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World Heritage in Ireland

Summary of the Attributes for Ireland's two existing World Heritage Properties

'Brú na Bóinne' and 'Sceilg Mhichíl'

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Monastery at Sceilig Mhichil.

1 Introduction

1.1 Commissioning of work

This report was commissioned from Dr. Christopher Young¹ by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to extract and distil from the Statements of Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Properties of Brú na Bóinne and Sceilg Mhichíl a summary list of the attributes of the two properties. This will facilitate the completion of the relevant questions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Third Cycle Periodic Report for Europe and North America for these two properties.

1.2 Periodic Reporting

The World Heritage Convention (Article 29) requires States Parties to report regularly on legislative and administrative provisions and on other actions taken for the implementation of the Convention. The World Heritage General Assembly agreed in 1997 that this requirement could be met by Periodic Reporting, which is described in the **Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention [Link]** (“Operational Guidelines”) (paras 200–211). Since then, Periodic Reporting has become one of the core conservation monitoring mechanisms of the World Heritage Convention. This exercise is carried out every six to eight years according to the Periodic Reporting cycle of each region (**Figure 1**).

Ireland is currently engaged in the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting (2018–2024) for the European and North American Region. An online platform is hosting the Periodic Reporting Questionnaire, which is divided in two sections: Section I is the general one, while Section II is property specific.

For each World Heritage Property, Section II includes a range of specific questions focusing on the definition of attributes and the evaluation of the elements that are, or could, impact on their preservation.

This report has been commissioned to make sure those questions are answered to the highest standard. The aim of this document is to extract and distil a list of

¹ See **Appendix 4** for further information about the author.

attributes from the existing retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for both World Heritage Properties while explaining the background to the concept of attributes and the methodology adopted.



Figure 1: Periodic Reporting Structure (©UNESCO/Valentino Etowar).

1.3 Attributes in the World Heritage system

Over the last 20 years or so, **attributes** have become a feature of management of heritage sites. This is, to some extent, a consequence of the development of value-led approaches to management of heritage places. Once it is necessary to make decisions based on the value of heritage, then it becomes necessary to define heritage more clearly and to identify the elements that give value to a particular place. It is also of great practical assistance to be able to define individual features, since overall definitions of value can be difficult to define in terms of practical management. It is much easier, if it is possible, to point to particular elements or relationships, which support that value since action can then be taken to protect different features and relationships, whether tangible or intangible.

Attribute is the **portmanteau** term used for such features and relationships, and understanding of its use is spreading. There has been some confusion within World Heritage practice over the meaning and use of the term attribute in the World

Heritage system. This is because the word has in fact been used with two different meanings.

Attributes of authenticity

The earliest use appeared in the UNESCO **Operational Guidelines** in 2005 in text about authenticity. Para 82 of the 2021 Operational Guidelines reads:

Depending on the type of cultural heritage, and its cultural context, properties may be understood to meet the conditions of authenticity if their cultural values (as recognized in the nomination criteria proposed) are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes including:

- 1. form and design;**
- 2. materials and substance;**
- 3. use and function;**
- 4. traditions, techniques and management systems;**
- 5. location and setting;**
- 6. language, and other forms of intangible heritage;**
- 7. spirit and feeling; and**
- 8. other internal and external factors.**

This text, which has not changed since 2005, recognises that Outstanding Universal Value can derive from many different factors and that the test of authenticity (the truthful and credible expression a property's cultural values) will depend very much on the nature of the site. The Outstanding Universal Value of an archaeological site will, for example, derive primarily from its materials and substance, while an architectural masterpiece may rely more on its form and design. A living cultural landscape such as the English Lake District may well place great weight on its traditions, techniques and management systems and on spirit and feeling. These **attributes of authenticity** have come to be used more as a means of testing that the cultural values of the property are expressed truthfully and credibly, rather than for detailed descriptions of a property.

Attributes of Outstanding Universal Value

For more detailed identification of the features contributing to the Outstanding Universal Value of a property, the World Heritage system has developed the concept of **attributes of Outstanding Universal Value**. The Operational Guidelines now speak about ‘attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value’ (UNESCO 2021, para 99), ‘attributes which are a direct tangible expression of the Outstanding Universal Value of a property’ (UNESCO 2021, para 100) with many more references to what might be termed attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

Annex 5 (the Nomination Format) of the Operational Guidelines now contains useful text, added in 2021, on attributes of Outstanding Universal Value:

Nominated properties are required to demonstrate their potential Outstanding Universal Value through their attributes. Attributes convey the potential Outstanding Universal Value and enable an understanding of that value. These attributes will be the focus of protection and management actions, and institutional arrangements, and their spatial distribution and respective protection requirements will inform the boundary of the property.

Attributes can be physical qualities or fabric, but can also include processes, associated with a property, that impact on physical qualities, such as natural or agricultural processes, social arrangements or cultural practices that have shaped distinctive landscapes. For natural properties they can be specific landscape features, areas of habitat, flagship species, aspects relating to environmental quality (such as intactness, high/pristine environmental quality), scale and naturalness of habitats, and size and viability of wildlife populations. (UNESCO 2021, Annex 5, Section 2 (a)).

In recent years, the concept of attributes has been developed and incorporated into other UNESCO guidance. In Periodic Reporting, States Parties and site managers were first invited to describe the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value in the questionnaire for the Second Cycle (2008–2015) though the uptake was not great. **In the Third Cycle, currently underway, the need to define attributes and to assess their condition has assumed even more prominence** (see **Appendix 1** of

this report, taken from the Third Cycle Periodic Reporting Questionnaire). The state of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value is seen as a good proxy for the condition of overall Outstanding Universal Value. The concept of attributes is likely to become even more prominent in the activities of the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre, and the Advisory Bodies in the future.

This section has only touched on the nature and use of attributes.²

1.4 Use of attributes in the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting

As noted in Section 1.3, the take-up of the request to identify attributes of Outstanding Universal Value in the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting was far from universal. Nevertheless, the World Heritage Committee decided to continue to focus on attributes in Third Cycle. There was more than one reason for this.

Generally, attributes are an important aspect of Outstanding Universal Value since they convey that significance and enable an understanding of it. The identification of attributes such as physical features or relationships between such features can provide an easier basis for site management than the definition of Outstanding Universal Value as a whole. Often it is easier to assess the impact of a proposal by using the affected attribute(s) as a proxy for Outstanding Universal Value.

Attributes are used quite extensively throughout Section II of the questionnaire for the Third Cycle. This report has focused mainly on how the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value should be identified for the purpose of Periodic Reporting.

Identification of between five and 15 attributes of Outstanding Universal Value is one of the purposes of Question 3.2. The second equally important part of the question is to assess the condition of each attribute on a scale of 'Lost', 'Seriously compromised', 'Compromised', or 'Preserved'. Definitions are given for each of these conditions (**Appendix 1**). This information will provide a baseline for future reviews of their condition in subsequent cycles of Periodic Reporting, since one of the purposes of the exercise is to measure change through time.

² Further discussion can be found in a recent publication by the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties which contains contributions from more than a dozen experts from across the world (Nishi, Sakaino, Fujisawa (eds) 2021, see particularly Young 2021 in this volume).

The attributes and their condition are then used to support replies to subsequent questions. Questions 4.1 to 4.14 ask whether and how each property is, or might be in the future, affected by a series of factors. There are more than 70 secondary factors, grouped into **14 primary factors [Link]** which correspond to those used in reactive monitoring missions and state of conservation reports. For each secondary factor it is necessary to identify whether it is or is not relevant to the specific property. If it is relevant, it is then necessary to say whether its impact is current or potential, whether it originates inside or outside the property, whether its trend is decreasing, stable or increasing, and whether it is positive or negative.

The questionnaire (4.15) then automatically produces a table summarising all the relevant factors and whether they are current or potential, their impact is negative or positive, and if located inside or outside the property. The site manager is asked to assess for each identified factor:

- its spatial scale;
- its temporal scale;
- its impact on the attributes of the site;
- its contribution to sustainable development;
- its trend over the last six years (i.e., since the previous Periodic Reporting cycle); and
- the capacity of site management to respond to the factor.

