

SITES OF JAPAN'S MEIJI INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Interpretation Audit March & August 2019

INTRODUCTION

There is an obligation to convey the significance of a World Heritage Site to visitors - and to local communities - in order to increase public awareness, enhance understanding of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and to encourage public support in the activities directed at its management and conservation.

This is a progress monitoring report on the implementation of the *Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution* World Heritage Site (WHS) Interpretation Strategy 2017. It focusses on the key changes that have occurred since 2017, on how each Area/Component Part is presenting the OUV of the whole WHS, and the connections and historic linkages that exist between them. The report provides comments and recommendations for the ongoing interpretation of this WHS in order to strengthen the interpretive connectivity and consistency between the Areas and their Component Parts and to foster a better appreciation of its OUV.

There has been considerable and positive progress on the WHS interpretation and presentation since the 2017 audit – both remotely (especially the custom-developed maps and phone/tablet-based interpretive resources), and on-site (presentation). It is addressing the complexity and challenges of interpreting a serial WHS, particularly in terms of scale, location, management, access and resources.

This audit provides an overview of how the WHS and its Component Parts is currently presenting its OUV. It highlights that there is a need for a more consistent, cohesive and coordinated approach to connect and present the 23 Component Parts, to communicate the OUV and how they relate to each other. This will be addressed by the completion of the already planned implementation of the overarching interpretation of the singular OUV which will be led by the “common exhibition” being developed for the *Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution* Tokyo Centre, opening in 2020.

BACKGROUND

In July 2015, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed the *Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining* as a World Heritage Site. As part of this inscription, it was recommended that the Japanese Government give consideration to:

Preparing an interpretive strategy for the presentation of the nominated property, which gives particular emphasis to the way each of the sites contributes to OUV and reflects one or more of the phases of industrialisation; and also allows an understanding of the full history of each site.

In response, the Government of Japan developed an interpretation strategy in 2017. The strategy's development was informed by a comprehensive audit of the WHS and its Component Parts to create a baseline. It also includes an action plan based on issues raised in the audit and advice received following a sites' tour by ICOMOS' President of the International Scientific Committee on Interpretation and Presentation.

The Strategy was submitted as part of the Government of Japan's State of Conservation Report 2017 to the World Heritage Committee, which:

7. *Further notes that monitoring of the number of visitors is being undertaken systematically for all component sites, and that a visitor management strategy, including carrying capacities, will be formulated in 2018 on the basis of these results; and also requests the State Party to submit this strategy to the World Heritage Centre, once it is completed, for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
8. *Notes furthermore that interpretation is available for all component sites, and that digital communications have been developed, but that further improvements are planned, including Information Centre to be opened;*
9. *Further requests the State Party to provide an update on overall interpretation upon completion of Information Centre;*
10. *Strongly encourages the State Party to take into account best international practices for interpretation strategies when continuing its work on the interpretation of the full history of the property, both during and outside of the period covered by its OUV, and in the digital interpretation materials. (Decision 42 COM 7B.10)*

CURRENT SITUATION

This monitoring report is based on sites visits to each Area in March and August 2019 and meetings which discussed progress to date and shared ideas to further develop the WHS's interpretation and presentation.

The "common exhibition"

- The 2017 Interpretation Strategy and audit recommended the development of consistent content and brand for the presentation of the WHS OUV at each Area. It is a key task of the Strategy. This should also clearly articulate the connections between the component parts and their respective contributions - in a balanced way; as there is often a tendency for sites to (over) emphasize their own achievements in a way that neglects the fundamental (linked) contributions by others. It should also include why the three themes were selected. As informed during the 2019 interpretation audit, this recommendation has a functional working title the "common exhibition".
- The Cabinet Secretariat will provide immediate and clear direction on who is responsible for leading the development and content of the "common exhibition" to provide well defined guidance to all Areas for the presentation of OUV'. It is important to have consistency in content and design and present OUV in a clear, structured and succinct manner. It is further essential that sites provide a suitably large enough, dedicated, area that greets the visitor on arrival and helps them to understand that they are in one serial World Heritage Site, and why it is significant.
- Guidance on the content and design of the "common exhibition" should draw from the widely-consulted and approved texts in the Nomination Document, and existing exemplars from the exhibitions at the Hashino Iron Mining and Smelting Site Information Centre (specifically regarding a model approach for technical and accessible content) and the Hagi Visitor Centre (specifically regarding the successful

