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The politics of World Heritage Sites: city planning, bird shit architecture and European impunity

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ABSTRACT

Liverpool holds the unenviable distinction to be the first UK city to lose its United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site status. It was inscribed in 2004, placed on the ‘in Danger’ list in 2012 and de-listed in 2021 due to the perceived negative impact of extensive waterfront regeneration. Planning permission for the £5.5 billion Liverpool Waters project and Everton Football Club’s £500 million stadium sealed the city’s fate. This is both interesting and unusual. First, very few properties appear on the ‘in Danger’ list, and before Liverpool, only two other sites had been de-listed since the mid-1970s. Second, extant knowledge indicates that European states enjoy ‘impunity’ from World Heritage Committee decisions. However, this was not the case with regards to the UK State Party and Liverpool. Through an analysis of city planning and the ‘politics at the site’, this article problematizes how and why Liverpool was controversially de-listed as a World Heritage Site. Beyond the case study, this article contributes to, and drives forward, international debates on World Heritage Sites.

KEYWORDS

heritage; waterfront; planning; politics

1. INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday, 21 July 2021, Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City lost its 17-year status as one of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) 1154 World Heritage Sites (WHSs). World Heritage Committee (WHC) chair Tian Xuejun informed that of the 20 votes that had been cast (via secret ballot, as a consensus could not be reached), 13 supported the proposal to remove Liverpool from the WHS list and five were against (two ballot papers were invalidated). For over a decade, the WHC expressed concern over the impact of extensive waterfront regeneration on the city’s historical architecture and built environment (WHS property). Most notably the £5.5 billion Liverpool Waters project. In 2012, Liverpool was placed on UNESCO’s ‘in Danger’ list, a ‘disciplinary instrument’ for
transgression of its guidelines on heritage conservation and preservation (Hølleland et al., 2019). In March 2021, planning approval for Everton Football Club’s £500 million stadium at Bramley-Moore Dock sealed the city’s fate (Simpson, 2021). Following this, the WHC deleted Liverpool from the WHS list (UNESCO, 2021a). This is both interesting and unusual. First, few properties appear on the ‘in Danger’ list – 52 (4.5%) at the time of writing – and before Liverpool, only two other sites had been de-listed in five decades. Second, recent studies (Brown et al., 2019; Hølleland et al., 2019; Liuzza & Meskell, 2021) argue European states exert strong influence – resulting in ‘impunity’ – over decision-making within the WHC. Given this, and the fact that ‘de-accessions are extremely rare’ (Frey & Steiner, 2011, p. 563), why was Liverpool such a drastic case that warranted de-listing, and the UK government (State Party) unable, or unwilling, to affect political leverage and preserve the city’s WHS status?

Liverpool features prominently in governance debates. Sykes et al. (2013, p. 315) state, ‘[t]he history of Liverpool makes for a distinctive and tumultuous urban story, and one which is far from over’. The ‘global trading city’ (Munck, 2003) and ‘second city of Empire’ (Lane, 1997) of the 18th–early 20th centuries plummeted into a ‘beaten city’ (Belchem, 2006a) and ‘pariah city’ (Wilks-Heeg, 2003) during the 1970s and 1980s. Mass unemployment, urban decline, social problems and societal stereotyping adversely affected the city and its people (Boland, 2008). Liverpool became emblematic of the fallout from UK deindustrialization. As a response, in the 1980s and 1990s, Liverpool and its city-region – Merseyside – became a laboratory for public policy initiatives, in particular significant support from European Union (EU) Cohesion Policy. Latter inputs involved two tranches of Objective 1 funding for stimulating economic development and social regeneration (Boland, 2000). Moreover, from the late 1990s/early 2000s, as elsewhere in the UK, Liverpool’s planning and development policies came to embrace the ‘intellectual drive from academic consultants’ promoting the influential discourse of economic competitiveness (Boland, 2007, p. 1031). Such that, upon entering the new millennium Liverpool had transmogrified into what is described as a ‘competitive’, ‘cultural’ and ‘sexy city’ (Boland, 2013). It must also be acknowledged that, despite progress, Liverpool still underperforms socio-economically compared with the rest of the UK and continental Europe.