Question 4.18 asks for a prediction of the likely state of conservation of each attribute at the next cycle of Periodic Reporting, using the same scale of 'Lost', 'Seriously compromised', 'Compromised', or 'Preserved'.

Question 5.1.1 assesses the adequacy of the property boundaries partly by asking whether attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are outside the boundaries.

Question 7.1 asks whether there is adequate knowledge about the values and attributes of the property to support planning, management and decision making to ensure the maintenance of Outstanding Universal Value.

Section 12 of the questionnaire summarises and analyses the results; 12.1 summarises the factors affecting the site. One question is how the attributes and Outstanding Universal Value itself are affected by the factors impacting on the property. Question 12.3 asks separately about the current state of authenticity and

integrity, whether Outstanding Universal Value has been maintained, and what the current state of any other values of the property is. In each case, the respondent is asked, among other things, to consider the answers given earlier on attributes, along with the summary of factors affecting the property and management needs, and responses to questions on protection, management and monitoring of the property.

From this brief survey, it will be clear that two of the key aspects relating to the state of conservation of a property are the condition of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, and the factors affecting that property. This demonstrates the importance now given to attributes in the management of a World Heritage Property and the implementation of the World Heritage Convention at site level. Attributes of Outstanding Universal Value have now been recognised as a key part of the protection, management and monitoring of World Heritage Properties. It is therefore vital that the identification of attributes of Outstanding Universal Value is carried out thoroughly and conscientiously for both Periodic Reporting and other purposes. A methodology for doing so is set out in Section 1.5 below.

1.5 Methodology

This report was commissioned by the National Monuments Service to produce a summary of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the two World Heritage Properties of Brú na Bóinne and Sceilg Mhichíl. It is therefore not a comprehensive list of all attributes of the two properties though it is desirable that such lists should be produced for all World Heritage Properties since a comprehensive knowledge of each property is essential for effective management. The report is intended to support a specific piece of work which has to be carried out by the Irish State Party and the site managers of Brú na Bóinne and Sceilg Mhichíl for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting. The summarised attributes are needed to report on the state of conservation of the two properties in the Periodic Report.

Periodic Reporting is carried out by all States Parties belonging to the World Heritage Convention at intervals of roughly six to eight years to meet the reporting requirements of Article 29 of the World Heritage Convention. Since the first cycle (2001–2006), the process has continued to evolve while attempting to maintain some continuity of the data recorded to allow for the analysis of trend data over time. Increasing emphasis has been placed on identification and assessment of the

condition of attributes of Outstanding Universal Value and this has become one of the central tasks of the Third Cycle, which is currently underway. This report therefore identifies and summarises only the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the two properties.

Because of the purpose of this report, the starting point has to be the definition of attribute used in the Periodic Reporting Questionnaire:

Attributes, more commonly called features in the case of natural properties, are those elements, processes or features that convey and make manifest the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of a property. Identification and understanding of their interrelationships are crucial to understanding OUV and therefore to ensuring appropriate protection and management mechanisms. Attributes should be the focus of protection and management. It is therefore very important that they should be identified for Periodic Reports on World Heritage Properties.

Attributes can be physical qualities or fabric, or the relationships between them. Attributes can also be processes impacting on physical qualities, such as natural or agricultural processes, social arrangements or cultural practices that have shaped distinctive landscapes. For natural properties, they can include landscape features, habitats, aspects of environmental quality (such as intactness, high/pristine environmental quality), scale and naturalness of habitats, and size and viability of wildlife populations. (Appendix 1)

Attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are stated in the guidance to the Periodic Reporting Questionnaire to be encapsulated in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the property. This Statement is agreed by the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription and can, in practice, only be changed by a renomination of the property. In the case of the two Irish properties, the Statements were adopted retrospectively since they were inscribed before the current practice was adopted. These Statements of Outstanding Universal Value are based on the relevant decisions of the World Heritage Committee and on the documentation available to them at the time of inscription (**primarily the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) evaluation of the nomination dossier [Link]**).

In this report, the analysis of the attributes is carried out separately for each property. Brú na Bóinne is covered in Section 2 and **Appendix 2**. Sceilg Mhichíl is considered in Section 3 and **Appendix 3**.

Step 1 of the methodology is to go through the agreed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value and identify all the attributes present in each Statement. The results of this exercise are to be found in **Appendix 2** (for Brú na Bóinne) and **Appendix 3** (for Sceilg Mhichíl).

Step 2 for both properties is to list all the identified attributes in tabular form.

Step 3 is to group them thematically. The themes will vary according to the nature and defined Outstanding Universal Value of each property. For both properties, landscape and intangible are obvious themes. Both also have groups of attributes which relate more directly to the physical man-made remains of the property. For Brú na Bóinne this theme has been defined as ‘archaeological sites and features’, and for Sceilg Mhichíl ‘archaeological/architectural/structural features/qualities’. At Sceilg Mhichíl a fourth identified group is ‘nature’ since, very unusually, the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for a cultural property identifies a natural attribute (breeding seabirds).

Step 4 is to summarise the attributes which have been thematically grouped, since the Periodic Reporting Questionnaire asks for the identification of between five and 15 attributes for each property. In **Tables 3 and 8**, these summary attributes are shown in bold. At this point, some of the original attributes were moved between themes because this seemed to work better when grouped and summarised.

For Brú na Bóinne a fifth step was to compare the draft summary attributes with an attribute list produced independently in 2017. No similar list has been identified for Sceilg Mhichíl.

At Brú na Bóinne there is a high degree of overlap between the two lists as far as Outstanding Universal Value is concerned, though the style of the two lists is different. The 2017 list introduced many attributes which are not relevant to the agreed Outstanding Universal Value. Exceptionally, the inclusion of one attribute from the 2017 list, which is not specifically documented in the agreed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, is recommended for inclusion in the final list because

in spirit it clearly falls within the Outstanding Universal Value, and it is also highly significant in terms of future management of the property.

Finally, a consolidated list of summary attributes is recommended for each property in Section 4.



Solstice within Newgrange Passage Tomb

2 Brú na Bóinne

Brú na Bóinne was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1993. Its retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was only agreed by the World Heritage Committee in 2013 on the basis of the information presented to the Committee at the time of inscription.⁴ Even that decision and Statement are now ten years old. The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value therefore takes no account of developments in the understanding of the property in the last 30 years. This is a period when there has been considerable change in understanding of the archaeology and landscape of the area. The Statement also contains relatively little on the intangible aspects of the property.

There are also some aspects of the property's significance which do not appear to have been taken into account by ICOMOS in its 1993 evaluation of the property. For example, there is no mention of the astronomical aspects of Newgrange. This does raise certain issues which are considered further below. First, it is important to identify the attributes that were identified in the 2013 Statement (**Appendix 2** of this report shows the whole Statement of Outstanding Universal Value with the potential attributes identified in bold). These are listed in **Table 1**. This table quotes identified attributes directly from the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value in the order in which they appear in the Statement:

Table 1: First cut attributes for Brú na Bóinne in the order in which they appear in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

- Bounded on the south by a bend in the River Boyne
- Three great burial mounds of Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth
- Forty satellite passage graves
- Funerary landscape recognised as having great ritual significance
- Attracting later monuments of the Iron Age, early Christian and medieval periods
- Part of an area rich in stories of Ireland's ancient past

⁴ The Statement contains factual errors which will be corrected in due course.