approach to design, graphic techniques and a range of diverse and wholly appropriate easily accessible media). Hashino provides well-balanced information on the OUV, which is presented both in its exhibition and brochure that is provided in multiple languages. Hagi’s design and presentation of the OUV has been developed to a high standard and is consistent with design and presentation of the nomination document, website, WHS’s brochures and road signs.

- A detailed brief, including the content and design informed by the Hashino and Hagi exhibitions, should be developed and provided to all Areas so that the “common exhibition” can be developed and installed at each appropriate facility. The exhibition’s design should also be modular so that its installation can be flexible and adapted to fit each Area’s available exhibition space, particularly as some facilities have limited space and resources.

Area 1 – Hagi

- Provides an exemplar regarding the successful approach to design, graphic techniques and a range of diverse and wholly appropriate easily accessible media. Interpretation of the overall OUV is provided at the visitor centre (300,000 visitors in 2018), then more specific information is provided at the associated facilities. The amount of spaces allocated for the exhibition of OUV in the museum ought to be the model for all other Areas to follow (although in terms of visitor experience, OUV should be presented first, before the Component Part’s specific contribution, and national and/or local stories). It is also important to remember balanced, accurate history, as some storyboards/presentations can become “over-enthusiastic” when relating the achievements of a specific aspect of the site or component part; sometimes to the detriment of others in their equally important contributions.
- Current detailed design development for the new exhibition in the Hagi Museum provides the opportunity to incorporate an object-rich display (in contrast to the interpretation-only visitor centre) that is relevant to each of Hagi’s Component Parts and elements. This can be backed by succinct WHS interpretive context and labels; the exhibit fitting seamlessly into the rest of the museum and its current exhibition style.
- Ohitayama Tatara Exhibition Hall provides sufficient interpretation for an introduction to the adjacent site. The archaeological site is supplemented with interpretation boards and a virtual reality facility.

Area 2 – Kagoshima

- It is important to intercept and capitalise on the 600,000 visitors to Sengan-en and the 300,000 to the Shoko-Shuseikan museum (Former Shuseikan Machinery Factory) to present and communicate the WHS OUV and how this area contributes to it. Content should draw from the widely-consulted and approved texts in the Nomination Document.
- Projected earthquake-strengthening of the structure of the Former Shuseikan Machinery Factory presents (as current exhibits will be temporarily removed) an opportunity to refresh, in particular, the introductory interpretive exhibition at the beginning of the visitor experience. This can assist with the above task.

- In developing the visitor experience in this area, it is important to understand and manage the limitations, and conservation vulnerability, of the Foreign Engineers' Residence. In terms of visitor carrying capacity, only 50 people may be accommodated in the house at any one time. The addition of a new interpretation facility in the vicinity of the site of the demolished apartment block, together with enhancements of the immediate seaward setting of the Foreign Engineers' Residence, will enable a greater capacity for visitors and their management at the site. The ongoing conservation and enhancement work at the Foreign Engineers' Residence are to be commended. It demonstrates the local government's ongoing commitment to the WHS, its obligations and opportunities.
- Based on advice provided at the site visit and subsequent meetings between Kagoshima City and Shimadzu, the new Sengan-en guidance facility is to be called the 'Kagoshima World Cultural Heritage Orientation Centre' which is to be open in October 2019. This Centre will ideally provide the first point of contact to succinctly inform the 600,000 visitors that they are in a WHS and why it is important. It should also "signpost" visitors to the Garden, the Reverberatory Furnace, Former Shuseikan Machinery Factory and the Foreign Engineers' Residence.
- In all developments, it is important to remember balanced, accurate history. Some storyboards/presentations can become "over-enthusiastic" when relating the achievements of a specific aspect of the site or component part; sometimes to the detriment of others in their equally important and often linked contributions.

