

From: [REDACTED]
To: [A303 Stonehenge](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: The effect of the scheme as proposed on the OUV of the WHS having regard to the conclusions and advice of UNESCO and its heritage advisory body, ICOMOS.
Date: 03 May 2019 18:18:59
Attachments: [mrrb_02-05-2019_18-52-29.pdf](#)
[Stonehenge - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION OF M Bush.docx](#)
Importance: High

Dear Sirs,

I submitted a relevant representation on behalf of the Consortium of Archaeologists and the Blick Mead Project Team on 11.1.19, in which I indicated we would wish to enter submissions on 5 separate issues. In my reply to your Rule 6 letter of 4.3.19, I further indicated that in the context of Issue 9 of your list of Principal Issues, we would wish to also make representations on the issue of Alternative Routes.

Upon further consideration and liaison with other Interested parties, we feel that we can best assist the Examination by limiting ourselves to making written representations on three of the issues we have raised before (and possibly only two in view of illness suffered by one of the key experts). This is in the interests of streamlining the process of the Examination as far as possible; where we are content that other Interested Parties will adequately address particular issues, we see no reason to duplicate their representations.

On behalf of the group I am co-ordinating, I will be sending you separate submissions on (1) the risk of damage to Blick Mead archaeology due to impact on its local water table, and (2) damage to hidden archaeology and the settings of known monuments near the Western Portal and along the road widening section to the Western edge of the WHS, and the adequacy of archaeological surveying commissioned by Highways England.

What follows here are my written representations on the issues identified in the subject line above (with an executive summary attached above as requested):

I am aware that other parties will be addressing you on these issues, so I will only briefly set out for ease of reference the relevant provisions in the World Heritage Convention 1972, and in our own planning laws/policies, together with my observations arising from them. However, where I wish to focus attention with these representations is upon the advice of UNESCO and ICOMOS from time to time during the progress of the public consultation, and how this has been interpreted and to a large extent re-presented by Highways England and indeed by Historic England.

A. The relevant policy framework:

1. The World Heritage Convention 1972

Under the Planning Act 2008, nationally-significant infrastructure projects (NSIP) for which development consent is sought must demonstrate compliance with international treaties signed by the UK. One such treaty is the World Heritage Convention 1972 ("the WHC"), which the UK ratified in 1984.

Article 3 of the WHC provides that *"it is for each State Party to this Convention to identify and delineate the different properties in its territory mentioned in Articles 1 and 2"*.

(Articles 1 and 2 define the kind of monuments, buildings or sites that can be listed under the WHC, and these include *"archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view."*)

The Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site ("the WHS") was inscribed on the list in 1986. It is important to keep in mind that the WHS encloses an area of some 27 square kilometres. At the time of inscription, the Outstanding Universal Value ("the OUV") of the site, in heritage terms, was attached to its proliferation of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments and archaeology – a uniquely rich concentration even before the more recent discoveries, unparalleled in the UK and NW Europe. As such, it affords protection to far more than the iconic Stonehenge circle and its immediate surrounding area. The OUV derives from the entirety of the landscape inside the boundaries of the WHS.

Article 4 of the WHC requires that *"Each State Party to this Convention recognizes the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 and situated on its territory, belongs primarily to that State. It will do all it can to this end, to the utmost of its own resources and, where appropriate, with any international assistance and co-operation.....which it may be able to obtain."*

There are no proviso's, caveats or exceptions here. On the face of it, insofar as the proposed scheme involves destruction of archaeology inside the WHS, it is in breach of Article 4 of the WHC.

2. **The National Policy Statement for National Networks, 2014 (the "NPSNN")**

Paragraph 5.131 provides that:

*"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give great weight to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Once lost, heritage assets cannot be replaced and their loss has a cultural, environmental, economic and social impact. **Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Given that heritage assets are irreplaceable, harm or loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II Listed Building or a grade II Registered Park or Garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated assets of the highest significance, including World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Registered Battlefields, and grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens should be wholly exceptional.**"*

I have highlighted the most relevant aspects of this policy statement above. The NPSNN therefore does envisage circumstances in which it might be necessary (in the cause of an infrastructure development) to cause harm or loss through alteration or destruction of a heritage asset, but affirms that any such action requires "clear and convincing justification". Any substantial harm to an asset of the highest significance, including to a WHS, should be "wholly exceptional".

