constitutes the curtilage of the listed buildings on the site is a difficult one, as indicated in this document, and could be firmly answered only in a court of law. Dock furniture, e.g. the caisson, bollards and cranes might be considered to be listed along with the dock. The ship too, might be regarded as part of the curtilage of the dock.

PPG 15 emphasises that listed buildings are a finite resource and irreplaceable asset.

3.3 While the listing of a building should not be seen as a bar to all future change, the starting point for the exercise of listed building control is the statutory requirement on local planning authorities to 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' (section 16). This reflects the great importance to society of protecting listed buildings from unnecessary demolition and from unsuitable and insensitive alteration and should be the prime consideration for authorities in determining an application for consent

PPG 15 sets out the general criteria that are relevant to the consideration of all listed building consent application (3.5). It also notes the importance of owners seeking advice:

3.25 Owners of listed buildings should be encouraged to seek expert advice on whether proposed works require listed building consent and on the best way to carry out such works to their property. Many will need to obtain professional advice anyway, but the Secretaries of State hope that local planning authorities will give owners informal advice where they can or guide them to other sources where they can get advice for themselves. English Heritage publishes much specialist advice on the care of historic buildings and can sometimes give advice on individual cases, especially where unusual problems are encountered. The national amenity societies are willing to offer advice to individual owners whenever possible. The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England may have a record of a building and its reports and photographs may be available for guidance in understanding the structure and its evolution.

Annex C in PPG 15 'Guidance on Alteration to Listed Buildings' sets out general principles. These are not comprehensive and more relevant to the dock office than the dock or quayside.

Listed buildings have brief descriptions attached to their address. The descriptions are not exhaustive and elements that are not described are listed, as well as those that are.

List Descriptions

ST5772
901-1/41/1300
18/02/72

GASFERRY ROAD, Floating Harbour
(North East side)
Great Western Dry Dock

II*

Dry dock. 1839. Pennant rubble and brick. Bow-ended and brick base, with a curved section to the entrance. Stepped sides and iron caisson single-leaf dock gate. HISTORICAL NOTE: Built for the construction of Brunel's *ss Great Britain*, launched from the dock in 1843.
(Lord, J. and Southam, J. *The Floating Harbour: Bristol*: 1983-84)

ST5772
901-1/41/1301
18/02/72

GASFERRY ROAD, Floating Harbour
(North East side)
Premises occupied by Wickham and
Morris (timber importers)

II*

Office. Early C19, later alterations. Roughcast and brick, gable stack and pantile roof. Double-depth plan. 2 storeys; 2-window range. 2 gables facing the river each with 1 window, brick right-hand gable has wide segmental-arched C20 windows, roughcast left-hand gable with a square oriel with 26/26-pane sash (a notable distinguishing feature of the C19 office) and roughcast exterior stack to the left. INTERIOR: panelled ground floor and stair with stick balusters and uncut string. HISTORICAL NOTE: reputed to have been used by Brunel as his drawing office during the building of the *ss Great Britain*. A complete example of its type, graded for its historical interest.

PRN Vo. 01/1/42/1297

Grade II
CUMBERLAND ROAD, Floating Harbour
(North side)
Prince's Wharf and Wapping Wharf, quay and
bollards

II

Quays and bollards. 1874-76. By Thomas Howard, Docks Engineer. Granite and Pennant with cast-iron bollards. Granite curbs to Pennant rubble walls. Quay walls built 'chiefly of concrete, partly of the best hydraulic lime and partly of Portland Cement...faced with stonework and granite' (Lord). Includes the bay for the Fairbairn Crane (qv).

1.2 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments

At present there are no scheduled ancient monuments on the site. However, Policy 3.3 in this conservation plan recommends that formal statutory protection is sought for the ship, the factory remains and for the south boundary wall of the GWSSC dockyard. The advice of Bristol City Council and English Heritage is the best route to determining the question of whether listing or scheduling is the most appropriate form of protection.

PPG 16 Emphasises that archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, are a finite and non-renewable resource and that there should be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation of nationally important remains (this would apply to the ship and to the factory building, the latter both below and above ground). As with listed buildings, early consultation between developers and planning authorities, particularly the County Archaeological Officer and English Heritage, is recommended, pointing out that this helps to reconcile the needs of archaeology and development.

1.3 - The City Docks Conservation Area

The GWSSC Dockyard and the *Great Britain* are part of the City Docks Conservation Area. Conservation Areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority. This introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings, for which Conservation Area Consent is required, and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character and appearance that define an area's special significance.

There is a November 1993 Conservation Area Enhancement Statement for this Conservation Area produced by Bristol City Council Planning, Transport and Development Services.

The key issues identified are 'Traffic and Movement'; 'Land Use' and 'Townscape'. The general enhancement objectives are listed as follows.