Liverpool was inscribed as a WHS due to its ‘historic waterfront’ and rich tapestry of cultural and natural heritage (Rodwell, 2008a, 2008b, 2015). Post-inscription, however, Danish architect/urbanist Jan Gehl derided high-profile and high-rise – the trendy phrase is *iconic* (Short, 2007) – developments on Liverpool’s waterfront as ‘bird shit architecture’ (cited in Rodwell, 2014). This, and broader concerns with how new developments interacted with the city’s heritage landscape, resulted in removal from the WHS list. Undoubtedly, 2021 was a difficult year for Liverpool. In March, local authority Inspector Max Caller published ‘a damning report’ into the council’s operations, citing examples of bullying, poor practice and suspect planning procedures (Caller, 2021). The loss of WHS contributed to a ‘tumultuous 12 months’ (Hamilton, 2021), attracting further unwanted negative attention on the city (Bayliss, 2021; Belchem et al., 2021; Lawless, 2021; Thorp, 2021a). Joanne Anderson, Liverpool’s City Mayor, denounced the decision as ‘incomprehensible’; architectural critic and author Simon Jenkins called it a ‘humiliating blow’ for city leaders; while Aina Khan of *The New York Times* lamented Liverpool’s ‘rare indignity’ as only the third city globally, and first in the UK, to lose this celebrated status (BBC News, 2021; Jenkins, 2021; Khan, 2021). In this article, we postulate that planning interventions underpinning the city’s ‘economic renaissance’ (Sykes et al., 2013) and, in particular, the ‘local politics at the site’ (after Hølleland et al., 2019) contributed to the loss of WHS status. We end by cogitating on the broader implications for future research emergent from the Liverpool case, notably the live controversies surrounding the WHSs of prehistoric Stonehenge and Avebury.
2. METHOD

This article draws upon extant studies of WHSs. This is supplemented through a policy review of strategy documents on the city’s economy, waterfront and WHS, and media coverage of Liverpool’s WHS. An important source of secondary data was the UNESCO website. We accessed minutes of WHC meetings, reports on properties on the WHS ‘in Danger’ list, and Monitoring Mission reports on Liverpool. Of note, Dennis Rodwell’s extensive work (Rodwell, 2008a, 2008b, 2009a, 2009b, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2021) covers the historical context, physical transformation, planning/design controversies that have shaped Liverpool’s WHS. Given this, the lead author exchanged emails with Rodwell during the preparation of this article, and he provided useful insights into how the research might develop. Here, we drive forward a key conclusion from his and others’ work (Alsalloum & Brown, 2010; Armitage et al., 2014; Fageir et al., 2015, 2021; Patiwa et al., 2019, 2020; West, 2022), concerning the tension between heritage conservation and economic growth (Sykes & Ludwig, 2015). We develop the debate by injecting a more theoretically informed interrogation of Liverpool’s regenerated waterfront and the implications for the WHS, using the literatures on neoliberal urbanism and city competitiveness.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Neoliberal urbanism and the competitive waterfront

Since Harvey’s (1989) seminal article, studies from around the world address the impact of planning interventions on port cities and waterfront areas (e.g., Brownill, 2013; Bunce & Desfor, 2007; Chang & Huang, 2011; Hoyle, 2000; Lehrer & Laidley, 2008; Sandercock & Dovey, 2002; Shaw, 2013). First, ‘[s]ea ports are an essential component in the broad cultural heritage of humanity’ (Hinchliffe, 2012, p. 950). Second, ‘[i]n the recent history of human settlements, waterfronts had become one of the most significant sites in the city’ (Fageir et al., 2021, p. 536). This is true for major planning initiatives. A body of research argues waterfronts are infected with neoliberal urbanism: a market-based approach underpinned by the nebulous concept of competitiveness (Bristow, 2005; on Liverpool, see Boland, 2007; Nurse, 2017) and entrepreneurial governance (Harvey, 1989; on Liverpool, see Biddulph, 2011; Jones, 2015). Oakley (2011, p. 234) opines, ‘waterfront renewal is being driven by a neoliberal competitive city paradigm’. Others highlight the performative nature of planning for the ‘competitive waterfront’ (Doucet et al., 2011; Lovering, 2007). Here, ‘mega structures and signature buildings epitomize the performativity of neoliberal competitiveness on the waterfront’ (Bolan et al., 2017, p. 119). Neoliberal policies prioritizing economic growth require cities to compete for investment, events, labour and tourism. This involves upgrading the waterfront through major planning interventions, especially iconic buildings as towering symbols of success (Lovering, 2007; Short, 2007), and place branding initiatives repositioning the city to compete in the global marketplace (Biddulph, 2011; Fageir et al., 2015; on Liverpool, see Boland, 2013).