If it is accepted, as it must be, that the scheme will if it proceeds cause substantial harm to a heritage asset of the highest significance, i.e. the WHS, is there clear and convincing justification for the scheme, and are the circumstances for which the scheme has been proposed wholly exceptional? These are judgments that the Examining Authority's panel must make in the course of the Examination. To assist, I offer the following observations:

- (a) The circumstances said to justify the scheme are that the A303 is a major trunk road from London to SW England, and that in several sections along its length, the dual carriageway narrows to single carriageway, which sometimes (especially at peak times) causes congestion, lengthening journey times;

- (b) It is assumed that by widening the single carriageway sections of the A303, journey times to and from the SW will be cut, which will in turn lead to a boost to the economy of SW England; the assumption underpinning this justification will doubtless be examined by the Panel in any event and is not the focus of this submission;
- (c) In essence however, the problem that the scheme seeks to address is rather commonplace throughout the country; it is not a “wholly exceptional” situation.
- (d) Does the problem however justify the inevitable harm to the OUV of the WHS? Apart from the economic argument, the other main perceived benefit used to justify the Scheme, certainly in the eyes of Historic England, is that it will re-unite the two halves of the WHS, and will “substantially improve the ability of the public to enjoy the extraordinary archaeology of the whole Stonehenge WHS, rather than only the part to the north of the WHS” –(Historic England’s response to the public consultation, 20.4.18). As anyone who has recently visited the northern part of the WHS near Stonehenge could tell us, the idea of the public being able to wander freely at will across this landscape is somewhat fanciful. In any event, this claim only relates to the section of the WHS bordering the proposed tunnel, it does not benefit the rest of the WHS where the portals and surface roads will continue to sever the WHS.
- (e) Even if the perceived benefits of faster journey times and reunification of the two halves of the WHS did amount to “clear and convincing justification”, both aims could be delivered without any risk of harm to the WHS if instead of the tunnel scheme the A303 were diverted to the south of the WHS and converted to dual carriageway along its full length. The merits of various alternative route proposals will no doubt be argued over by other Interested Parties and the Applicant in the course of the Examination. My only observation on this is the deeply ironic nature of the reasons given by the Applicant for rejecting alternative routes to the south, in particular the one designated as route option F10. In its report to UNESCO entitled “A303 Stonehenge Summary of the detailed assessment of F10”, a couple of the main reasons given for the rejection of F10 were that (1) the route was un-surveyed and could impact on unknown archaeology, and (2) it would spoil pristine countryside. One would very readily assume that such objections arise with almost any infrastructure project in this country – the difference however is that not all infrastructure projects propose destroying swathes of land inside the UK’s most prestigious WHS.

In short we submit that the justification for the inevitable damage this scheme will cause to the WHS is hardly clear and very far from being convincing; insufficient weight has been attached to the importance of the WHS status, which should be paramount. If the panel agree that the justification has not been made out or is less than convincing, it must conclude there is a breach of the NPSNN.

B. The advice from UNESCO and ICOMOS

1. The First Advisory Mission – October 2015

Given the WHS status, and the UK’s obligations under the WHC, UNESCO and ICOMOS were invited to send a joint Advisory Mission to the WHS in October 2015, by way of initiating an early consultation process before the tunnel scheme was even designed. From UNESCO’s perspective, they wished to ensure the scheme would be thoroughly scrutinised to ensure no damage

would be caused to the OUV of the WHS. The particular concern at this stage, over the proposed 2.9km tunnel, was that the eastern and western portals, cuttings and embankments, as well as exit/entry ramps, had the potential to adversely impact the OUV of the site as a whole. The report of the Joint Advisory Mission dated 27-30 October 2015 is available on-line. It sets out the ICOMOS recommendations at that early stage, advising in effect a cautionary approach and inviting the UK Government to call upon UNESCO's expert advisory missions throughout the scheme. It is not every NSIP that involves development inside a WHS, and if the UK takes its obligations to the WHC seriously, where better to turn for expert guidance as to those obligations and whether the scheme proposals would meet them or place the UK in breach of its commitments. In addition it advised that a Scientific Committee (of experts in the heritage assets of the WHS) be established to monitor the development of the Scheme and to exercise quality control.