- (1) On Hotwells Road, Cumberland Road and Coronation Road an environmental traffic management scheme, including provisions for cyclists, needs to be prepared in conjunction with the Highway Authority, balancing out the needs of cyclists, pedestrians, public transport, service vehicles, as well as through-traffic.*
- (2) This scheme should promote pedestrian safety by the introduction of pedestrian crossings linking the harbourside to residential areas.*
- (3) The scheme should also involve upgrading and possible widening to pavements, provision of attractive traditional street furniture.*
- (4) Pedestrian access from the south to the centre and dockside areas needs to be improved, and a policy promoting access across the waterway developed.*
- (5) Consideration needs to be given to conserving the principal historic buildings characterising the historic docks area.*
- (6) New development needs to be assessed in reference to its historic context, retention of existing views, and its character relating to the forms and materials utilised in the traditional dockside areas.*
- (7) Where leisure uses are proposed, development should assist in the conservation of buildings and enhancement of the Conservation Area.*

(8) Within any proposals for improvement or development in the Conservation Area, the retention and preservation of the traditional quay walls, quays themselves, original dock furniture and industrial machinery adjacent to the area must form a part of the intended scheme.

(9) The form and massing of intended development should enhance and retain principal views.

(10) Pedestrian access and walkways will form part of any development proposals to an agreed development framework.

(11) An environmental landscape framework for the area needs to be developed which identifies areas of soft landscaping.

1.4 - Relevant Extracts from the Bristol Local Plan: Adopted Local Plan Policies: December 1997

Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings: General Principles

B13 Development should preserve listed buildings their features and settings, and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the City's designated conservation areas, as defined on the proposals map. Development which conflicts with these objectives will not be permitted.

Designation of Conservation Areas

B14 in assessing an area for conservation area status the following factors will be taken into account:

- (i) the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area;
- (ii) the level of architectural or historic interest;
- (iii) the quality and special character of the area within its local and regional context;
- (iv) the degree of threat to the character or appearance of the area;
- (v) the amount of alteration and development, detrimental to the character or appearance of the area, that has occurred;
- (vi) other controls on development such as planning restrictions and other designations.

Streets and Open Spaces

- B15** (I) Townscape and landscape features that contribute to the character or appearance of streets and open spaces within conservation areas should be preserved or enhanced.
- (II) Development will not be permitted where it would unacceptably harm landscapes, open spaces and gardens that contribute to the character of the area.
- (III) The introduction of car parking into areas historically used as gardens and forecourts will not be permitted where it erodes either the character of the street and/or the setting of historic buildings.

New Buildings

B16 In a group of historic buildings, where a formal and unified design forms an essential part of the character, new buildings which reproduce the appearance of these architectural elements that contribute to the overall design of the group will be permitted. In determining applications for new buildings within formal groups, account will be taken of the following:

- (i) the height in relation to surrounding properties. Where existing heights are varied, new development should remain within the range of heights of historic neighbouring properties;
- (ii) the rhythm, scale and proportion of neighbouring properties;
- (iii) established building lines, where they form an essential part of the character of the area;
- (iv) the provision of a suitably designed means of enclosure, reflecting the character and traditions of the area, where it helps to assimilate new buildings into the conservation area;
- (vi) roof forms complementing those that contribute to the character of the area;
- (vii) the use of materials that respect, retain and strengthen those that are predominant and form a fundamental component of the character of the area;
- (viii) the incorporation of locally distinctive patterns and features used on historic building facades which give a special identity to Bristol;
- (ix) the scale, proportion and hierarchy of windows that complement the historic context and are in balance with the design as a whole.

Extensions to Buildings

B17 Extensions to buildings that contribute to the character of a conservation area should not dominate the original building by virtue of their scale, materials or location. Large, unsightly or bulky extensions which would conflict with the form, or harm the appearance of the building and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, will not be permitted.

Alterations to Traditional Buildings

B18 Alterations, requiring planning permission, to buildings that contribute to the character of a conservation area will be permitted where:

- (i) traditional materials are retained, repaired and where necessary replace, and not covered with paints or cladding which would be harmful to the appearance of the conservation area;
- (ii) the original form, pitch, cladding and ornament of the roof is retained. Where this is not possible, replacement materials should approximate to the original as closely as possible in terms of size, texture, quality, colour and weathering properties;
- (iii) new dormers respect the appropriate scale and form of the period involved and are in balance with the external appearance of the property;
- (iv) chimney stacks and pots are retained, repaired or rebuilt where they are a significant feature of the property. This is applicable even if they are no longer functionally necessary;
- (v) prominent original windows are retained and repaired. Where this is not possible, replacement windows should be constructed to match the original in terms of style, proportions, colour and materials. Proposed new window openings should not disturb a balanced or composed elevation and should respect the size, proportion, material and decoration of existing windows;
- (vi) modern additions such as security devices or communications equipment, are sensitively located to minimise their impact on the historic environment.

