

OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE OF WHS:

At the time of inscription on the World Heritage list, the City of Bath was considered to have outstanding universal value for a combination of the following cultural attributes:

- Bath's formal neoclassical Palladian terraces and squares reflect its deliberate design to make it one of the most beautiful cities of Europe, with architecture and landscape combined formally and harmoniously.
- The grandiose scale and conception of the public buildings, crescents, terraces and squares by John Wood, Ralph Allen and Adam, reflect both the profound influence of Palladio but also their success in relating his ideas to a picturesque aestheticism with buildings in a garden setting, linking the town to its surrounding green hills, villas and bridges around its margins.
- The remains of the Roman spa, Aqua Sulis, uncovered in 1755 underpinned Bath's re-birth in the 18th century as a fashionable spa with Royal patronage
- The Roman baths, the mediaeval Cathedral, and the use of local honey-coloured quarried limestone unify the conception of the city and reflect two millennia of continuous development

Bath was inscribed on the World Heritage list on the basis of criteria (i), (ii) and (iv). The following is a summary of the justification for the use of these criteria. Text in italics is part of the official text for each criterion, as set out in the Operational Guidelines.

Criterion (i):

Represents a masterpiece of human creative genius

Bath's grandiose neo-classical Palladian terraces and squares spread out over the hills of Bath, and set in its green valley are a demonstration par excellence of the integration of town planning and landscape and the deliberate creation of a beautiful city. Not only are individual buildings such as the Assembly Rooms, Pump Room, of great distinction but these are part of the larger overall city landscape which evolved over a century in a harmonious and logical way drawing together terraces, crescents and squares to reflect the precepts of Palladio tempered with picturesque aestheticism

Criterion (ii):

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

Bath exemplifies the 18th century move away from the inward-looking uniform street layouts of Renaissance cities which dominated through the 15th-17th centuries, towards the idea of planting cities in the landscape to achieve picturesque views and forms. This unifying of nature and city, seen throughout Bath, is perhaps best exemplified in the Royal Crescent (John Wood (Younger)) and Lansdown Crescent (John Palmer). Bath's urban and landscape spaces are created by the buildings that enclose them, providing a series of interlinked

spaces that flow organically. The effect can also be seen when viewing the city as a whole in its wider landscape: its natural building material, organic layout and location in a hollow in the hills all combine to seat the city harmoniously in its landscape.

Criterion (iv):

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

Bath reflects two great eras in human history: Roman and Georgian. The Roman Baths and temple complex, together with the archaeological artefacts and remains of the Roman settlement, make a significant contribution to the understanding and appreciation of Roman social and religious society. The 18th century re-development is a unique example of outstanding urban architecture, spatial arrangement and social history. Bath exemplifies the main themes of the 18th century neoclassical city; the monumentalisation of ordinary houses, the integration of landscape and town, and the creation and interlinking of urban spaces.

CHARACTER

Overall the planning of Bath is characterised by a tight network of comparatively long streets, both curved and straight, complemented by wide open spaces, paved areas, formal parks and less formal green areas; by dominant facades; by noticeable corner buildings; by narrow units part of larger blocks with a verticality to the repetitive patterns of windows and doors; by grand tall terraces complemented by rows of more subservient buildings; by the sudden opening up of views; by the green backdrop of the surrounding landscapes; and by views from the upper to the lower parts of the city. It is not characterised by rigid, grid plan geometry but above all by the way its built form blends organically with the landscape to create a distinctive and beautiful garden city.