2. The Second Advisory Mission – Jan/Feb 2017

In January 2017, the DfT opened its "Options" consultation process (a precursor to the full public consultation in 2018), by presenting the single option of the "short" tunnel scheme, with a choice at the western end for the road to pass either north or south of the village of Winterbourne Stoke. This was quickly followed by the second advisory mission of UNESCO/ICOMOS in Jan/Feb 2017. The joint report of this advisory mission, dated 31.1.17 to 3.2.17 and available on-line. Amongst other findings, it concluded that:

- The alternative F010 route would have less impact on the OUV of the WHS than the tunnel options (D061 and D062) then under consideration, which would cause *"considerable damage to the OUV of the WH property, through adverse effects on the archaeological remains, on their landscape attributes, and on setting and visibility."*
- Highways England's decision-making processes *"do not give enough weight to the heritage priority required for a WH property...as required by the obligations of the State Party under the WHC"*.
- The State Party *"should be encouraged to further explore the F010 route option, as an alternative that will bring significant benefits to the whole WH property and the wider Stonehenge landscape."*
- Its previous recommendation about setting up a Heritage Monitoring and Advisory Group (HMAG) had only been partially implemented, and it regretted that the proposed Scientific Committee, to ensure proactive participation of academics and representatives of learned societies, had not yet been created.

ICOMOS-UK, the UK national committee of ICOMOS, then submitted a deeply critical response to the "Options" consultation on 4.3.17, also available on-line. Its position was that it was prepared to approve the tunnel scheme in principle, but only if (a) all options for re-routing around the WHS had been adequately investigated and put through an informed consultation process before being rejected, and (b) the proposed tunnel were long enough that all its cuttings for the portals would fall outside the WHS, i.e. the "long" tunnel scheme. Evidently since the first advisory mission, ICOMOS-UK had been expecting by this stage to see Highways England (HE) presenting three genuine options for the scheme for public consultation: a route to the south of the WHS, known as F010, the long tunnel and the short tunnel. Its response signals its dismay that HE were only presenting a single option (disregarding the almost meaningless alternative routing south or north of Winterbourne Stoke). It considered the reasons given for excluding F010 were not substantial, and that the decision to exclude it from consultation should be reconsidered. In short ICOMOS-UK made it clear that by now they were firmly objecting to the short tunnel scheme, which would in its (expert) view have "substantial negative and irreversible impact" on the OUV of the WHS. In particular, it criticised:

- That the WHS had been given lower priority in the assessment of route options than an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and an existing commercial lease of the former RAF Boscombe Down airfield;
- The apparent view that the inevitable destruction of or damage to archaeology in the areas of the portals would be mitigated by perceived benefits to the central part of the WHS – this showed fundamental misunderstanding of the obligation to sustain the OUV of the whole WHS, not just part of it.

3. The Decision of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 41st session, in Krakow, July 2017

The WH Committee, meeting in Krakow, re-iterated its view that the tunnel scheme would cause unjustifiable damage to the WHS, and that it should be reconsidered.

4. The Third Advisory Mission – March 2018

ICOMOS/UNESCO conducted a 3rd joint advisory mission from 5-7 March 2018, and its findings are also available on-line in its "Final Report". Despite welcoming some small improvements to the original scheme, it concluded it should not proceed in its current form, and urged surface routes outside the WHS should be reconsidered. More specifically, the mission found that:

- If the tunnel option is pursued, the proposed length of 3.0km would not be adequate to protect the integrity and conserve the OUV of the WHS;
- If the tunnel option is pursued, the western portal should be re-located outside the western boundary of the WHS to avoid dual carriageways in this part of the WHS;
- If the tunnel option is pursued, the eastern portal should be relocated well to the East of the Countess Roundabout, and outside the WHS, to protect the OUV of the property;
- In considering route options, HE should have given greater weight to avoiding impact on the WHS, in view of the obligations of the State Party under the WHC;
- The appropriate test is not whether there is net benefit to the WHS, but rather how adverse impact on OUV can be avoided;
- Proposed surface routes outside the WHS should be reconsidered on the basis that the OUV should have at least equal priority to other environmental considerations, such as impacts on an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and on Special Areas of Conservation.