Listed Building Alterations

B19 Applications for planning permission involving material alterations to a listed building or its curtilage that fail to preserve the building, its features or setting will not be permitted.

Listed Buildings Urgent Repairs and Demolition

B20 Applications for planning permission which involve the demolition of listed buildings will not be permitted without clear and convincing evidence that:

- (i) all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain an existing use or find new uses, including preservation through some form of charitable or community use;
- (ii) redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

In all cases demolition should be assessed on the importance and condition of the building, and minimised with the aim of retaining those parts of the building that are of particular historical or architectural interest including interiors.

Demolition of Listed Buildings and Buildings in Conservation Areas

B21 Applications for planning permission which would involve the demolition of buildings, walls and other minor structures which make a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area will not be permitted unless there are overriding environmental, economic or practical reasons. Consent will only be granted where there is a valid permission for a detailed redevelopment scheme.

Sites of Archaeological Significance

- B22** (I) There will be a presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not.
- (II) Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desk-top study, and where appropriate a field evaluation.
- (III) Where there is evidence of archaeological remains, development will not be permitted except where it can be demonstrated that the archaeological features of the site will be satisfactorily preserved in situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals upon important archaeological remains and their settings, or, if this is not possible and the sites are not scheduled or of national importance, provision for adequately recording the site prior to destruction is made, preferably by negotiating a planning agreement to ensure that access, time and financial resources are available to follow essential recording and publication to take place.

1.5 Bristol Harbourside Regeneration: Planning Brief Implementation Phase

This sets out Bristol City Council's planning, urban design and implementation parameters for Harbourside, into which the ss *Great Britain* site falls. It is an extremely important touchstone document which defines the parameters, large and small within which the Project should work and against which the Project should check all intended proposals at an early stage. It has been quoted at length but selectively here and the full document should be used for further detail. Black and white copies of figures accompanying the document are reproduced here, the coloured originals should be referred to by the Project.

The document makes several specific references to the ss *Great Britain* site, including identifying the range north of the dock as a building 'worthy of retention where practicable' (Figure 6).

The document has five principal functions, all of which are relevant to the Project:

i) to inform the people of Bristol about the future of the area;

ii) to set an up to date framework within which the phased, comprehensive development of the area is to be achieved and the provision of all necessary infrastructure is to be secured;

iii) to provide certainty to potential investors and developers in Harbourside as development proceeds;

iv) to guide the preparation and consideration of planning applications for development of individual elements of the Harbourside Project; and

v) to provide continuing support for the submission of bids for funding assistance for certain elements of the project from sources such as the National Lottery's Millennium, Arts Council and Heritage funds, and English Partnerships.

The document acknowledges the importance of Harbourside as:

1.5...part of one of the region's fastest growing tourist and leisure development areas, with an impressive range of existing attractions, events and cultural facilities of national renown, and its location at the heart of Bristol, adjacent to features of historical, architectural and industrial archaeological interest, places it within an unrivalled position in the city.

The City Council's objectives for the development of the area are as follows:

i) To achieve regeneration of the area with development designed for a diverse and balanced range of uses which will ensure a level of vitality and activity appropriate to this prestigious city centre site.

ii) To secure major cultural and leisure facilities for the people of Bristol

iii) To further develop the principal leisure functions of the waterfront

iv) To promote significant inward investment in the centre of the city and the creation of new employment opportunities

v) To provide new opportunities for housing in the centre of the city to contribute towards demand across a range of types and tenures

vi) To provide for safe, comfortable and convenient access to all parts of the site for all, but particularly elderly and disabled people and parents with young children.

vii) To ensure that there is appropriate provision for access to the area by public transport and other alternatives to the private car.

viii) To retain and restore wherever possible buildings and townscape features of particular architectural or historic interest.

ix) To secure a development with a distinct sense of place through the promotion of architectural and design innovation.

x) To provide a network of well landscaped and designed public spaces linked by strong pedestrian routes.

The Vision for Harbourside stresses a mixed development including a festival place for all; office and residential development and 'a real emphasis on alternative means of travel' making use of Park and Ride schemes, Light Rapid Transit; pedestrian and cycle routes and harbour ferry services.

Throughout the accent will be on quality and the creation of an urban sense of place, with the water a constant point of reference. The document also emphasises the expectation of outstanding architecture, with the development to be known for its innovative forms, structures and uses of materials, and for the sustainability of its buildings.

The *ss Great Britain* Project is specifically noted in the section on the Leisure Core.