3.2. Heritage and regeneration

A second strand to the theoretical framework is the tension between heritage (tangible and intangible) conservation and (neoliberal) economic growth, and how this is played out in the urban regeneration process. Commentators (Rodwell 2008a, 2008b, 2009b, 2014, 2015, 2018; Short, 2007; Pendlebury et al., 2009; Rao, 2010, Sykes & Ludwig, 2015) explain how conceptualizations of authenticity, built heritage landscape and outstanding universal value (OUV); the (in)appropriateness of new developments, especially tall buildings; the UK’s incomplete (or inadequate) approach to conservation planning; conflict between multi-scalar actors and...
between local pro-development and pro-conservation groups leads to contested governance. Reflecting earlier arguments, elite stakeholders are seduced by the dominant neoliberal orthodoxy requiring cities to compete in the global marketplace to deliver economic growth and regenerate large swathes of city centres and waterfronts. In the race to be competitive, cityspaces identified for spectacular regeneration come into conflict with heritage assets and areas of conservation or preservation. Regarding Delhi’s withdrawn dossier for WHS inscription, Meskell (2021, p. 28) highlights the prioritization of ‘neoliberal experiments to promote urban heritage, while encouraging economic growth and modernization’, and the desire for ‘world class’ status and ‘global competitiveness’. It is noteworthy that such tension is evident in WHSs around the world (Lee, 2009; Pendlebury et al., 2009; Ripp & Rodwell, 2015; Rodwell, 2012, 2018; Rodwell & Turner, 2018; Short, 2007).

4. UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

World Heritage status is highly prized. Apart from the international legitimacy and universality it confers on the value of a site, it is also viewed as a guarantor of authenticity. Since it is anticipated that World Heritage status will attract foreign tourists, it is also perceived as a source of economic potential.

(Nic Craith, 2012, p. 157)

In the mid-1970s UNESCO created WHSs to ‘serve as a reference for what is worth preserving for future generations’ (Rao, 2010, p. 161; Liuzza & Meskell, 2021). Brown et al. (2019, p. 287) add, the ‘UNESCO World Heritage Programme stands at the forefront of international efforts to preserve its inscribed heritage properties’ from specific threats, for example, human activities, terrorist attacks, infrastructure projects. Another point is ‘[t]he World Heritage list … has become highly popular’ (Frey & Steiner, 2011, p. 555). As noted above, WHSs are used as place-branding tools to promote cities to inward investors and global tourists (Bertacchini et al., 2016; Birendra, 2021; Ripp & Rodwell, 2015; Short, 2007). In Liverpool, the WHS was part of broader objectives to recover its ‘global city’ moniker (Boland, 2013; Liverpool City Council, 2018; Team Liverpool, 2020). However, Armitage et al. (2014) argue local stakeholders did not effectively appropriate the ‘WHS brand’. Linking to the city’s tenure as European Capital of Culture 2008, LOCUS Consulting Ltd (2017, p. 32) commented on the dangers of losing WHS status:

Without the WHS the city runs a real risk of eroding its competitive edge amongst European destinations. Of the fifty-four European cities that have celebrated the award of Capital of Culture two thirds are World Heritage Sites. WHS status is one of few accreditations that guarantees visitors the experience of a high-quality place.

The WHS inscription process is heavily politicized, involving both high – formal diplomacy – and low – informal chatter – politics (Bertacchini et al., 2017; Brown et al., 2019; Holleland et al., 2019), raising concern that State Party influence over WHC decisions ‘diverge from considerations of heritage significance and conservation’ (Bertacchini et al., 2016, p. 124). Meskell (2012) mentions the mobilization of ‘national pride’ and ‘aggressive lobbying’ by government representatives, and a ‘lack of transparency’ into how the selection and monitoring processes of WHSs operate. While Bertacchini et al. (2016) bemoan the influence of career diplomats pursuing national interest, rather than qualified heritage experts. Resultantly, the selection of sites is determined by the ‘power and influence’ of certain states over WHC decision-making. In this journal, Liuzza and Meskell (2021) identify ‘political manipulation’ tactics that are employed within WHC discussions, that is, ‘threats and assurances’ are mobilized to influence other states’ and UNESCO experts’ thinking to affect decision-making. Relatedly, others discuss the
‘growing politicization’ and ‘polarization of discussion’ at WHC meetings (Bertacchini et al., 2017; Rao, 2010) regarding WHS selection, monitoring and the ‘in Danger’ list.