Section 3.4 of this "final report" considered the reasons for the de-selection of route option F10 in some detail. Its conclusion on this issue was:

"The Mission acknowledges that the State Party has determined that the F10 route will not proceed as it cannot deliver a key project objective (i.e. the complete closure of the A303 section in the WHS). However, a surface route, which re-routes an improved A303 road completely around the WHS, and enables the closure (or even down-grading) of the existing section of the A303 within the WHS, remains the best option in relation to the impact on the OUV of the WHS. Therefore it would be appropriate for potential surface routes for the proposed dual carriageway sections of the A303 to be reconsidered, on the basis that the OUV of the WHS should be given greater weight in the evaluation process and that any surface route must include closure of the section of the A303 which runs through the WHS."

Mr Peter Marsden, Chair of ICOMOS-UK, submitted his organisation's response to the statutory consultation on 21.4.18, which was unequivocal in its condemnation of the proposed scheme. It is a 4 page letter and is worth reviewing in full. I have attached a copy to this submission for ease of reference. The final two paragraphs are set out here in full:

"We consider that the nation has a responsibility to future generations to safeguard our precious World Heritage. Stonehenge, as a total landscape linked to the development of the world's human civilisation over thousands of years, should not be sacrificed to an unsatisfactory project that will deprive the national and international community of an almost intact sacred landscape that the government has committed itself to pass on to future generations. In conclusion, we urge the Highways Agency to put on hold the development of this A303 project to allow a wider range of options to be considered in line with the recommendations of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. We would also urge the Highways Agency to work closely with the World Heritage Centre in conjunction with the Department of State responsible for World Heritage in the UK to find a long term, acceptable and reasoned solution that protects the integrity of the Stonehenge component of the WHS as a sacred place of global importance not just for its main henge monument but for the totality of its interconnected pre-historic landscape".

5. The Decision of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session, in Bahrain, July 2018

The WH Committee decision was that the UK should address the findings and implement the recommendations of the March 2018 Advisory Mission, and continue to seek an optimal solution for the widening of the A303 with a view to avoiding adverse impact on the OUV of the property.

(NB. It is understood that in advance of the 42nd session of the WH Committee, a representative or representatives from Historic England made a last-minute dash to Bahrain in an attempt to influence the Committee's decision in favour of the current scheme; somewhat bizarrely, the representative for Spain spoke in favour of the scheme at the session, seeking a motion that it should be approved. That motion was defeated. It is further noted that at the Preliminary Meeting of the Examination on 2.4.19, representatives of Historic England were at pains to stress that the panel need not be concerned with recommendations of the UNESCO/ICOMOS advisory missions, but only with the WH Committee decisions, as it was only these that carried any weight in determining the UK's obligations. The next Decision of the WH Committee is due in July 2019, in the middle of the Examination process. We feel that the Panel should make enquiries of Historic England as to its actions in this regard. What is clear is that the WH Committee, composed as it is of delegates from all State Parties, is susceptible to political pressure and horse-trading, such that perhaps the unfettered recommendations of its expert advisors in preparing mission reports ought to carry more weight, not less, than a Decision reached in the WH Committee. If Historic England is intent on influencing the next Decision of the 43rd session, it has certainly had a longer time to prepare the ground than on the last occasion. In any event, these remarks are simply intended to

draw attention to the possibility that there will be another attempt to influence another State Party to propose that the Scheme be approved. We all await developments at the 43rd Session with interest).