- Knowth group where the earliest features date from the Neolithic period and the latest from the Anglo-Norman period⁵, has produced thirty monuments and sites that figure on the official inventory; these include passage graves adorned with petroglyphs, enclosures, occupation sites and field systems
- The Newgrange group is purely prehistoric with a ringfort⁶, cursus, passage graves and a henge
- The Dowth group is similar to that at Newgrange but there is medieval⁷ evidence in the form of a church and a castle⁸
- Largest and most important expression of prehistoric megalithic plastic art in Europe
- Concentration of social, economic and funerary monuments at this important ritual centre
- Long continuity from prehistory to the late medieval period
- Passage grave, here brought to its finest expression, was a feature of outstanding importance in prehistoric Europe and beyond
- 90 recorded monuments – as well as an unknown quantity of as yet unrecorded sites – remain scattered across the ridge above the Boyne and over the low-lying areas and floodplain closer to (the present course of) the rivers
- Views into and out of the property
- Ambiance of the ritual centre
- Archaeological remains on the site, both above and below ground

In terms of management and Periodic Reporting, the order, which reflects the requirements of the format of the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, is not particularly helpful. The list is also very repetitive. In **Table 2**, therefore, the attributes

⁵ Error in Statement; the latest archaeological features date to the 17th century.

⁶ Error in Statement; should be referred to as a stone circle.

⁷ Error in Statement; the evidence of activity dates to the medieval and late medieval periods.

⁸ Error in Statement; should be referred to as a tower house.

have been grouped into three categories of landscape and setting, archaeological sites and features, and intangible.

Table 2: First cut attributes for Brú na Bóinne grouped thematically

Landscape and setting

- Located about 40 km north of Dublin on a ridge between the rivers Boyne and Mattock
- Bounded on the south by a bend in the River Boyne
- Funerary landscape recognised as having great ritual significance
- Concentration of social, economic and funerary monuments at this important ritual centre

Archaeological sites and features

- Long continuity from prehistory to the late medieval period make this one of the most significant archaeological sites in Europe
- Passage grave, here brought to its finest expression, was a feature of outstanding importance in prehistoric Europe and beyond
- Largest and most important expression of prehistoric megalithic plastic art in Europe
- Three great burial mounds of Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth
- Knowth group where the earliest features date from the Neolithic period and the latest from the Anglo-Norman period, has produced thirty monuments and sites that figure on the official inventory, including passage graves adorned with petroglyphs, enclosures, occupation sites, field systems
- Newgrange group is purely prehistoric with a ringfort, cursus, passage graves and a henge
- Dowth group is similar to that at Newgrange but there is medieval evidence in the form of a church and a castle
- Attracting later monuments of the Iron Age, early Christian and medieval periods

- 90 recorded monuments – as well as an unknown quantity of as yet unrecorded sites – remain scattered across the ridge above the Boyne and over the low-lying areas and floodplain closer to (the present course of) the rivers
- Forty satellite passage graves
- Archaeological remains on the site, both above and below ground

Intangible

- Part of an area rich in stories of Ireland's ancient past
- Views into and out of the property
- Ambiance of the ritual centre

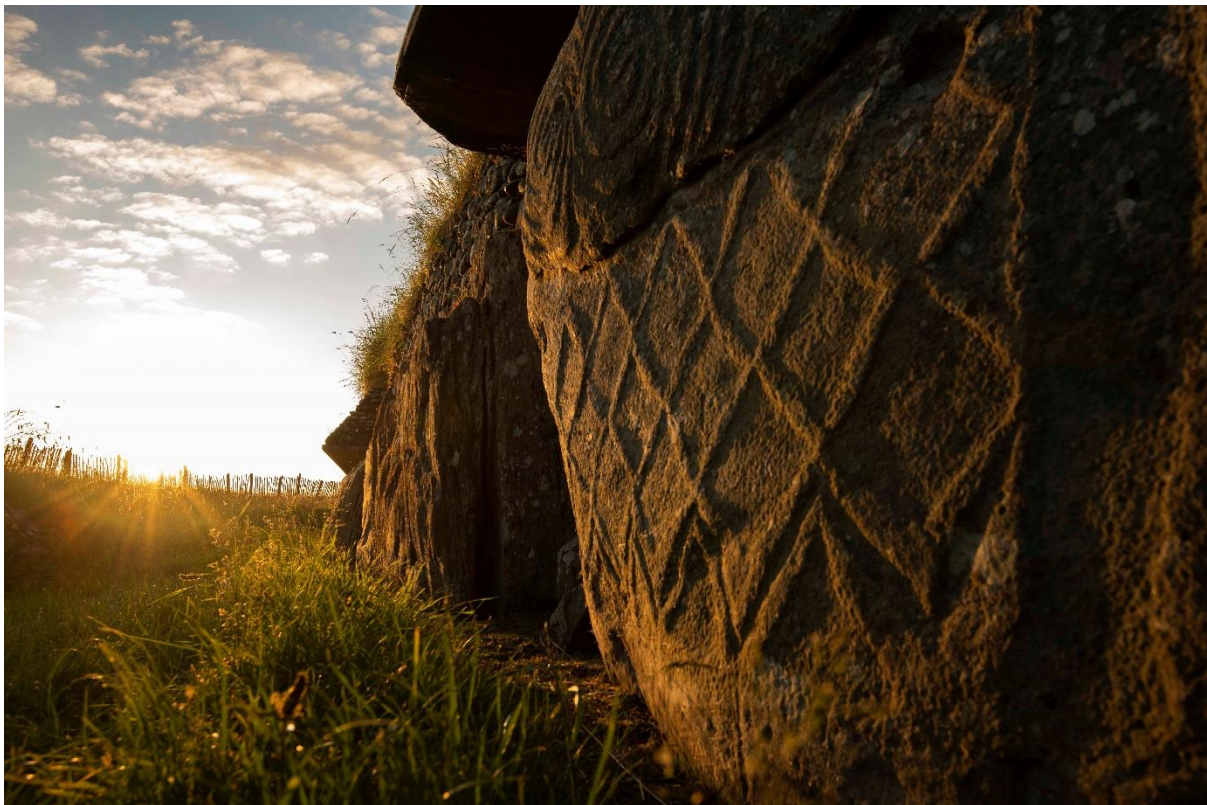


Image 1 Megalithic art on kerbstone at Brú na Bóinne.

Grouping the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value in this way is a useful management tool in that similar attribute types will require similar treatments. As it stands, though, this list is lengthy and for the purposes of Periodic Reporting it is helpful to summarise or group attributes. The guidance for Periodic Reporting

suggests that the focus should be on five attributes with a maximum of 15 considered. Focusing on just five attributes is impractical for a large and complex landscape property such as Brú na Bóinne.

Table 3 adds in bold a summarised version of the attributes which attempts to consolidate them into around a dozen items.

Table 3: Suggested summary attributes of Outstanding Universal Value for Brú na Bóinne (in bold)

Landscape and setting

- Located about 40 km north of Dublin on a ridge between the rivers Boyne and Mattock
- Bounded on the south by a bend in the River Boyne
- Funerary landscape recognised as having great ritual significance
- Concentration of social, economic and funerary monuments at this important ritual centre

An extensive funerary landscape of great ritual significance in a bend of the River Boyne with a concentration of social, economic and funerary monuments including 40+ passage graves

Archaeological sites and features

- Long continuity from prehistory to the late medieval period makes this one of the most significant archaeological sites in Europe

The time depth of Brú na Bóinne from the Neolithic to late medieval periods

- Passage grave, here brought to its finest expression, was a feature of outstanding importance in prehistoric Europe and beyond

The finest expression of passage graves in prehistoric Europe

- Largest and most important expression of prehistoric megalithic plastic art in Europe

Largest and most important expression of prehistoric megalithic plastic art in Europe

- Three great burial mounds of Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth

The three great burial mounds of Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth and the sites surrounding them

- Knowth group where the earliest features date from the Neolithic period and the latest from the Anglo-Norman period, has produced thirty monuments and sites that figure on the official inventory; these include passage graves adorned with petroglyphs, enclosures, occupation sites, field systems

Knowth group with use spanning from the Neolithic to the Anglo-Norman periods, including passage graves, enclosures, occupation sites and field systems

- Newgrange group is purely prehistoric with a ringfort, cursus, passage graves, henge

Newgrange group of prehistoric sites including passage graves, henge, cursus, and ringfort

- Dowth group is similar to that at Newgrange but there is medieval evidence in the form of a church and a castle