Area 3 – Niriyama

- Izunokuni City's development of the Furnace Visitor Centre (200,000 visitors in 2018) and the ongoing enhancement of the site is to be commended. Since the audit in 2017, the further works undertaken (tree management, new signage, land acquisition, conservation works) provide a more holistic understanding and experience of the site. For example, the now clearer visual connection between the river and the furnaces illustrates the direct relationship between the two elements. These works also embrace other experiences around the site such as the tea plantation and the viewing areas.
- The City's ongoing conservation, management and presentation of the site is an exemplar model that should be shared with the other Areas. It also clearly demonstrates one of the aims of the WH Convention, that is the WHS should have social and economic benefits to the local and broader communities.
- Izunokuni City is proposing to install the "common exhibition" within the visitor centre's entrance area. The visitor will then be able to better understand and experience the engaging and well-designed exhibition on the Component Part and its broader history. Currently, the quality and content of the presentation of overall OUV of the series is not adequate in comparison with the (occasional) over-emphasis of the contribution of the site (Component Part).
- The presentation of the site should also include what, and where, significant events/impacts/achievements relevant to Niriyama were experienced elsewhere in the WHS and beyond. Content should draw from the widely-consulted and approved

texts in the Nomination Document. Again, it is important to remember balanced, accurate history, as some presentations can become “over-enthusiastic” when relating the achievements of a specific aspect of the site or component part, sometimes to the detriment of others in their equally important contributions.

- There is the opportunity with the Egawa House for Izunokuni City to enhance its interpretation while also supporting an increase in visitation to the Egawa House (currently around 30,000, with an estimated annual carrying capacity of 50,000); thus extending the overall visitor experience to the area and expanding on the WHS story. However, this will need to be carefully managed to retain the current personable and intimate experience, and ensure that the structures and gardens are not adversely impacted. Around 50,000 visitors seem viable as a manageable and achievable target.
- The new archival facility at the Egawa House provides the opportunity to provide additional educational experiences and materials that could be used for exhibitions etc.
- Izunokuni City is proposing to remove the Heda Shipbuilding Museum from the third tier of the Interpretation Strategy’s hierarchy in developing their interpretation plan. There was a discussion that this associative site demonstrates one of the significant impacts of the Nirayama Reverberatory Furnaces’ technological achievements and one of the WHS three themes. The museum is not managed by Izunokuni City. The removal of this facility from the hierarchy’s third tier will not have an adverse impact on the interpretation of the WHS OUV and its attributes.

Area 4 – Kamaishi

- Since the last audit, key changes and developments at the Hashino Iron Mining Smelting site and Information Centre include the presentation of information with the introduction of new interpretation panels and the updated application (based on augmented reality) to use with mobile devices. Both provide information in more than one language. The Information Centre provides a well-balanced presentation of the WHS OUV, followed by the contribution made by the Component Part and how it links with other relevant Component Parts. Its fuller history is also outlined.
- At the Iron and Steel History Museum (13,000 visitors), ongoing interpretation and presentation includes further developing the exhibition content to clearly demonstrate the connection and links between Nirayama, and Yawata, via Kamaishi. It also includes the impacts of the legacy of iron mining and smelting, and its continuous development, until the present day. The museum presents in more than one language, including the furnace sound and light show, exhibition panels and labels, and a guide book.
- At the Former Kamaishi Mine Office site, holistic improvements offer a more diverse experience that provides a wider interpretation and presentation of the site eg new interpretive panels which show how the site operated. This is provided in multiple languages, museum labels, and a guide leaflet.
- The Kamaishi Historical Material Display provides an appropriate associative understanding of the fuller history of the Area drawing links with the WHS and this Component Part. Labels in English.
- Training for guides and teachers and educational programs which focus on smelting.