6. Highways England's digest of UNESCO advice/decisions in its Consultation Report, October 2018

At section 3.10 of the consultation report, Highways England has made a heroic effort to interpret the conclusions of UNESCO as favourably as possible, to avoid the conclusion that the Scheme places the UK in breach of the WHC. I set out the relevant extract in full below, for ease of reference:

3.10.1 In parallel with the statutory consultation, a third UNESCO/ICOMOS advisory mission took place from 5 to 7 March 2018 to consider the scheme proposals presented for consultation. A copy of the report on the third UNESCO/ICOMOS mission can be found at:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/168265>

3.10.2 The recommendations contained in the mission report and the subsequent decision of the World Heritage Committee have been taken into consideration alongside the feedback to the statutory consultation as part of the continued development of the scheme. As with the first and second missions, this consultation report does not seek to present or address in detail all the recommendations arising from the mission; instead it focuses more on key aspects that have been material to the development of the proposed scheme.

3.10.3 While the recommendations from the third mission report (consistent with those from the second mission) reflect an ideal wish not to see any new construction within the WHS, there are no practical solutions that can achieve that wish and deliver the scheme's objectives. The second mission (see paragraphs 2.5.25 to 2.5.31) had recommended pursuit of a particular surface route that had emerged from an exhaustive appraisal of options as the best surface alternative to the tunnel solution. That surface alternative route was given careful consideration by the third mission as set out in its report, which: a. summarises the extent of the route's damaging effects through unspoilt countryside to the south of the WHS, and b. acknowledges that the State Party has determined that the route will not proceed.

3.10.4 The report also considers tunnelled solutions and records the disadvantages that longer tunnels would have in being extended beyond the boundaries of the WHS. The report also recognises that, within the WHS, the eastern tunnel portal has been positioned in the least impactful location available, close to the WHS boundary.

3.10.5 Accordingly, while endorsing the recommendations of the third advisory mission which seek, in principle, to avoid any construction in the WHS, the decision of the World Heritage Committee also placed an emphasis on ensuring the scheme achieves a satisfactory solution in the western part of the WHS. This emphasis resonates with how the scheme has continued to be developed since statutory consultation.

3.10.6 The development of the scheme since the statutory consultation and the third mission has seen further mitigation being introduced in the western part of the WHS. This comprises the proposal for a c.150 metres of a green bridge over

the new road where it passes to the south of an important barrow group in the WHS, the Winterbourne Stoke group. This change was one of three introduced since statutory consultation that were presented at the supplementary consultation reported in Chapter 6.

3.10.7 The impacts of the scheme, with its additional mitigation, on the WHS have been subject to a Heritage Impact Assessment (reported as part of the Environmental Statement) since the third mission. The assessment followed ICOMOS guidance and scoping methodology which was presented to and endorsed by the third mission, and its results will be fed back to the World Heritage Centre as part of the scheme's continuing engagement with UNESCO/ICOMOS going forward.

Despite the gloss applied by HE in the consultation report, the inconvenient truth is that UNESCO has consistently stated that it does not approve a scheme that will involve the excavation of two 4-lane wide tunnel portals and a 1.1km long and 40m wide dual-carriageway inside the WHS boundaries. The implication is that if the Scheme is developed as currently proposed, UNESCO will hold the UK to be in substantial breach of its obligations under the WHC, and thus in breach of the requirements of the Planning Act 2008. HE appear to be in a state of institutional denial about these implications, although it cannot be said that it does not understand them. In its responses to consultees set out in Annexe K to the consultation report, it has responded at Appendix K14 to a question from Durrington Town Council, asking why the A303 cannot simply be 'dualled' across the WHS rather than incurring the expense of excavating a tunnel. HE's reply explains that the reason this was not an option is that it would *"cause unacceptable damage to the OUV of the WHS. It would also breach the WHC, and would be unlikely to receive development consent"*.