5.17 On the south side of the harbour, along the waterfront at Wapping Wharf, there are well-established leisure attractions and facilities, including the Bristol Industrial Museum, the SS Great Britain and Maritime Heritage Centre and the Dock Railway. It is intended that these establishments facilities, including the railway, will be retained within the brief area, allowing that some adjustment may be needed to ensure successful integration of leisure facilities with the redevelopment of land to the rear for housing.

5.18 The Leisure Committee of Bristol City Council are redefining the Industrial Museum as a Museum of Bristol and proposals will be brought forward for major investment in the further development and improvement of these facilities over the next 5 years. The SS Great Britain Trust are bringing proposals forward for the further development of the ship and its surroundings as an attraction celebrating the achievements of I K Brunel.

Section 7 of the *Bristol Harbourside Regeneration: Planning Brief, Implementation Phase* provides particularly useful guidance on 'Urban Design Principles'. This is worth quoting selectively at length.

Section 8 'Environmental Requirements' notes that the factory site has been identified as an area of potential contamination (8.4 (viii)) deriving from its tannery use and remarks that 'all sites on Harbourside should be regarded potentially contaminated'. For this reason a contamination survey and statement would be required for any major development proposals in Harbourside as part of an Environmental Assessment (8.1).

The Project has commissioned a 'Contamination Report on Site Investigation at Wickham and Norris Timber Yard, Report 70233' from Structural Soils Ltd. (Nov 1997).

7. URBAN DESIGN AND CONSERVATION

Context

7.1 Harbourside presents a unique opportunity to create an area of high quality development set within an attractive layout of planned routes and external spaces creating a new urban context in the heart of Bristol. It has the potential to provide a unique sense of place at the centre of an outstanding historic city.

- 7.2 *Its new focus as a centre for leisure and commerce, coupled with high quality residential development, creates the potential for an attractive urban environment integrating historic, waterside and contemporary themes to deliver a new area of architectural distinction and character, that is the City Council's objective.*
- 7.3 *Within the Harbourside area as a whole, the aim is to secure an integrated and comprehensive approach to redevelopment which balances conservation and regeneration objectives to achieve viable development with long term sustainability.*

Urban Design Principles

- 7.4 *As part of the evolution of an acceptable urban design layout for the Harbourside area, a notional network of routes and spaces has been identified as set out in section 6. This suggests a framework in which development can take place whilst, in particular, maintaining certain important views of the Cathedral from across the Floating Harbour (see fig. 5). The key urban design principles, which the Council will wish to see influencing development proposals for the area are set out below.*

Building Form and Massing

- 7.5 *New buildings shall generally be no less than three and no more than four storeys on the waterside sites. Buildings of four storeys will be acceptable fronting onto appropriately scaled urban routes and spaces rising to five storeys along existing streets and areas of higher density and possibly up to six storeys at the Cumberland Road/Wapping Road Junction. The aim is to create a distinctly urban character to the development area reflecting the traditional built environment of the city centre.*
- 7.6 *The Harbourside Area is highly visible from surrounding parts of the city, therefore the form and treatment of roofscape in new development will be of particular significance; the integration of plant and machinery structures will be expected as part of any design proposal.*
- 7.7 *There are a number of key views across the area towards the Cathedral which must be retained and enhanced as development proceeds. These are indicated on fig. 5. Two of these views will require a particular alignment of routes through development. The third, which is a view of the Cathedral central tower from Wapping Wharf allows the tower to be seen over the linking section of the Lloyds TSB building between phases one and two. Any development along this view line will have to ensure that this is not interrupted in any way.*
- 7.8 *There are other important views into and out of the area but it is not appropriate to attempt to prescribe retention of all of them. Developers will need to take into account the effect that their proposals will have on views of features, buildings and skylines inside and outside the brief area, and the potential for the creation of new views.*
- 7.9 *Although views from individual properties cannot be protected by planning control, developers will need to have regard to the effect of their proposals on the general amenity of existing residents in the area. The local planning authority will be looking to strike a balance between these considerations and achieving a scale of development which enables the creation of traditional urban form.*
- 7.10 *A three-dimensional computer-generated model is being prepared of the Harbourside area.*

For major development proposals, developers will be expected to prepare, or meet the Council's reasonable cost of preparing, an appropriate level of compatible design information to enable the impact of their proposal to be assessed within the context of the base model.

