

Defining physical boundaries – the property and the setting

Protecting and sharing heritage require management strategies that define and monitor property boundaries but also address the setting in which the property is located. For World Heritage properties, this could be a precisely identified and regulated buffer zone (OG paras103-107) or it might extend to include a larger 'area of influence' (OG para104).⁵

The values of the property, and above all the OUV, are the primary parameters for defining the physical area(s) that management strategies need to address and for defining the varying levels of control necessary across those areas. Distant views from the property (for example, the view of the volcano Vesuvius from Pompeii in Italy) or views of the property from certain arrival routes (e.g. the Taj Mahal in India) could be important to maintaining values.

However, other parameters will influence the definition of the physical area(s), including:

- the type of threats and their relative timeframes (e.g. the impact of vandalism, uncontrolled development of the built environment, climate change);
- the extent to which the management strategy involves local communities and other stakeholders (a successful participatory approach can permit reduced levels of control);
- the extent to which the management system embraces sustainable management practice (see Part 2.3).

This recognition that physical boundaries are no longer where the property boundary falls but are in fact a series of layers undoubtedly favours protection, but it creates new management challenges. It is also an acknowledgement that heritage places depend on their setting (and vice versa).

2.2 Placing heritage concerns in a broader framework

The expanding concept of heritage and the increased importance given to how heritage places relate to their surroundings mark an important shift in thinking. Heritage places cannot be protected in isolation or as museum pieces, isolated from natural and man-made disasters or from land-use planning considerations. Nor can they be separated from development activities, isolated from social changes that are occurring, or separated from the concerns of the communities.

Indeed, only fairly recently has the international community begun to appreciate the importance of conserving cultural heritage as places where social and cultural factors have been and continue to be important in shaping them, rather than as a series of monuments offering physical evidence of the past. As a result, international 'good' practice, often led by Western management practice, has at times provided insufficient guidance and has risked eroding rather than reinforcing good traditional heritage management systems, particularly those in place for historic centres or other cultural sites which host ongoing multiple land and property uses.

The wider scope of heritage nowadays has led to many more players or stakeholders being involved in its management. When heritage places were primarily monuments or buildings under public control, the property manager could have a relatively free hand within the site's boundaries. This is no longer the case. Even if a heritage place is publicly owned and managed, the site manager will still need to work with the stakeholders and authorities involved

5. Martin, O. and Piatti, G. (eds). 2009. *World Heritage and Buffer Zones, International Expert Meeting on World Heritage and Buffer Zones, Davos, Switzerland, 11–14 March 2008*. Paris, UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (World Heritage Papers 25).