Dowth group of prehistoric and Iron Age, early Christian and early medieval sites including the great burial mound, megalithic tombs, many smaller burial mounds, henge, standing stone, and medieval church and castle

- Attracting later monuments of the Iron Age, early Christian and medieval periods
- 90 recorded monuments – as well as an unknown quantity of as yet unrecorded sites – remain scattered across the ridge above the Boyne and over the low-lying areas and floodplain closer to (the present course of) the rivers
- Forty satellite passage graves
- Archaeological remains on the site, both above and below ground

Other prehistoric, Iron Age, early Christian and medieval sites spread across the landscape

Intangible

- Part of an area rich in stories of Ireland's ancient past

Part of an area rich in stories of Ireland's ancient past

- Ambiance of the ritual centre

Ambiance of the ritual centre

- Views into and out of the property

Views into and out of the property

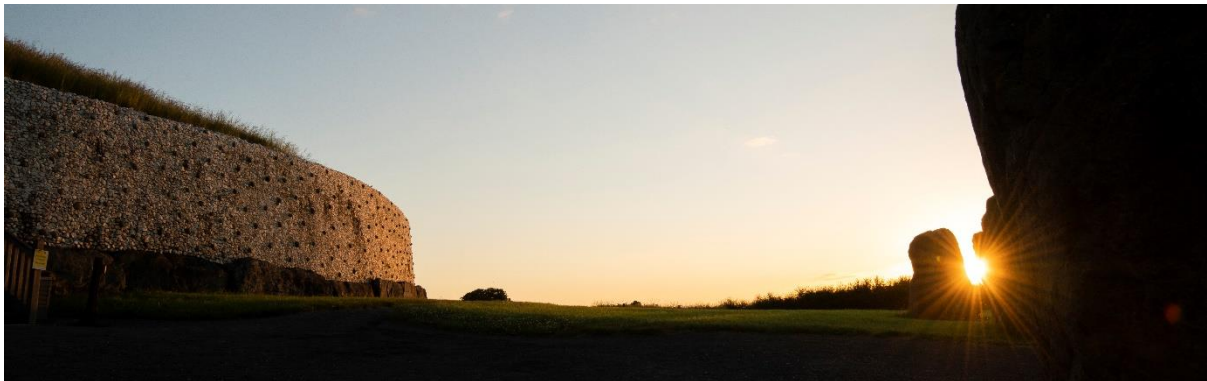


Image 2 Summer solstice at Newgrange.

The selected attributes derived from the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value are shown in **Table 4** below. The bulk of the attributes are archaeological and they have been chosen to cover both typological aspects such as passage graves and megalithic plastic art, and topographical and relational aspects. In particular, the three great clusters of Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth are emphasised since they are such dominant features within the landscape and were clearly the foci of much contemporary and later activity. Of course, there are many other attributes of Brú na Bóinne but many of these do not relate directly to its Outstanding Universal Value. The ones selected here are those which express the Outstanding Universal Value most clearly. **Views have been moved from the intangible group to the landscape heading because the management issues around views relate so much to the landscape as a whole.**

Table 4: Proposed attributes of Outstanding Universal Value for Brú na Bóinne

<p>Landscape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. An extensive funerary landscape of great ritual significance in a bend of the River Boyne with a concentration of social, economic and funerary monuments including 40+ passage graves2. Views into and out of the property
<p>Archaeological features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. The time depth of Brú na Bóinne from the Neolithic to late medieval periods4. The finest expression of passage graves in prehistoric Europe5. Largest and most important expression of prehistoric megalithic plastic art in Europe6. The three great burial mounds of Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth and the sites surrounding them7. Knowth group with use spanning from the Neolithic to the Anglo-Norman periods, including passage graves, enclosures, occupation sites and field systems8. Newgrange group of prehistoric sites including passage graves, henge, cursus, and ringfort9. Dowth group of prehistoric and Iron Age, early Christian and early medieval sites including the great burial mound, megalithic tombs, many smaller burial mounds, henge, standing stone, and medieval church and castle10. Other prehistoric, Iron Age, early Christian and medieval sites spread across the landscape
<p>Intangible</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">11. Part of an area rich in stories of Ireland's ancient past12. Ambiance of the ritual centre

As noted above, these attributes are drawn directly from the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. However, there have been other attempts to define attributes for Brú na Bóinne, most notably in the Doyle Kent report of 2017 (see **Table 5** below).

These have been reviewed to see whether any of them are relevant to the definition of Outstanding Universal Value and of high importance to the management of the property. As a group they have similarities to the attributes defined in 2009 for the Stonehenge part of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site (Young, Chadburn, Bedu 2009, 28) and subsequently applied to the whole property (Simmonds, Thomas 2015, 32). All are true of the Brú na Bóinne property and all of them are highly relevant in the overall management of the property. However, the ICOMOS evaluations of the two properties, carried out some years apart focus on these great monument complexes in different ways.

Table 5: Attributes relating to Outstanding Universal Value and other values from 2017 Doyle Kent report (Section 16.3, Appendix C; item numbers have been added for ease of reference in discussion)

1. Newgrange is globally famous and its carved stones in particular are iconic monuments in the public consciousness
2. The presence and scale of the megalithic tombs dating from the Neolithic period
3. The important concentration of megalithic art
4. The physical remains as masterpieces of human creative genius
5. The siting or landscape setting of monuments
6. The design of the passage graves in relation to the skies and astronomy demonstrates a high level of human knowledge, ingenuity and creativity
7. The longevity of settlement in this location is significant giving information about life, ritual, economy, environment, settlement, and the adaptation of agriculture
8. The influence and inspiration that these monuments have had and continue to have on artists, writers, historians, archaeologists, architects and others

9. The site has contributed to the development of archaeological practice from its early antiquarian origins to more recent non-invasive technologies
10. The site has educational and research values
11. The World Heritage Site contains a large number of both archaeological and historic assets many of which are important in their own right although not attributes of its Outstanding Universal Value
12. Social, artistic and spiritual values manifest through the strong sense of history, the continuing interest and the astronomical and mystical significance of the World Heritage Site for many indicate a spiritual value of the site as a sanctuary
13. The local community value is key through its ongoing involvement with the World Heritage Site
14. The World Heritage Site has tourism and economic values
15. The World Heritage Site has natural values

As noted previously, it is the ICOMOS evaluations which are the primary sources of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value because they provide the evaluation of the properties which were considered by the World Heritage Committee when it placed them on the World Heritage List. However, if aspects covered in the ICOMOS evaluation are not included in the Statement once it has been agreed by the Committee, it is the Statement which takes precedence in the World Heritage system. Since this particular exercise has been commissioned to deal with the particular needs of the UNESCO Periodic Report, it is necessary to stick as closely as possible to defining attributes which are directly derived from the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, unless there are strong reasons for doing otherwise.



Image 3 Morning at Newgrange.

Looking at the attributes defined in the Doyle Kent report, it is clear that numbers 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15 relate primarily to management and access to the property and are therefore not relevant to the Outstanding Universal Value. Number 11 is excluded because it specifically defines attributes which are not part of the property's Outstanding Universal Value. Number 8 (the influence of the monuments on artists and other creatives) is doubtless an important aspect of Brú na Bóinne but is not mentioned in the agreed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (unlike Stonehenge and Avebury). The same is true of number 4 (the physical remains as masterpieces of human creative genius) and number 12 (social, artistic and spiritual values) except that the latter is covered to some extent by attributes 11 and 12 on **Table 4**. Number 1 (the global fame of Newgrange) is again undoubtedly true but is not mentioned in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (again unlike Stonehenge).

Several other attributes on the Doyle Kent list duplicate those in **Table 4** which are derived from the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. Number 2 is covered by numbers 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 in **Table 4**. Number 3 matches 5 in **Table 4**, number 5 matches 1 in **Table 4**, and number 7 is equivalent to 3.