Area 5 – Saga

- Ongoing professional work at Mietsu Naval Dock and the associated museum, including excavation archaeology, furthers the interpretation and conservation of the Component Part. This is to be complimented.
- The plans they have developed to inform the development of Mietsu Naval Dock and the museum are to be commended.
- The OUV and linkages with other component parts (especially those in Nagasaki where there are very close historic relationships) will be essential in these developments. Great care must be taken to achieve balanced, accurate (evidenced) history, as some storyboards/presentations can become “over-enthusiastic” when relating the achievements of a specific aspect of the site or component part; sometimes to the detriment of others in their equally important contributions. Content and story should draw from the widely-consulted and approved texts in the Nomination Document.

Area 6 - Nagasaki

- It is appropriate for the proposed ‘Nagasaki Area Centre’ to be located in the Former Mitsubishi No 2 Dock House in Glover Park to present the “common exhibition”. This facility will optimize the existing catchment of over one million annual visitors. Together with other buildings and the spacious grounds in the park adjacent to Glover House, it is easily able to accommodate large numbers.
- An interpretation plan for the Glover House should be being developed in parallel with the current conservation works which are due to be completed within two years. We look forward to providing ongoing advice for the design and interpretive development of these two places.
- There is some merit in considering parallel planning with the proposed developments in Nagasaki and Saga as their content and timescales are to a degree overlapping.
- The Nagasaki Shipyard Museum clearly interprets and presents the history of the shipyard and its role as part of the overall WHS. There is the opportunity to increase the visitation to the facility. However, as the site is still operational, access will need to be managed by the company.
- The Takashima Coal Mining Museum should further embrace its association with the WHS by introducing greater visibility in branding, including further relevant interpretive content and raising its profile and visitor numbers through networking with other Component Parts in the Nagasaki Area. The World Cultural Heritage Division could provide advice to achieve this.

Area 7 – Miike

- The principal interpretation centre, Omuta Coal industry and Science Museum, is currently redeveloping its exhibitions. The proposed location for the “common exhibition” within the entrance area is appropriate. From here, it will be a

straightforward task of interpretation planning to reorganize and re-present the first section of the galleries to introduce Miike’s contribution to OUV, and that of its Component Parts and various elements. There are already good exhibits on a number of these that will require little modification.

- The museum has the opportunity to become a world class coal mining interpretive centre as, not only is it located next to a key coal mining Component Part of a WHS, it contains innovatively displayed and highly impressive working exhibits of large-scale coal mining equipment (albeit more recent technology). To achieve this goal, it is recommended that a study tour is undertaken of some European coal mines such as the recently inscribed World Heritage sites in France and Belgium, Big Pit in Wales (part of Blaenavon WHS in the UK), and the German Mining Museum in Bochum (Germany) that has just had a major redevelopment of its galleries.
- The Nagasaki Customs House is awaiting further interpretive developments. A word of advice given on site was that the installation of facilities or structures close to the building should be given greater consideration as to their location (e.g. new visitor toilet).
- Mikawa Pit is the last production section to exploit the Miike Coalfield (from 1945), even mining under the Ariake Sea. Presentation of this associated site enhances the ‘full history’ of the Component Part by its focus on the social theme with the labour strike, coalmine disaster, and labour issues including prisoners of war working in the mine. Along with the Mitsui Manato Club (dating from 1907; contemporary with Miike Port) with which it is connected by a short pathway, it provides the opportunity to enhance the visitor offering within the area and to create positive social and economic impacts.
- The opportunity to open up the railway line to connect the Pits to the Port offers both economic potential and the ability to fulfil a critical interpretive aspect on the how the Area functioned and why it is significant. It could also provide a critical attraction to draw visitors to Miike and link its key elements in a single visitor experience that would further encourage perhaps an overnight stay.
- Misumi West Port is currently presenting out of date and poor quality interpretation and needs to address its presentation and exhibitions in relation to the WHS as soon as possible. There has been no significant change to this infrastructure since the 2017 audit. The exterior interpretation panels pre-date the WHS inscription and some of Ryujokan’s exhibitions are in poor condition and quality and are presented with an unacceptable “temporary” appearance. The site visit discussed the WHS responsibility to engage with and to reveal to the community and visitors the OUV of the WHS and the contribution of Miike and Misumi West Port to this. There was an assurance that a permanent exhibition is currently being designed and developed, due to open in four years following earthquake strengthening of the building. However, there was also a financial commitment to update the exterior panels and to install a temporary exhibition within the Ryijokan of a more appropriate standard (both in content and design) within the next year.