General Principles of Building Design

- 7.11 Within the Harbourside area there will be scope to reinforce the prominence and importance of its outstanding location. Architectural solutions of quality and distinction which do justice to the historic waterside context and civic location will be required. High standards of design have been set already in adjacent developments, for example, Lloyds TSB, and 31 Great George Street, Brandon Hill, and a similarly high standard will be expected from development proposals in Harbourside, whether for commercial, leisure or housing.*

Materials

- 7.14 Throughout the development, materials, including facing materials should be of the highest quality and durability. The imaginative use of both traditional and modern materials will be sought. Within the setting of buildings of architectural merit, materials used in new developments should complement existing materials, and buildings should harmonise with each other and with existing development.*

Sustainability

- 7.15 The large scale development within Bristol Harbourside will create opportunities for building form and design to produce schemes which are environmentally responsible. Developments which reduce energy consumption, pollution and the depletion of non-sustainable resources will be encouraged. A largely quiet and relatively traffic free environment will, for example, permit natural ventilation of buildings.*

Visual Diversity and Environmental Quality

- 7.16 The quality and significance of the open spaces, promenades and public streets will be as important an element in creating the environment to make Harbourside a successful development project, as the creation of buildings of distinction and character. Outstanding quality will be the objective.*

Routes and Spaces

- 7.17 There is the opportunity on Harbourside to prioritise pedestrian movement along the waterfront and create a linked series of public spaces within the leisure area. The aim is to realise a rich and varied context in which routes link up and allow vistas through and out of the area, but especially to the water and leisure attractions. Para 7.7 above emphasises the importance of the use of routes and spaces in the protection of existing and creation of new views (See also fig. 5).*
- 7.18 The design of routes and spaces within the development should be conceived as an integral part of the design process and should be equal to the quality and distinction of the building design. Consistency in the use of materials, lighting and planting will help to reinforce the character and create an integrated urban context.*

- 7.19 *Routes and spaces should be of robust materials and finishes consistent with the area and reflecting the traditional strong working character adjacent to the Harbour. Areas of traditional paving material such as granite setts, pennant slabs should be retained, whilst bearing in mind the comfort and convenience of users.*
- 7.20 *Existing traditional dockside features and fixtures such as bollards, railings, lighting columns and cast iron kerbs should be retained wherever possible. New furniture, including seats, litter bins, signage and lighting should be of a unified design and reflect the high quality and robust construction of the dockside area, reinforcing the strong identity of the area.*

Accessibility

- 7.21 *The needs of disabled people, of the elderly and of parents with young children in push chairs, must be a design consideration, in accordance with the City Council's accessibility policy and Local Plan policies H6 Accessible Housing, and B3 Accessibility. Pedestrian routes particularly, should make use of even surface materials, dropped kerbs/raised crossings, combining ramps/steps at all level changes. Tactile surfaces and other clear route interpretation features will be necessary.*

Public Art

- 7.22 *The incorporation of public art into development is welcomed by the City Council, and developers will be strongly encouraged to build this element into their proposals at an early stage to ensure the integration of 'art' into the design process. Outstanding quality will be promoted through the Harbourside Design Forum which will advise on scope for artists' involvement, choice of materials and opportunities for creating a built environment of quality with richness, individual identity and public interest.*

Conservation Area Enhancement Objectives

- 7.24 *The Harbourside area has been associated over the centuries with Bristol shipbuilding and maritime industry. It contains many historic buildings and structures related to those uses which give character and identity to the old harbour and waterfront.*
- 7.25 *As part of the City Docks Conservation Area and containing much of historic interest, the Harbourside development will need to be carried out in both the context of the Local Plan Conservation Policies referred to above and the City Docks Conservation Area Enhancement Statement, which is also appended to the local plan.*

Listed Buildings and Other Buildings or Structures worthy of Retention

- 7.28 *Many of the remaining buildings within the Harbourside area are listed as of historic and architectural interest. There is also one Scheduled Ancient Monument - the Fairbairn Steam Crane - situated on Wapping Wharf. These are identified and scheduled on fig. 6, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. The presumption is that these buildings and structures will be retained and restored, and that Local Plan policies B19 Listed Buildings: Alterations, B20 Listed Buildings: Urgent Repairs will be applied regarding proposed alterations or demolitions. There are also within the area a number of other buildings and structures which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. These should be retained and reused and Local Plan policies B18 Alterations to traditional buildings and B25*

Demolition: Listed Buildings and Buildings in Conservation Areas will apply in such cases.