There remains attribute 6 in **Table 5**, which relates the design of the passage graves in relation to the skies and astronomy. This is clearly a very important aspect of the passage graves, particularly of Newgrange. However, it was not mentioned in the

Statement of Outstanding Universal Value or in the ICOMOS evaluation of the nomination dossier. However, the need to protect and manage the astronomical aspects of the property is an important factor which needs to be taken into account. Because of its operational significance in future management, it is suggested that the astronomical links should be added as a further attribute since they are such an integral part of the complex.

This will give a final list of 13 attributes to be used in the Periodic Report, with the astronomical links added as number 6, see Section 4.



Puffin atop Sceilg Mhichíl.

3 Sceilg Mhichíl

Sceilg Mhichíl was added to the World Heritage List in 1996. Its retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2017. Unlike Brú na Bóinne, the Committee did include a short statement about the values of the property in its decision, which is fully reflected in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

The Committee decided to inscribe the nominated property on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (iv) considering that the site is of outstanding universal value being an exceptional, and in many respects unique example of an early religious settlement deliberately sited on a pyramidal rock in the ocean, preserved because of a remarkable environment. It illustrates, as no other site can, the extremes of a Christian monasticism characterizing much of North Africa, the Near East and Europe. (Decision 20COM VIII C)



Image 4 Island of Sceilg Mhichíl.

As with all retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value, the Statement agreed by the Committee will have been based on the Committee decision and the ICOMOS evaluation presented to the Committee in 1996. The Statement takes no account of the developments in understanding of the site in the quarter-century since the nomination was submitted and ICOMOS carried out its evaluation.

Appendix 3 of this report shows the whole Statement of Outstanding Universal Value with the potential attributes identified. These are listed in **Table 6**, largely in the order in which they appear in the Statement. **Table 7** shows the same draft attributes grouped thematically. This is useful for management since similar attributes are likely to require similar approaches. The themes selected are landscape/seascape/setting, archaeological/architectural/structural features/qualities (essentially human interventions on the island), intangible, and natural since one identified attribute is that the island is one of Ireland's most important sites for breeding seabirds.



Image 5 Aerial view of the monastery from the south.

This list of attributes is lengthy with 35 items identified. The Periodic Reporting guidance recommends a maximum of 15 attributes with five as an ideal, which is unrealistic for many complex World Heritage Properties. It is still necessary to try to group and summarise attributes to reduce the number which are monitored for Periodic Reporting. **Table 8** has added in bold a suggested grouping and summary of attributes. In each case the summarised attribute is below the attributes which it is summarising. As with Brú na Bóinne, carrying out this task has meant that some attributes have been moved between thematic groups.

This exercise gives a list of nine attributes which together cover all the more detailed attributes of Outstanding Universal Value identified from the retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. These are listed in Section 4.

Table 6: First cut attributes for Sceilg Mhichíl in the order in which they appear in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

- Most spectacularly situated of all early medieval island monastic sites
- Isolated hermitage perched on narrow, human-made terraces just below the South Peak
- U-shaped depression known today as “Christ’s Valley” or “Christ’s Saddle” 130 m above sea level in the centre of the island, and this is flanked by two peaks
- Three island landing points
- Flights of steps
- Principal monastic remains, which are situated on a sloping shelf on the ridge running north-south on the north-eastern side of the island
- Hermitage is on the steeper South Peak
- The monastery, its cells and oratories and the even more precipitous structures of the South Peak Hermitage symbolise both the arrival and spread of Christianity and emerging literacy of lands so remote
- Isolation
- Difficulty in accessing the site
- Living spaces
- Buildings for worship
- Plots for food production
- Dramatic and unique settings
- Indigenous stone architecture of a past millennium is intact
- Evolution of dry-stone masonry techniques

- Unique documentation of the development of this type of architecture and construction
- One of Ireland's most important sites for breeding seabirds
- Illustrates, as no other property can, the extremes of a Christian monasticism characterizing much of North Africa, the Near East and Europe
- Outstanding and in many respects a unique example of an early religious settlement deliberately sited on a pyramidal rock in the ocean
- Structural-historic integrity in that the structures have developed over time
- Visual-aesthetic integrity, in other words, the iconic image that has been retained
- Unique artistic achievement
- Outstanding example of a perfectly preserved early medieval monastic settlement
- Architectural ensemble is unique because of its level of preservation
- Significant stage in building history
- Uniqueness of the property
- Dramatic topography of the island
- Integration of the various monastic elements within the landscape
- Presence of the monks on the island for such a long period has imbued the place with a strong sense of spirituality
- Sense of remoteness
- Stepped terraces
- Paved areas
- Overall layout is almost fully intact

Table 7: First cut attributes for Sceilg Mhichíl grouped thematically

Landscape/Seascape/Setting

- Most spectacularly situated of all early medieval island monastic sites
- Isolation
- Difficulty in accessing the site
- Dramatic topography of the island
- Dramatic and unique settings
- Integration of the various monastic elements within the landscape
- Isolated hermitage perched on narrow, human-made terraces just below the South Peak
- U-shaped depression known today as “Christ’s Valley” or “Christ’s Saddle” 130 m above sea level in the centre of the island, and this is flanked by two peaks
- Outstanding and in many respects a unique example of an early religious settlement deliberately sited on a pyramidal rock in the ocean
- Principal monastic remains, which are situated on a sloping shelf on the ridge running north-south on the north-eastern side of the island
- Hermitage is on the steeper South Peak

Archaeological/architectural/structural features/qualities

- Significant stage in building history
- Outstanding example of a perfectly preserved early medieval monastic settlement
- Architectural ensemble is unique because of its level of preservation
- Three island landing points
- Flights of steps
- Living spaces
- Buildings for worship
- Plots for food production

- Uniqueness of the property
- Isolation
- Stepped terraces
- Paved areas
- Overall layout is almost fully intact
- Indigenous stone architecture of a past millennium is intact
- Evolution of dry-stone masonry techniques
- Unique documentation of the development of this type of architecture and construction and structural-historical integrity, in that the structures have evolved over time

Intangible

- The monastery, its cells and oratories and the even more precipitous structures of the South Peak Hermitage symbolise both the arrival and spread of Christianity and emerging literacy of lands so remote
- Illustrates, as no other property can, the extremes of a Christian monasticism characterizing much of North Africa, the Near East and Europe
- Unique artistic achievement
- Visual-aesthetic integrity, in other words, the iconic image that has been retained
- Presence of the monks on the island for such a long period has imbued the place with a strong sense of spirituality
- Sense of remoteness

Nature

- One of Ireland's most important sites for breeding seabirds



Image 6 Monks' graveyard and cells of the monastery.

Table 8: Suggested summary attributes of Outstanding Universal Value for Sceilg Mhichíl (in bold)

Landscape/seascape/setting

- Most spectacularly situated of all early medieval island monastic sites
- Isolation
- Sense of remoteness
- Dramatic and unique settings

- Difficulty in accessing the site
- Outstanding and in many respects a unique example of an early religious settlement deliberately sited on a pyramidal rock in the ocean

Most spectacularly situated of all early medieval island monasteries in an isolated and dramatic marine setting, deliberately sited on a pyramidal rock in the ocean

- Dramatic topography of the island
- U-shaped depression known today as “Christ’s Valley” or “Christ’s Saddle” 130 m above sea level in the centre of the island, and this is flanked by two peaks

Dramatic topography and scenery of the island with Christ’s Valley 130 m above sea level flanked by the North and South Peaks

- Principal monastic remains, which are situated on a sloping shelf on the ridge running north-south on the north-eastern side of the island
- Integration of the various monastic elements within the landscape
- Isolated hermitage perched on narrow, human-made terraces just below the South Peak
- Hermitage is on the steeper South Peak

Integration within the landscape of the principal monastic remains on a sloping shelf on the north-eastern side of the island and of the hermitage on narrow terraces just below the South Peak within the landscape of the island

Archaeological/architectural/structural features/qualities

- Outstanding example of a perfectly preserved early medieval monastic settlement
 - three island landing points
 - flights of steps
 - living spaces
 - buildings for worship