Area 8 – Yawata

- The First Head Office’s conservation works are to be commended. When they are completed in 2020, it will provide a fitting facility to present its contribution to the

WHS and that of the Component Part - even though access will (at least for the time being) be limited due to its location within the operational site.

- The First Head Office observatory space has enhanced its visitor experience with the introduction of a virtual reality experience that provides interpretation of the WHS and also the history of this Component Part. There is an early stage proposal to develop a tunnel from the observatory to the First Head Office which would provide safe and controlled physical access to a secured area within this operational site which has necessary restricted access.
- The Innovation Gallery is an appropriate publicly accessible cultural facility that serves as a visitor centre to accommodate the future “common exhibition”.
- The Onga River Pumping Station interpretation is to be commended. It clearly states the significance of the Component Part and its contributions and relationships to other Component Parts and the overall OUV of the WHS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made to continue to build on the WHS ongoing interpretive development that has been implemented since inscription in 2015. They also aim to strengthen the interpretive connectivity and consistency between the Component Parts in order to foster a better appreciation of this WHS and its Outstanding Universal Value.

1. The content, design and development of the “common exhibition” must be undertaken as a priority and installed in each Area (in appropriate respective Component Parts) as soon as possible. Adequate resources, particularly relevant expertise and funding, and a suitable size of space and location (in terms of visitor arrival), need to be provided to achieve this.
2. Continue the development of the interpretation plans as they are a key tool, based on best international practices, that will guide how each Area and their Component Parts contribute to the OUV and allow an understanding of their full history. This will make sure that there is a consistent, cohesive and coordinated approach to connect and present the 23 Component Parts to communicate OUV and how they relate to each other. The plans are not required to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee.
3. The Government of Japan provides an update on the WHS overall interpretation when the Tokyo Centre is completed (Decision 42 COM 7B.10). This update should report on progress against the nine key steps in the interpretation strategy.
4. The development of the visitor management strategy (as indicated in the decision of the WH Committee) should be progressed as a priority. This is important as it should inform the ongoing decision-making for the interpretation and presentation of the WHS, such as discussed at Kagoshima. Management of visitors is important to the protection of WHS values and attributes as well as contributing to a sustainable, engaging and quality experience. See <http://whc.unesco.org/sustainabletourismtoolkit/guides/guide-8-managing-visitor-behaviour>
5. The audit clearly demonstrated that there are highly experienced and professional curatorial and interpretation personnel delivering Area interpretation in accordance with best practices. World Heritage Cultural Division Directors and site managers

should continue to meet regularly to discuss and share practices and resources, particularly to ensure consistent content and standards for interpretation across the WHS.

6. All Areas and their Component Parts should embrace the use of the WH logo in all platforms (e.g. signage and brochures) to celebrate and capitalise on the opportunities that being a WHS provides.
7. The authenticity and accuracy of information is very important, and the Nomination Document provides a consulted, balanced and approved story that is backed by extensive research and evidence. Any discrepancies in information should be able to be rectified with the agreed themes and key messages within each Area's interpretation plans.
8. The "third tier" of facilities (associated sites/facilities) identified in the Interpretation Strategy are to be included as locations on the maps currently being developed by the NCIH. These sites do not require additional WHS interpretation, nor do they require to be reported to UNESCO in the Area interpretation plans (other than they are located as map points). They are peripheral to the theme of the WHS, but are nonetheless important visitor sites and attractions.
9. A final monitoring mission should be undertaken within two years to ensure that all the Interpretation Strategy 2017 key steps are complete.