- 7.29 *Whilst the general presumption is that these buildings will be retained and restored in accordance with Local Plan policies, it is recognised that there may be circumstances where demolition or part demolition cannot be avoided. The Local Plan policies referred to above, and guidance given in PPG15, sets out clear criteria which must be satisfied before any proposals for demolition, in part or in whole, can be considered.*

Other Features to be Conserved

- 7.30 *Granite seated areas, traditional dockland railings, bollards, lamp posts, cast iron kerbs, stone boundary walls and other interesting features which impart character to the area should be preserved in situ. Where this is not possible or desirable such material should be salvaged, cleaned and reused within the development.*

Archaeology

- 7.31 *Sites on both sides of the harbour have been identified since the eighteenth century with boat construction, repair, brewing, rope making and structures deriving from the early production of town gas.*
- 7.32 *A preliminary assessment of the area's archaeological importance is contained within the Strategic Environmental Appraisal (Appendix II). This identifies the key features of archaeological interest in the area. Any development proposals should be prepared in consultation with the City Archaeologist in the Planning Directorate and be accompanied by an archaeological assessment and strategy to mitigate the effects of development upon identified archaeological remains. Local Plan policy B22 Sites of Archaeological Significance requires that sufficient resources should be allocated if necessary for excavation, site investigation and publication of results prior to development as part of any detailed planning application.*

9. Implementation

Process

- 9.1 *The development process will be led by the granting of planning permissions, accompanied by listed building and conservation area consents where necessary.*
- 9.2 *The planning authority will accept outline applications where it is satisfied that they conform with the principles established in this brief. This is contrary to normal practice in a Conservation Area, but the authority believes it to be justified in that it will help to achieve the objective of regeneration by enabling firm principles to be established for confident marketing of development opportunities.*
- 9.3 *However, where outline applications are submitted, they will be expected to provide adequate information to enable an initial assessment of their impact to be made (see 9.7 below).*
- 9.4 *The grant of any outline planning permission will be dependent on contribution to or the actual provision of specific related infrastructure, to be made or carried out at the appropriate stage in the development, between its commencement and its completion. This requirement will be*

secured by a S.106 or other appropriate planning agreement.

- 9.5 *In addition, it will be a requirement of the grant of planning permission that the permitted development will contribute financially to the achievement of the Council's objective of establishing the cultural and leisure focus as part of the regeneration of Harbourside. This requirement, enshrined within the Harbourside Framework Resolution, will be secured by S.106 Agreement. The method of assessment of the amount of contribution and the timing of its payment will be based on an agreed formula (the formula will reflect agreements between the City Council and the other principal landowners).*
- 9.6 *Subsequent submission of details pursuant to an outline planning permission shall be supported by such information and assessments as may be required to satisfy fully any conditions of the outline consent, or the requirements of a legal agreement.*

Outline Planning Application Requirements

- 9.7 *Outline planning applications will be expected to include the following information:*
- i. A full description of the proposed land use(s) and, in mixed use cases, an indication of the distribution of uses.*
 - ii. The quantum of proposed use(s), expressed in gross metres of floorspace in the case of offices and leisure uses and in unit sizes and types of housing.*
 - iv.[sic] The means of vehicle access to the site and the way in which the required pedestrian and cycle routes and spaces will be accommodated.*
 - v. The proposed amount of dedicated parking provision.*
- 9.8 *Supporting information necessary to enable proper consideration of outline applications must include the following:*
- i. a written statement making clear how the land use proposals related to and will contribute towards the achievement of the principles of this brief;*
 - ii. Such visual material as is necessary to demonstrate that the quanta of development proposed can be achieved on the site in accordance with the urban design principles in the brief, in particular demonstrating by appropriate means, including the generation of 3D computer images, the effect of the proposal on the principal views as set out in fig. 5;*
 - iii. a description of the related essential infrastructure works, including remediation, to be undertaken or funded as part of the development; and*
 - iii.[sic] an initial Archaeological Assessment, indicating the implications of development for the archaeological context of the site and proposals for mitigating the effect.*
- 9.9 *Developers should discuss with the local planning authority the need for an informal or formal environmental assessment of the impact of the proposal, including traffic impact and any mitigation measures proposed, as set out in 8.4 above. Guidance on the criteria for, and scope and content of, EA's will be contained within the Strategic Environmental Appraisal*

supplementary to this brief. A full assessment may not be needed in all cases, and in some it may be appropriate that more detailed investigation be a matter for consideration at the detailed planning stage.

- 9.10 Sites O3 and A1, which are known to be contaminated and parts of which are currently in operational use as a gas storage facility, will require geotechnical survey information to be made available to the local authority prior to marketing, and particulars of decommissioning and remediation to be submitted with any application such that the planning authority can be satisfied that the development proposed can proceed in accordance with any consent subsequently granted. Investigation of part of site A2 (the land to the rear of the SS Great Britain), formerly used as a tannery, will also have to be carried out and findings and recommendations submitted with any planning application.*
- 9.11 It is acknowledged by the planning authority that some development may involve demolition of existing structures. In making outline applications for proposals which affect listed buildings or other buildings in the conservation area, where there are no detailed plans the applicants are advised to seek the informal opinion of the local planning authority and its consultees, including English Heritage (see 9.15 below).*