- plots for food production
- stepped terraces
- paved areas
- Overall layout is almost fully intact
- Architectural ensemble is unique because of its level of preservation
- Significant stage in building history
- Uniqueness of the property

Outstanding example of a perfectly preserved early medieval monastic settlement including landing points, flights of steps, terracing, plots for food production, paved areas, living spaces, buildings for worship

- Indigenous stone architecture of a past millennium is intact
- Evolution of dry-stone masonry techniques
- Unique documentation of the development of this type of architecture and construction

Intact indigenous stone architecture of a past millennium, uniquely documenting the evolution of dry-stone masonry techniques

- Structural-historical integrity, in that the structures have evolved over time

Structural-historical integrity

Intangible

- The monastery, its cells and oratories and the even more precipitous structures of the South Peak Hermitage symbolise both the arrival and spread of Christianity and emerging literacy of lands so remote
- Illustrates, as no other property can, the extremes of a Christian monasticism characterizing much of North Africa, the Near East and Europe

Symbol of the spread of Christianity and emerging literacy across the world, illustrating the extremes of early Christian monasticism

- Unique artistic achievement
- Visual-aesthetic integrity, in other words, the iconic image that has been retained
- Presence of the monks on the island for such a long period has imbued the place with a strong sense of spirituality

Strong sense of spirituality derived from the long presence of the monks on the island and the retention of the visual-aesthetic integrity of this iconic site

Nature

- One of Ireland's most important sites for breeding seabirds

One of Ireland's most important sites for breeding seabirds

4 Conclusions and recommendations

Attributes have become an increasingly important part of the management of World Heritage Properties to protect their Outstanding Universal Value. Attributes are now one of the key components of the Periodic Report since their condition can help to assess the overall state of conservation of World Heritage Properties. It is therefore very important to identify the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value as clearly as possible for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting.

The basis for identifying attributes of Outstanding Universal Value for Brú na Bóinne and Sceilg Mhichíl is their agreed Statements of Outstanding Universal Value since these Statements are regarded in the World Heritage system as the basis for future management and as encapsulating the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. This analysis has first used the Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for Brú na Bóinne and Sceilg Mhichíl to identify 'first cut' lists of attributes of Outstanding Universal Value for the two properties. These have then been grouped and summarised to produce lists of between five and 15 attributes in line with the UNESCO guidance on the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting. These will not be a comprehensive statement of all attributes of heritage value since there will be some which do not contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value.

The analysis for Brú na Bóinne also took into account an independent list of attributes produced in 2017. Very exceptionally, it is recommended that one attribute not specifically included in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value should be included in the summary list for the Periodic Report. No such alternative statement has been identified for Sceilg Mhichíl.

On the basis of the analysis in this report, it is recommended that the following summary lists of attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are used for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting.⁹

⁹ The errors in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for Brú na Bóinne noted above have been corrected for the final list of attributes in Section 4.1.

4.1 Brú na Bóinne

Landscape

1. An extensive funerary landscape of great ritual significance in a bend of the River Boyne with a concentration of social, economic and funerary monuments including 40+ passage graves
2. Views into and out of the property

Archaeological features

3. The time depth of Brú na Bóinne from the Neolithic to late medieval periods
4. The finest expression of passage graves in prehistoric Europe
5. Largest and most important expression of prehistoric megalithic plastic art in Europe
6. The design of the passage graves in relation to the skies and astronomy
7. The three great burial mounds of Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth and the sites surrounding them
8. Knowth group with use spanning from the Neolithic to the late medieval periods, including passage graves, enclosures, occupation sites and field systems
9. Newgrange group of prehistoric sites including passage graves, henge, cursus, and stone circle
10. Dowth group of prehistoric and Iron Age, early Christian and late medieval sites including the great burial mound, megalithic tombs, many smaller burial mounds, henge, standing stone, and medieval church and tower house
11. Other prehistoric, Iron Age, early Christian and medieval sites spread across the landscape

Intangible

12. Part of an area rich in stories of Ireland's ancient past
13. Ambiance of the ritual centre

4.2 Sceilg Mhichíl

Landscape

1. Most spectacularly situated of all early medieval island monasteries in an isolated and dramatic marine setting, deliberately sited on a pyramidal rock in the ocean
2. Dramatic topography and scenery of the island with Christ's Valley 130 m above sea level flanked by the North and South Peaks
3. Integration within the landscape of the principal monastic remains on a sloping shelf on the north-eastern side of the island and of the hermitage on narrow terraces just below the South Peak within the landscape of the island

Archaeological/architectural/structural features/qualities

4. Outstanding example of a perfectly preserved early medieval monastic settlement including landing points, flights of steps, terracing, plots for food production, paved areas, living spaces, buildings for worship
5. Intact indigenous stone architecture of a past millennium, uniquely documenting the evolution of dry-stone masonry techniques
6. Structural-historical integrity

Intangible

7. Symbol of the spread of Christianity and emerging literacy across the world, illustrating the extremes of early Christian monasticism
8. Strong sense of spirituality derived from the long presence of the monks on the island and the retention of the visual-aesthetic integrity of this iconic site

Nature

9. One of Ireland's most important sites for breeding seabirds



Sunrise at Newgrange.

Appendix 1 Third Cycle Periodic Reporting Format: Question 3.2 defining attributes of Outstanding Universal Value

List of attributes of Outstanding Universal Value and assessment of their condition

Please list the key attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of your property and give an assessment of their condition. As a guideline, it is suggested to focus on approximately five key attributes (no more than 15 overall).

Attributes are an important aspect of Outstanding Universal Value. The identification of attributes such as physical features or relationships between features including landscapes provides an easier basis for site management than the sometimes more general definition of Outstanding Universal Value. Attributes can also be intangible (e.g. silence). Attributes should be based on and extracted from the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

The condition of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value is a good guide to the overall state of conservation of a World Heritage Property. This question also seeks to establish the present condition of each attribute and the trend in that condition since the last cycle of Periodic Reporting (is it getting better or worse?).

Identification of attributes

Attributes, more commonly called features in the case of natural properties, are those elements, processes or features that convey and make manifest the Outstanding Universal Value of a property. Identification and understanding of their interrelationships are crucial to understanding Outstanding Universal Value and therefore to ensuring appropriate protection and management mechanisms. Attributes should be the focus of protection and management. It is therefore very important that they should be identified for Periodic Reports on World Heritage Properties.

The World Heritage Committee adopts a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) for each property either at the time of inscription on the World

Heritage List or retrospectively for older properties. The Statement is the baseline for future management and encapsulates the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

In each SOUV, a balance is sought between specificity and synthesis. Further detailed identification of the attributes of each property, covering the elements of which they are composed, their distribution within the property and their relationship with the immediate or wider setting, is key to solidly grounded and effective protection and management: the lack of a clear and detailed understanding of the attributes may undermine management efforts and cause serious difficulties to the recovery process in case of disasters.

Attributes can be physical qualities or fabric, or the relationships between them. Attributes can also be processes impacting on physical qualities, such as natural or agricultural processes, social arrangements or cultural practices that have shaped distinctive landscapes. For natural properties, they can include landscape features, habitats, aspects of environmental quality (such as intactness, high/pristine environmental quality), scale and naturalness of habitats, and size and viability of wildlife populations.

A useful technique for complex properties, in particular cultural ones, with a complex layering of attributes, is to map the important attributes and the values they convey. This mapping can assist with understanding the relationship between attributes. It can also highlight conflicts or management issues.

The point of departure for such a detailed analysis is always the SOUV, particularly the brief synthesis, the justification of the criteria and the statements of authenticity (for cultural and mixed properties only) and integrity. The first step is to extrapolate from the SOUV references to qualities, features, and characteristics that support the case for Outstanding Universal Value and the criteria used for the property. In identifying attributes, it is possible to be more detailed than in the SOUV.

For cultural properties, integrity determines how well, in terms of completeness and intactness (including relationships, dynamic functions and processes), the attributes convey the Outstanding Universal Value, while authenticity indicates through which attributes and sources of information Outstanding Universal Value is truthfully and credibly expressed.