Quite how HE is unable to reach the same conclusion about the damage to the OUV that will be caused by the portals and the dual-carriageway in the western part of the site (not to mention along the line of the yet-to-be-determined haul route) is a mystery, and something the Panel may wish to explore. With no pun intended, it seems that HE has developed "tunnel-vision" about the heritage impact issues arising from the proposed scheme, notwithstanding its own heritage impact assessments.; either that or it has been encouraged by its parent organisation, the Department for Transport, not to be concerned about UNESCO's views or risking breach of the WHC. However, we respectfully submit that placing the UK in breach of the WHC is not a decision that should be taken for the nation by the Secretary of State for Transport, and that, in keeping with the consistent advice from UNESCO, alternative schemes for improving the A303 which do not irreversibly damage the OUV of this iconic landscape should be reconsidered and, this time, put through to full public consultation. We urge the Panel to heed the expert views of the UNESCO/ICOMOS advisory missions, and to disapprove this lamentable scheme.

Mark Bush, for the Consortium of Archaeologists and the Blick Mead Project Team.

3.5.19.

7.



DAC Beachcroft's Insurance Remodelled Market Conditions and Trends Report

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By email to the Highways Agency

21st April 2018

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**ICOMOS-UK RESPONSE TO HIGHWAYS AGENCY CONSULTATION ON A303
PREFERRED ROUTE PROPOSALS IN RELATION TO THE STONEHENGE,
AVEBURY AND ASSOCIATED SITES WORLD HERITAGE SITE, APRIL 2018**

ICOMOS-UK plays a leading role in helping to implement the 1972 World Heritage Convention within the UK and promoting best practice in the management of UK World Heritage Sites (WHSs). Maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the UK's WHSs is a key objective

The following sets out ICOMOS-UK's response to Highways England's formal consultation on its preferred route proposals for a 2.9km tunnel combined with dual carriageways in cuttings across the Stonehenge component of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage site.

ICOMOS-UK wishes to register a strong objection to these proposals in view of the substantial negative and irreversible impact we believe that the dual carriageways at both ends of the tunnel would have on the attributes of OUV of the WHS of Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites.

We consider that to suggest that this negative impact on OUV of the dual carriageways can be mitigated by benefits brought by the tunnel to the centre of the WHS, is to fundamentally misunderstand the Government commitments to sustain the OUV of the WHS, including its integrity and authenticity, made by the UK State Party to the World Heritage Convention at the time of inscription of the property on the World Heritage List.

In our view, the overall preferred route project is severely flawed and its impacts cannot be readily mitigated; it is essential that the whole project be re-assessed and a wider range of routes and construction options explored before a public consultation by the Government is recommended.

The following are the main points upon which we wish to base our objections:

1. While acknowledging that there has long been a need to do something to address the impact of the major A303 road through the WHS, and that initiatives to try and solve traffic problems are needed, we do not accept the idea that the proposed tunnel is a once in

a lifetime opportunity to solve the road problems that has to be taken even if the length of the tunnel means there would be irreversible damage to the WHS and its OUV, which we consider would be the case;

2. We consider that a 2.9km tunnel is too short to protect the WHS as it leaves some 2.2 km of the dual carriageways in cuttings at either end; the dual carriageways either side of the tunnel would cause irreversible damage to the OUV of the WHS as they would slice through the planned sacred landscape in a way that destroys the visual and physical links of the interconnected monuments, would destroy large swathes of potential archaeological evidence; and would sever the interconnectedness of the above and below ground monuments that has now been revealed through non-invasive surveys and targeted excavations;
3. Recent archaeological surveys have profoundly changed our understanding of this sacred landscape and as even better innovative scientific techniques are likely to emerge in the next few decades, we cannot afford to sacrifice parts of this landscape and the embedded knowledge within it that awaits discovery and celebration;
4. We do not consider that the full impact of the proposed project on the overall pre-historic archaeological landscape within the boundaries of the WHS has been fully acknowledged in the HIA; more emphasis has been given to the visual impact of the tunnel portals rather than on the impacts of dual carriageways and substantial cuttings emanating from those portals;
5. The whole project appears to have been retro-fitted to an initial budget, driven by road/tunnel making and not by an assumption that one of the world's most significant and iconic WHSs has to be protected;
6. We consider that a much wider range of options should have been considered in far more technical detail;
7. We consider that what has not been properly promoted in the public consultation is that the WHS is not just the main henge monument but the henge together with the extensive planned landscape that surrounds it. Various Highways Agency publications associated with the Public Consultation have suggested that the tunnel would benefit the 'Stonehenge' landscape overall rather than in reality just (possibly?) the main henge monument and its immediate setting;
8. We do not consider that the assumed potential benefits to the centre of the property from the tunnel, however apparently great, can compensate for the destruction of attributes of OUV by the dual carriageways at either end of the tunnel; the idea that access and visual benefits in the centre of the site can outweigh threats to OUV from destroyed archaeology and visual and noise intrusion beyond the tunnel is an equation that cannot be supported; major irreversible impacts on OUV cannot be mitigated by benefits elsewhere in the