Today, 52 properties are on UNESCO’s ‘in Danger’ list.6 For Brown et al. (2019, p. 287), it is ‘a mechanism specifically designed to protect the most imperilled sites’. The list can be viewed as a carrot-and-stick approach. The former involves financial aid to address threats to WHSs; the latter is more punitive in labelling a country/city for not addressing previously identified threats. Only a small number of endangered sites appear on the ‘in Danger’ list, and membership hardly ever leads to de-listing (Birendra, 2021).7 As with inscription, sites ‘under consideration’ for inclusion on the ‘in Danger’ list are subject to State Party high and low politics through bureaucratic and diplomatic practices, ‘lobbying power’ (Brown et al., 2019; Hølleland et al., 2019) and ‘behind the scenes machinations’ (Meskell, 2021).8 Thus, there is a ‘clear discrepancy between overall threats facing World Heritage listed properties and those facing sites on the List in Danger’ leading to ‘a pool of high-profile properties that routinely evades inscription on the List in Danger’ (Brown et al., 2019, p. 219, 301). Furthermore, sites from Europe and North America ‘are too rarely inscribed on the List in Danger’ (Brown et al., 2019, p. 291).9 Therefore, it is reasonable to enquire why Liverpool was included on the ‘in Danger’ list and then de-listed.

It appears to be an exception to European ‘impunity’:

Powerful countries continue to escape sanction, largely from the Europe and North America regional grouping, further exacerbating disparities and dissatisfaction between regions. Countries like the United Kingdom and Italy can claim to be conservation leaders internationally, while evading censure for their unrestrained development and infrastructural projects nationally. We might venture that consideration has developed as a strategy for emerging nations to achieve what the powerful Western nations already enjoy: impunity.

(Brown et al., 2019, p. 300)

More cultural than natural or mixed properties appear on the ‘in Danger’ list.10 A second point is the ‘distribution is not, however, evenly spread across world regions or site categories’ (Brown et al., 2019, p. 289). Evidence of this ‘regional imbalance’ is that African and Arab states have the highest number of sites on the ‘in Danger’ list (Arab states sites are mostly cultural, in Africa natural sites dominate) compared with Europe and North America (Bertacchini et al., 2017). A third point, following the above discussion, is the process of inclusion on the ‘in Danger’ list and (potential) de-listing is heavily politicized (Brown et al., 2019; Hølleland et al., 2019). Some sites are warned they may be placed on the list – ‘under consideration’ – and are subsequently included (e.g., Cologne, Dresden, Liverpool), while others lobby against inclusion on the list (e.g., Great Barrier Reef, Venice, Panama City). With respect to ‘external coalitions’ and ‘incentivisation’, Liuzza and Meskell (2021, p. 7) claim, ‘BRICS nations managed to prevent their sites being placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger’ (see also Bertacchini et al., 2017).11 Many developed countries’ WHSs are constantly ‘being considered’ but never included on the list such is their political influence (Birendra, 2021; Brown et al., 2019). Liuzza and Meskell (2021, p. 5) explain, ‘states develop alliances and strategies to evade criticism of their activities so as to excuse poor site conservation and prevent their sites being placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger’. Finally, some sites are removed after satisfying UNESCO’s recommendations (e.g., Baku, Cologne), while others – that is, Oman, Dresden, Liverpool – are de-listed for ignoring UNESCO’s recommendations and pursuing what are interpreted as ‘inappropriate developments’.