A suggested second step in further detailing the attributes includes analysing what makes up the attributes mentioned in the SOUV, listing these elements as well as mapping their location and density within the property.

Establishing a hierarchy among attributes, that is to say identifying which ones are crucial to convey the OUV and which ones may be considered complementary, could be a useful exercise for the prioritisation of management activities.

The approach developed here is based on the work of Jon Day at ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia. A number of World Heritage Properties have tested the approach in an attempt to operationalise the Outstanding Universal Value(s), including the **Great Barrier Reef** (Australia), **Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park** (Philippines), **Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System** (Belize), **Wet Tropics of Queensland** (Australia), **Fraser Island** (Australia), **Ningaloo Coast** (Australia), **West Norwegian Fjords – Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord** (Norway), **Aires volcaniques et forestières de la Martinique** (Tentative List, France).

Further information can be found in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) publication **Keeping the Outstanding Exceptional: the Future of World Heritage in Australia** (2013).

The categories in the table below can be defined as follows:

- **Lost:** loss or alteration to most aspects of this attribute has occurred and has caused a major loss of significance of this attribute.
- **Seriously compromised:** Loss or alteration of many aspects of this attribute has occurred, which is leading to a significant reduction in the significance of this attribute.
- **Compromised:** Some loss or alteration of the aspects of this attribute has already occurred, but their overall condition is not causing persistent or substantial effects to this attribute.
- **Preserved:** This attribute is essentially intact, and its overall condition is stable or improving. Available evidence indicates only minor, if any, disturbances, to this attribute.

Brief identification of attribute	Lost	Seriously compromised	Compromised	Preserved
Attribute 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attribute 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attribute 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attribute 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attribute 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 2 Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for Brú na Bóinne with attributes in bold

The text below is the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value agreed retrospectively by the World Heritage Committee in 2013. The Statement was drafted using the ICOMOS evaluation of the property when it was presented to the Committee for inscription in 1993. This was on the basis that this evaluation and recommendation was considered by the Committee at the time of inscription. It is therefore the closest available statement of what the Committee considered to be the property's Outstanding Universal Value justifying inclusion on the World Heritage List.

Attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are defined as those elements, processes or features that convey and make manifest the Outstanding Universal Value of a property. The elements in the text of the Statement in bold are those elements, processes or features considered to demonstrate the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

Brief synthesis

Bounded on the south by a bend in the River Boyne, the prehistoric site of Brú na Bóinne is dominated by the **three great burial mounds of Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth**. Surrounded by about **forty satellite passage graves**, they constitute a **funerary landscape recognised as having great ritual significance**, subsequently **attracting later monuments of the Iron Age, early Christian and medieval periods**.

Located about 40 km north of Dublin on a ridge between the rivers Boyne and Mattock, within several kilometres of other prehistoric mounds, the site is **part of an area rich in stories of Ireland's ancient past**. Predominantly agricultural at the present time the area has been extensively explored for more than a hundred years by archaeologists and historians, with excavations revealing many features.

The Knowth group, where the earliest features date from the Neolithic period and the latest from the Anglo-Norman period, has produced thirty monuments and sites that figure on the official inventory; these include **passage graves adorned with petroglyphs, enclosures, occupation sites and field systems**. The

Newgrange group is purely prehistoric, with a ringfort, cursus, passage graves and a henge. The Dowth group is similar to that at Newgrange but there is medieval evidence in the form of a church and a castle.

Criterion (i):

The Brú na Bóinne monuments represent the **largest and most important expression of prehistoric megalithic plastic art in Europe.**

Criterion (iii):

The **concentration of social, economic and funerary monuments at this important ritual centre** and the **long continuity from prehistory to the late medieval period** make this one of the most significant archaeological sites in Europe.

Criterion (iv):

The **passage grave, here brought to its finest expression, was a feature of outstanding importance in prehistoric Europe and beyond.**

Integrity

The 780 hectare area of the World Heritage Property Brú na Bóinne encapsulates the attributes for which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List. In addition to the large passage tombs of Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth, **90 recorded monuments – as well as an unknown quantity of as yet unrecorded sites – remain scattered across the ridge above the Boyne and over the low-lying areas and floodplain closer to (the present course of) the rivers.**

The buffer zone is comprised of 2,500 hectares, the boundary lines respecting **carefully mapped views into and out of the property.** Since inscription in 1993, views out of the property have been impacted by the M1 bridge crossing the River Boyne to the east of the property; the addition of a third chimney and other structures to the cement factory on the skyline to the east south-east near Duleek; the addition of an incinerator stack to the skyline at Carranstown and a housing development. The **ambiance of the ritual centre** is vulnerable to such disturbances which could potentially threaten the integrity of the property. The local authority (Meath County Council) has in place planning policies and procedures to deal with applications for

developments which may either incrementally or individually have potential impact on the integrity of the World Heritage Property.

Authenticity

The **archaeological remains on the site, both above and below ground** are wholly authentic.

Major excavations have been carried out at Newgrange and Knowth and have been fully published. Many small excavations and surveys have been carried out in the area. The main conservation works have concentrated on the two main passage tombs at Newgrange and Knowth subsequent to the excavations undertaken at these sites. All conservation and restoration work has been carried out by skilled professional staff.

At Newgrange, there has been comprehensive anastylosis of the kerbstones and the revetment wall, though the latter has been curtailed to allow access by visitors. The passage roof was completely dismantled to allow the orthostats to be returned to the vertical, with the introduction of reinforcement, and a cowl has been constructed over the chamber area. The cairn itself has been stabilised by means of thin revetments of cairn stones.

At Knowth, structures from all periods are being conserved. In some passage tombs outer support walls have been built for the burial chambers, involving the use of modern materials such as cement and plastic. Where such new additions are visible they are clearly distinguished in appearance from original materials, but in other cases they are completely concealed.

The restoration work on these monuments, the result of close collaboration between archaeologists and conservation architects, conforms with the principles enunciated in Article 7 of the International Charter for Archaeological Heritage Management of 1990.

Protection and management requirements

The protection and conservation of Brú na Bóinne is provided by a range of national legislation, international guidelines, statutory and non-statutory guidance. These provisions include the National Monuments Acts of 1930–2004, the Wildlife Acts of 1976 and 2000, the Planning and Development Acts, various EU Directives and international charters. The national monuments legislative code makes provision for the protection and preservation of national monuments and for the preservation of archaeological objects in the State. The Planning and Development Acts provide a framework to protect against undesirable development.

Most of the 780 hectare site is in private ownership. At the time of inscription only 32 hectares, largely around Knowth and Newgrange, were in State ownership (in 2011, 42.75 hectares are in State ownership). The State-owned part of the property has been under the direct management of the Office of Public Works. This State Office uses its professional staff of conservation architects, engineers, land managers and craftsmen in the day-to-day management activities. Archaeological input to the conservation and presentation of the property is provided by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The State Exchequer provides the funding needed for maintenance, management and conservation.

The local authority development plan (Meath County Development Plan) for the area in which Brú na Bóinne is situated seeks to protect the archaeological and cultural landscape and to enhance views within and adjacent to the World Heritage Property. The protection of views within and out of the property is a major factor contributing to retention of the property's integrity.

The Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre opened to the public in June 1997. Its primary purpose is to manage the flow of visitors to the megalithic tombs of Newgrange and Knowth. Education, public awareness and an emphasis on local engagement are also central to the role of the Centre. The number of visitors to these monuments each day is limited to the maximum that can be accommodated with due regard to the protection of the monuments. Access to the monuments is by guided tour only.

Appendix 3 Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for Sceilg Mhichíl with attributes in bold

The text below is the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value agreed retrospectively by the World Heritage Committee in 2017. The Statement was drafted using the ICOMOS evaluation of the property when it was presented to the Committee for inscription in 1996 as well as the Committee's decision on inscription. These are the best sources to understand what the Committee considered to be the property's Outstanding Universal Value justifying inclusion on the World Heritage List.

Attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are defined as those elements, processes or features that convey and make manifest the Outstanding Universal Value of a property. The elements in the text of the Statement in bold are those elements, processes or features considered to demonstrate the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

Brief synthesis

Sceilg Mhichíl, also known as Skellig Michael, was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1996. The island of Sceilg Mhichíl lies at the extreme north-western edge of Europe, rising from the Atlantic Ocean almost 12 km west of the Iveragh Peninsula in County Kerry. It is the **most spectacularly situated of all early medieval island monastic sites**, particularly the **isolated hermitage perched on narrow, human-made terraces just below the South Peak**.

Faulting of Devonian sandstone has created a **U-shaped depression known today as "Christ's Valley" or "Christ's Saddle" 130 m above sea level in the centre of the island, and this is flanked by two peaks**, that to the north-east rising to 185 m and that to the west-south-west, 218 m. The rock is deeply eroded and weathered, owing to its exposed position, but it is almost frost-free.

The **three island landing points** communicate by **flights of steps** with the **principal monastic remains, which are situated on a sloping shelf on the ridge running north-south on the north-eastern side of the island**; the **hermitage is on the steeper South Peak**.

The monastery, its cells and oratories and the even more precipitous structures of the South Peak Hermitage symbolise both the arrival and spread of Christianity and emerging literacy of lands so remote that they were beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire and the ultimate reach of organised monasticism which spread from Egypt by land and sea through Italy and Gaul to Britain and Ireland in a mere two centuries (the 5th and 6th). The date of the foundation of the monastery on this island is not known. It was dedicated to St Michael somewhere between 950 and 1050.

All the physical components of the ideal small monastery exist on Skellig: **isolation, difficulty in accessing the site, living spaces, buildings for worship and plots for food production**. Here, amongst **dramatic and unique settings**, the **indigenous stone architecture of a past millennium is intact** and in a relatively stable condition. A clear **evolution of dry-stone masonry techniques** is evident so this site offers a **unique documentation of the development of this type of architecture and construction**.

Sceilg Mhichíl is also **one of Ireland's most important sites for breeding seabirds**, both for the diversity of the species and the size of the colonies it supports.

Criterion (iii):

Sceilg Mhichíl **illustrates, as no other property can, the extremes of a Christian monasticism characterizing much of North Africa, the Near East and Europe**.

Criterion (iv):

Sceilg Mhichíl is an **outstanding and in many respects a unique example of an early religious settlement deliberately sited on a pyramidal rock in the ocean**, preserved because of a remarkable environment.

Integrity

In the case of Sceilg Mhichíl, there are two types of integrity: **structural-historical integrity, in that the structures have evolved over time**; and **visual-aesthetic integrity, in other words, the iconic image that has been retained**.

The monastery and hermitage on Sceilg Mhichíl represent a **unique artistic achievement**. They provide an **outstanding example of a perfectly preserved**

early medieval monastic settlement, and the **architectural ensemble is unique because of its level of preservation**. It illustrates a **significant stage in building history**. The **dramatic topography of the island** and the **integration of the various monastic elements within the landscape** reinforce the **uniqueness of the property**. The **presence of the monks on the island for such a long period has imbued the place with a strong sense of spirituality**.

The **sense of remoteness** is reinforced by the island's distance from the mainland and its frequent inaccessibility particularly between the months of October and May.

Sceilg Mhichíl is approximately 21.9 hectares in size. This area encapsulates the attributes for which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Property boundary is drawn tightly to the island, with a buffer zone formed naturally by the Atlantic Ocean.

Authenticity

The level of authenticity is very high. Sceilg Mhichíl, because of its **isolation**, has been protected from alterations and adaptations, other than those of the 19th century lighthouse builders. Most of the structures within the monastery are almost complete, as are the **stepped terraces** and the **paved areas**. In addition to individual features, the **overall layout is almost fully intact**.

The island's isolation has helped preserve and protect it from agents of destruction that have adversely affected most other sites of the period. Alterations were made during the lighthouse builders' occupation in the 1820s, but it has been possible to document these through research and on-site investigation. Due to the vicissitudes of time, the extreme environment and increased visitor pressure, a programme of conservation works, structural consolidation and repair has been in train since the late 1970s. The philosophy underpinning this work is that all original features are retained and conserved in situ.

Conservation work began in the 1880s when the monuments came into State guardianship; these included the rebuilding of part of the upper retaining wall along St Michael's Church and some minor repairs to the enclosure walls, where collapse had occurred. Other minor works were carried out in the 1930s. The current programme of preservation and conservation began in 1978 with an objective of the stabilization of the steps, retaining walls and individual structures. All this work was

carefully recorded by survey and photography, and revealed a surprising amount of evidence about the monastic structures and layout.

Major conservation works began in 1986 which concentrated on the repair and consolidation of the terraces and their retaining walls. This work was carried out in tandem with archaeological investigations.

Protection and management requirements

The protection and conservation of Sceilg Mhichíl is provided by a range of national legislation, international guidelines, statutory and non-statutory guidance. These provisions include the National Monuments Acts 1930–2004, the Wildlife Act 1976 and 2000, Planning and Development Acts, various EU Directives and international charters.

Skellig Michael is a national monument in full State ownership. The National Monuments legislative code makes provisions for the protection and preservation of national monuments and for the preservation of archaeological objects in the State. The Planning and Development Acts provide a framework to protect against undesirable development.

The management of Sceilg Mhichíl is in the hands of the Office of Public Works. This State Office has on its staff qualified conservation architects and engineers; skilled craftspeople are employed to carry out consolidation and conservation works. The State Exchequer provides the funding needed for maintenance, management and conservation. Archaeological input to the conservation and presentation of the property is provided by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs,¹⁰ while management is carried out under a service level agreement between the Department and the Office of Public Works.

The Office of Public Works has had a full-time presence on the island during the visitor season since the current preservation programme began in 1978. At that time the lighthouse was still staffed, but it is now an unoccupied station. An official guide service was introduced in 1987 with a view to regulating the numbers of visitors to the site during peak visiting hours and preserving the monuments. Since 2007 the

¹⁰ Situated within the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage since departmental rearrangement in 2017.

Office of Public Works has set out, on an annual basis, the period during which, weather permitting, a guide service is available on the island. This is also the period of the 'season' referred to in the permits issued annually to boatmen and boatwomen to land visitors on the island. In the interest of the continued protection of the island and to prevent damage to the monuments and particularly for reasons of health and safety of visitors, access to the island outside of the defined period is not permitted. Access to the island by private craft is discouraged by the Office of Public Works.

Appendix 4 About the author

Christopher Young, MA, DPhil (Oxon), FSA

Christopher Young is an expert on the workings and implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. He completed and implemented the first World Heritage Management Plan in the UK in 1996 (for Hadrian's Wall). He was joint author of the second management plan for Hadrian's Wall and of the 2009 Stonehenge management plan. He has advised on many other World Heritage Site management plans in the UK.

From 1999 to 2014 he was the international focal point for English Heritage, dealing with policy issues, meetings of the World Heritage Committee, English nominations to the World Heritage List, management issues of English properties, and co-authoring the 2009 English Heritage Guidance on World Heritage.

He has frequently worked with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, including revision of the Operational Guidelines between 2000 and 2005, and the 2013 UNESCO Resource Manual Managing Cultural World Heritage. He is involved with the Centre's initiative on religious interest in World Heritage.

He has also worked extensively on Periodic Reporting for 20 years. He was Rapporteur for the First Cycle of Periodic Reporting for Europe and then a Consultant for the analysis of the results of the Second European Cycle. Most recently he worked on the Arab Region Third Cycle Report. He worked with others on the revisions of the questionnaires before the Second and Third Cycles.

Christopher has worked on World Heritage nominations and management plans and other projects on World Heritage Properties in Europe and in East, South and South-East Asia. He is a Visiting Professor in the Bartlett School of Environment, Energy and Resources, University College London, and has contributed to many international workshops.

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