Reserved Matters

- 9.12 Any outline consent which is granted will by condition define the matters reserved for subsequent approval. A developer wishing to proceed with detailed proposals will be expected to consult with the local planning authority at any early stage in the preparation of plans for Reserved Matters approval to ensure that the planning authority's requirements will be met, and to clarify any requirement for detailed environmental or other assessment.*
- 9.13 Any developer wishing to bring forward detailed proposals for part only of a site which has outline consent, will be required to demonstrate that the ability to achieve the overall development and any related infrastructure, in accordance with the outline consent, will not be prejudiced. In such circumstances a developer may be required to enter into a further legal agreement to secure the provision of related infrastructure and other planning obligations.*

Full Planning Applications

- 9.14 Any full applications that may be made must embrace the requirements set out above for outline applications and reserved matters.*

Listed Building and Conservation Area Consents

- 9.15 Where demolition of listed buildings or structures, or other buildings in conservation areas may be involved in development proposals, the local planning authority will expect the applicant to demonstrate the criteria in PPG 15 and the Local Plan policies have been satisfied and that there are overriding environmental, economic or practical reasons to justify demolition. Such action, or alterations to listed structures, will in any case be subject to obtaining listed building consent, or conservation area consent. In the case of demolition this also has to be considered by the Secretary of State. In accordance with the Council's policies no demolition will be permitted to commence until a full planning consent is in existence and there is evidence of a signed building contract.*

Appendix 2

The National Historic Ships Committee Evaluation and Assessment System

This is the first systematic comparative evaluation system applied to preserved historic vessels. It is not complete and the results are therefore not yet available. The criteria for the evaluation, stated in *The House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 3rd Report: Preservation of Historic Ships: The Case of HMS Cavalier, 25 February 1998* are in two parts and deal, on the one hand, with the inherent properties of the vessel and, on the other, the preservation project and its management.

Vessel variables are as follows:

Aesthetic impact

Exemplary status - vessel function

Exemplary status - vessel type/construction

Historical associations with people and events

Socio-economic associations

Technological significance

Age

Condition

Scarcity - of vessel type

Scarcity - of vessel function

Percentage originality of fabric (referred to the end of the vessel's working life)

Project Variables are as follows:

Preservation Strategy

Project Technology

Project Management

When the results are available, the *ss Great Britain Project* and other decision-makers with an interest in the preservation of the ship (who are not necessarily maritime specialists) will be able to compare not only the ship, but also the preservation project, against other preserved ships.

In the interim, this Conservation Plan suggests that the *ss Great Britain* is likely to achieve a high score on her inherent properties in comparison with other historic craft. **Aesthetic Impact:** The beauty and fitness for purpose of Patterson's lines were noted by many of the 1840s commentators and are still remarkable in 1999, when the scale at which he was designing is no longer so striking (p. 110). Her present relationship to the surviving original fabric of her dock adds a unique element to her aesthetic appeal. **Exemplary status:** She is a fine example of a passenger liner, an emigrant ship and a windjammer, and her role as the forerunner of modern shipping gives her a unique position, heading up later examples. **Historical Associations:** The breadth of her historical associations with people and processes is listed on pages 110 and 113 of the Conservation Plan. **Socio-economic associations & technological significance:** She is unlikely to be bettered in these categories. **Age:** At 156 years old, she is one of relatively few preserved ships surviving from before 1845. **Scarcity of vessel type and function:** She is likely to achieve a high score for her unique status as the forerunner of modern shipping, combined with the three principal different functions she has fulfilled since construction as well as her role in the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. **Condition and percentage originality of fabric:** The second volume of the Conservation Plan should provide good information, both on her condition and the survival of fabric referred to the end of her working life.