property. In this sense WH properties need to be considered differently from other cultural and natural sites within the UK Planning system which accepts the idea of balancing benefits and dis-benefits and allows projects to go ahead if there are sufficient social and economic benefits that could be seen to outweigh heritage dis-benefits. We consider that this balancing approach is unacceptable for World Heritage properties. If ICOMOS, as an international organisation advising UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, accepted that social and economic benefits could outweigh impact on OUV, it would be difficult to challenge infrastructure projects or other new developments that provided social or economic benefits.

9. We believe that if 2.2km of cuttings for dual carriageways were to be approved across one of the most sacred and iconic historic landscapes in the world, it would be difficult to stop dual carriageways being constructed across any WHS and our UK reputation related to protecting cultural heritage would be severely affected.
10. We support the decision of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in July 2017 that the proposed partial tunnel of 2.9 km and its associated dual carriageways in cuttings within the property do not provide an acceptable solution as the cuttings would have an a highly significant, adverse and irreversible impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS, and its invitation to the UK government to explore further options in order to 'find an optimal solution for the widening of the A303 to ensure no adverse impact on the OUV of the property' including the F10 non-tunnel by-pass option to the south of the property and longer tunnel options to remove dual carriageway cuttings from the property;
11. We support the idea of a by-pass solution for the World Heritage site, and note that no convincing grounds have been put forward as to why the southern route entirely outside the WHS was discounted before the public consultation, other than to say it might promote 'rat running' on the remaining existing routes within and around the WHS which we consider could be managed; and we do not understand why other bypass options south of the WHS could not have been considered combined with tunnels under sensitive areas;
12. We are alarmed that no mention of this decision by the World Heritage Committee was made in the Highways Agency Consultation document;
13. We are disappointed that the Public consultation has not taken into account this decision or the key recommendations of the first two UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory Missions and nor did it wait for the third Mission in January 2018 or its report to be issued. As these missions were invited by the Government, it is of concern that they were not considered to be relevant to the decision making processes.
14. We are also disappointed that the design process has been a closed one and, as far as we are aware, has not allowed any interaction with the wider professional and public cultural heritage sector in the UK – as envisaged and recommended by the first Advisory Mission.

15. We are alarmed that insufficient attention has been given to the long-term technical issues associated with tunnelling and tunnelling management/maintenance given the life expectancy of the project is only a hundred years; some distinguished engineers have already raised concerns as to how, in a hundred years' time (which is a very minor part of the existence of the Stonehenge landscape), the long term stability of the tunnel will be maintained without damage to the landscape above and to the sides;
16. Furthermore, we consider that insufficient attention has been given to the long-term adverse geotechnical, geomorphological and environmental effects associated with the cuttings and dual carriageway elements within and adjacent to the WHS;

We consider that the nation has a responsibility to future generations to safeguard our precious World Heritage. Stonehenge, as a total landscape linked to the development of the world's human civilisation over thousands of years, should not be sacrificed to an unsatisfactory project that will deprive the national and international community of an almost intact sacred landscape that the government has committed itself to pass on to future generations.

In conclusion, we urge the Highways Agency to put on hold the development of this A303 project to allow a wider range of options to be considered in line with the recommendations of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. We would also urge the Highways Agency to work closely with the World Heritage Centre in conjunction with the Department of State responsible for World Heritage in the UK to find a long term, acceptable and reasoned solution that protects the integrity of the Stonehenge component of the WHS as a sacred place of global importance not just for its main henge monument but for the totality of its interconnected pre-historic landscape.