Two approaches underpin the ‘in Danger’ list (Hølleland et al., 2019). The ‘fire alarm’ method concerns the threat of war and civil unrest.12 UNESCO’s intervention intends to bring agencies and organizations together to ‘foster cooperation around the at-risk sites’ and ‘build better conservation management’ (Hølleland et al., 2019, pp. 36, 38; Frey & Steiner, 2011). Approximately 40% of sites on the ‘in Danger’ list are attributable to war and civil unrest,
including natural and cultural properties. The second method, more relevant here, concerns threats caused by development. Here, the ‘in Danger’ list is ‘a naming and shaming tool for states that fail to comply with the WHC ... a disciplinary instrument or reputational sanction aimed at recalcitrant states’ (Hølleland et al., 2019, p. 38). Following war and civil unrest, these ‘development pressures’ form the second highest number of sites on the ‘in Danger’ list. According to Hølleland et al. (2019, p. 49):

All of this implies that the IDL [‘in Danger’ list] can be used as a disciplinary tool by the World Heritage bodies, particularly in the context of inappropriate developments. The fact that most requests for inclusion on the IDL are initiated by the World Heritage bodies (rather than the states themselves) establishes an intention to use the IDL as a punitive measure where a state has breached the rules of the WHC.

Hølleland et al. (2019) question the ‘naming and shaming’ tool. They argue its effectiveness is attributable to a State Party’s reputation on the diplomatic stage and ‘their attitude towards development and heritage’ (p. 54). In the case of Dresden, threat of inclusion on the ‘in Danger’ list was insufficient to stop the development going ahead. In framing this article, we return to Liuzza and Meskell (2021, p. 3) and problematize how and why the UK, as a ‘powerful, wealthy nation’, was unable, maybe unwilling, to ‘stave off censure or danger listing’ and prevent Liverpool’s de-listing. We focus on the extent to which responsible organizations in the city reacted to the ‘naming/shaming’ and, most importantly, what Hølleland et al. (2019, p. 54) term ‘the local politics at that particular site’.

5. LIVERPOOL’S WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Liverpool is a place that has experienced dramatic patterns of growth, decline and renewal over the past 200 years. ... In many ways Liverpool can thus be seen as an archetype of a post-industrial city which has sought to reinvent itself through the valorization of its heritage and cultural assets.

(Sykes & Ludwig, 2015, pp. 16, 19)

Building on the above observation, we connect two key concepts to Liverpool. First, ‘[t]he tourism potential of such a heritage status can be aligned to the competitiveness discourse’ (Biddulph, 2011, p. 98). Second, “[r]egeneration” has become the city’s dominant, if seldom quantified or questioned, objective’ (Sykes et al., 2013, p. 300). On the city’s entrepreneurial governance and regeneration of the city centre and waterfront, ‘[i]t is significant that in Liverpool the Council tried to be more business facing and investment friendly’ (Biddulph, 2011, p. 97). As noted above, this reflects a shift towards more neoliberal planning interventions driven by the logic of competitiveness since the late 1990s/early 2000s (Boland, 2007; Speake & Pentaraki, 2017; West, 2022). For Fageir et al. (2015, p. 35), the city’s ‘waterfront was ... a platform that showed Liverpool’s endeavour to achieve distinctiveness and enhance competitiveness’. However, this was to have serious implications for the WHS.

5.1. WHS inscription

In 2004, Liverpool’s world class heritage was designated a UNESCO WHS (Sykes & Ludwig, 2015), joining worldly wonders such as Agra’s Taj Mahal (India), the Galápagos Islands (Ecuador), the Great Barrier Reef (Australia), the Athenian Acropolis (Greece), and the ancient rock-city of Petra (Jordan). Liverpool’s WHS included six ‘character areas’ (Figures 1 and 2): Pier Head, Albert Dock, Stanley Dock, Commercial District, Cultural Quarter and Merchants Quarter, covering 136 hectares of the city centre and waterfront, surrounded by a protective buffer zone of 750 hectares (Liverpool City Council, 2009). Liverpool’s inscription was based on three of UNESCO’s 10 core criteria (UNESCO, 2006). Biddulph (2011, p. 72) explains,
Liverpool’s built environment is a product of its mercantile past. UNESCO’s website confirms the important historical roles the city performed as justification for inscription onto the WHS list:

*Figure 1. Liverpool’s World Heritage Site Six Character Areas. Source: Liverpool City Council (2009) Note: Readers of the print issue can view the figure in colour online at [https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2022.2092204].*

‘Liverpool’s built environment is a product of its mercantile past’. UNESCO’s website confirms the important historical roles the city performed as justification for inscription onto the WHS list:
Six areas in the historic centre and docklands of the Maritime Mercantile City of Liverpool bear witness to the development of one of the world’s major trading centres in the 18th and 19th centuries. Liverpool played an important role in the growth of the British Empire and became the major port for the mass movement of people, e.g., slaves and emigrants from northern Europe to America. Liverpool was a pioneer in the development of modern dock technology, transport systems and port management.