Endnotes

- ¹ Defective bricks were found by Wessex Archaeology in the Floating Harbour adjacent to the site. These are thought to be late 18th century wasters discarded from the brickworks (Wessex Archaeology, 44626.01, Feb 1998, 2.3.3).
- ² Telford was using a 12 in bed of concrete for the foundations of the dock walls at St Katherine's dock in 1826 (Crimes, 1996, 345).
- ³ The date on the painting 'The Floating Harbour with the Albion Dockyard and Clifton Wood' could be read either as 1853 or 1858. The large paddle steamer in the Great Western Dock, the *Demarara*, establishes the date as 1853.
- ⁴ e.g. in *The SS "Great Britain": history and return salvage operation* by the Bristol Junior Chamber of Commerce (June 9 1970) and regularly repeated since.
- ⁵ A photograph of the dock office in Wickham & Norris Ltd, Timber Importers, Wapping Dock, Bristol, 1840-1935, n.d., BIM J43 13 shows the N elevation of this building and states that it was a mast-erecting shop but 'is now a planing and moulding mill'. The publication is probably c.1935.
- ⁶ A copy of de Lôme's report survives in the NMM.
- ⁷ Whicheloe Macfarlane MDP's 'Report on a preliminary inspection of existing buildings on the Wickham and Norris timber yard adjacent to the ss *Great Britain* site in Bristol carried out on the 2 September 1998', 4500/S, identifies the remains of the former factory as 'unsafe for its present or any use' on the basis of the condition of the roof trusses (SSGB).
- ⁸ The tithe map does show inaccuracies. The area was not subject to tithes and the surveyor may have made a rapid job of his survey.
- ⁹ This opinion might be reversed if good information could establish the old-fashioned character of dock offices as a building type or if specific dating evidence not visible at present, e.g. original sash weights, could be used to refine a date for the windows.
- ¹⁰ Bristol and Region Archaeological Services 'Archaeological Desktop Study of Bristol Harbourside Development', Feb 1995, Fig.3).
- ¹¹ A key to a plan of the Albion of c.1848 in the Charles Hill Collection, NMM, states: 'The whole of the Premises are in good order, having been built within the last few years, and are endowed with a high wall'.
- ¹² The plan has been added on the dorso of the second membrane of an 1856 deed.
- ¹³ The title of this firm varied throughout the period and all the variations are given in *Henry Maudslay, 1771-1831 and Maudslay, Sons and Field* (n.d.), a publication in the library of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. For the sake of consistency and familiarity, the firm is described as Maudslay, Sons and Field, throughout this document.
- ¹⁴ The mail contract, which was won by Cunard, would have covered the expenses, out and home, of the *Great Western* and given the business leeway to have built up passenger numbers on the GWSSC ships.
- ¹⁵ The shareholders do not seem to have complained about what may have been another diversification of the company, perhaps connected with the cargo carried, or intended to be carried by their ships. The *Bristol Mirror* noted their involvement (with the Bristol Cotton Company, owned by Peter Maze, the first GWSSC chairman) in the Great Western Cotton Works at Redcliffe (*Bristol Mirror*, Feb 2 1839; May 11 1839; April 4 1840).
- ¹⁶ The Bristol Industrial Museum has a reference to two brothers, called Williams, from Liverpool who worked on the hull. George was a blacksmith by trade and after the *Great Britain* went to work in the Great Western Railway works at Swindon (BIM, J1450).
- ¹⁷ The removal of the waling pieces in the 1851/52 refit generated the mistaken view that the phase one docking keels were removed. It is clear from the context of contemporaneous sources that it was the 1846 waling pieces, not the docking keels, that were removed.
- ¹⁸ Three are reproduced in Corlett (1990, 116, 117 & 119).

- ¹⁹ This is quoted in Sherington (1980, 60) quoting from G R Serle, *The Golden Age*, Melbourne University Press (1963, 44). The source of the original has not been found by Keystone. It may be one of Dickens' pieces of journalism & not from a novel.
- ²⁰ SSGB, Regiments sailing to the Crimea onboard ss 'Great Britain' and Fogg, N, "There never was such a transport": the ss *Great Britain* at War' (typescript).
- ²¹ This appeared as Plate 38 in Vernon's 1863 paper 'On the Construction of Iron Ships' in *Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers*, vol. 14. Vernon described the arrangement as part of the works carried out after the Dundrum Bay stranding.
- ²² Corlett's 1857 long section 1990, 142, 143 draws on this capacity plan, amended according to the analysis of the fabric of the ship after 1970.
- ²³ A photograph of the team on the spar deck survives in the State Library of Australia, reproduced (although the name of the ship is not given) in Clive Turnbull's *A Concise History of Australia*, 1965, 101.
- ²⁴ *Royal Commission on Unseaworthy Ships*, Vol 2, 1874, 868. There are references to other material associated with this letter. This deserves research but was information that arrived just as the Conservation Plan was being handed in.

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Primary Source Material

Primary source material investigated for the Conservation Plan has been supplied to the SS *Great Britain* Project as a separate volume, arranged in chronological order and dividing the sources which are either quoted, summarised or listed, between the different elements of the site. The principal archives used and referenced in the Conservation Plan are:

Bristol City Council
 Lawrence Tucketts, solicitors
 Lloyds Register Archives
 The archives of the Society of Merchant Venturers
 The Bristol Industrial Museum
 The Bristol Museum and Art Gallery
 The Bristol Record Office
 The Brunel Collection, Bristol University Library
 The Institution of Civil Engineers
 The Institution of Mechanical Engineers
 The National Maritime Museum
 The National Monuments Record
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 The SS *Great Britain* Archive
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| BIM Keen 3/175 | BIM Keen 22/140 |
| BIM.Keen 8/44 | BIM Keen 22/147 |
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BIM Keen 35/159
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There are 98 prints of the site in the National Monuments Record, ranging in date from 1946 to the 1980s.

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