Yours faithfully

Peter Marsden
Chair, ICOMOS-UK World Heritage Committee

cc:

The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, Secretary of State for Transport

The Rt. Hon. Matt Hancock, MP, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Dr Isabelle Anatole-Gabriel, Head of Europe and North America Unit, UNESCO World Heritage Centre

M Regina Durighello, Director, Advisory and Monitoring Unit, ICOMOS

Mr Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive, Historic England

The Planning Inspectorate, National Infrastructure Directorate, Bristol

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION OF M. BUSH ON IMPACT OF THE SCHEME ON THE OUV OF THE WHS, AND ON THE ADVICE RECEIVED FROM UNESCO AND ICOMOS

(On behalf of the Consortium of Archaeologists and the Blick Mead Team)

A. Relevant policy framework

1. World Heritage Convention 1972 (“WHC”)
 - Planning Act 2008 requires NSIP’s to comply with international treaties, including the WHC 1972
 - Article 3 – extent of the WHS as inscribed, OUV attaching to entirety of the landscape within its boundaries;
 - Article 4 – duty to protect and conserve for future generations;
 - Prima facie breach of Article 4 if the scheme involves destruction of archaeology inside the WHS.

2. National Policy Statement for National Networks, 2014 (“NPSNN”)
 - Paragraph 5.131
 - Substantial harm to a heritage asset of the highest significance should be “wholly exceptional”;
 - Scheme will cause substantial harm – but is there clear and convincing justification for it?
 - The Scheme will **not** reunite the two halves of the WHS, only the central section;
 - The Scheme addresses a traffic bottleneck where a dual-carriageway narrows to a single carriageway section – as such it is commonplace, not wholly exceptional;
 - The perceived economic and unification benefits could equally be achieved by diverting the A303 south of the WHS;
 - Reasons for rejection of the F010 route are deeply ironic, and unconvincing.
 - The justification for the Scheme is neither clear nor convincing – it will be in breach of the NPSNN.

B. Advice of UNESCO and ICOMOS

1. 1st Advisory Mission - Oct 2015
 - Concern that the proposed tunnel would involve deep cuttings inside the WHS;
 - Urges UK to call upon UNESCO for expert guidance;
 - Recommends setting up of an independent Scientific Committee

2. 2nd Advisory Mission – Jan 2017
 - Favours surface route F010 to south of WHS over the tunnel option which will cause considerable damage to the OUV of the WHS;
 - Regret that Scientific Committee yet to be established;
 - ICOMOS-UK’S deeply critical response to the “Options” consultation, 4.3.17;
 - Destruction of archaeology in portal sectors cannot be mitigated by perceived benefits in the central section.

3. Decision of UNESCO WH Committee at 41st Session in Krakow, July 2017
 - Scheme will cause unjustifiable damage to the WHS and should be reconsidered.

4. 3rd Advisory Mission – Mar 2018
 - Despite small improvements, scheme should not proceed in its current form;
 - Surface routes outside the WHS should be reconsidered;
 - If tunnel option is pursued, it should be longer and both portals should lie outside the WHS;
 - The importance of the WHS should carry as much weight as AONB's and SAC's;
 - The proper test is how can adverse impact on the OUV of the WHS be avoided;
 - ICOMOS-UK's statutory consultation response of 21.4.18 exhibited;

5. Decision of UNESCO WH Committee at 42nd Session in Bahrain, July 2018
 - Supports findings and recommendations of its advisory mission in March 2018;
 - (This being despite an apparent attempt to sway the decision in favour of the Scheme by persuading the delegate for Spain to speak in its favour)

6. Highways England's interpretation of UNESCO advice
 - Consultation Report, section 3.10, glossing over UNESCO advice;
 - Highways in state of denial about UNESCO's unequivocal conclusion that the Scheme as proposed should not proceed;
 - Highways well aware that causing damage to the OUV of the WHS would be in breach of the WHC, reference to Appendix K14 to Annexe K of the Consultation Report.

7. Conclusion
 - Heed UNESCO advice and disapprove this Scheme