(https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1150/)

5.2. WHS ‘in Danger’ list

Returning to the crux of the debate, Liverpool’s WHS ‘generated conflicts in interpretation about the design of development’ (Biddulph, 2011, p. 79). Two years after inscription, Liverpool was subjected to its first Reactive Monitoring Mission (UNESCO, 2006), the second one took place in late 2011 (UNESCO, 2012), plus an Advisory Mission in 2015 (UNESCO, 2015). The 2006 and 2011 missions reported on the impact of development that was taking place, or had received planning permission, in the WHS and buffer zone (Alsalloum & Brown, 2010; Armitage et al., 2014; Rodwell, 2008a, 2008b, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018; West, 2022; Fageir et al., 2015, 2021; Gaillard & Rodwell, 2015; Hinchliffe, 2012; Patiwael et al., 2019, 2020). The first mission ‘dictated that Liverpool adopt a stringent and clear framework to guide decisions about developments’ in the city centre and waterfront (Biddulph, 2011, p. 80). The uneasy relationship between local stakeholders and UNESCO came to a head in 2012 when Liverpool was placed on the ‘in Danger’ list due to the Liverpool Waters project. Then Mayor Joe Anderson was fiercely committed to Liverpool Waters. Journalist Josh Halliday argues Anderson’s commitment stemmed from the Conservative government’s austerity programme post-2010 that severely affected Liverpool (The Guardian, 2021). Losing millions of pounds of public funding for much-needed regeneration was replaced by a multi-billion-pound private investment. Defending the city’s record on heritage protection, Mayor Anderson criticized UNESCO’s ‘misinformed’ decision:

I would urge them to come and visit the city and to come and see for themselves. We are protecting more of our heritage than any other city in the UK and I challenge them to test my statement out. UNESCO can’t stop us building on a derelict car park. It can’t stop us providing new facilities,
new buildings, new jobs and new revenue coming into the city. They can’t stop us doing that and they won’t stop us.

(cited in Perraudin, 2016)

Connecting to Hølleland et al. (2019), Liverpool’s presence on the ‘in Danger’ list did not stop controversial urban regeneration projects from going ahead. As in Dresden, ‘naming/shaming’ did not work. The key concern for UNESCO was the proposed Liverpool Waters project located in a series of docks north of Pier Head. The official website captures the huge scale of the project, with a nod to the WHS:

Liverpool Waters is an ambitious 30-year vision to completely transform the city’s northern docks, creating a sustainable world-class, high-quality, mixed-use waterfront and bringing life back to the historical docklands. As the largest single development opportunity in the city, Liverpool Waters is a seamless extension of both Liverpool’s Commercial District and its iconic World Heritage waterfront. Extending to over 2km along the banks of the River Mersey, this £5.5 billion scheme has outline planning permission for 20 million sq. ft. of mixed-use development floor space across 60 hectares.

(https://liverpoolwaters.co.uk/)

‘The issue of the relative importance of WHS status and the Liverpool Waters scheme to the city soon became politicized’ (Sykes & Ludwig, 2015, p. 21). Liverpool Waters attracted strong criticism from UNESCO; English Heritage also found fault with the scale and design of the project (Biddulph, 2011; Sykes et al., 2013). Interestingly, evidence indicates that political leaders may not have taken this criticism seriously, nor subsequent inclusion on the ‘in Danger’ list. Perhaps they were confident that, as noted above, almost a decade on the ‘in Danger’ list hardly ever results in de-listing. Alternatively, connecting to another point, those in positions of power seemingly felt losing WHS was a price worth paying to drive forward the city’s plans for urban regeneration and economic growth. For example, ‘there was concern that the status might drive developers away, if the Council were required to resist tall buildings or developments which might modernize the city’s stadtbild’ (Biddulph, 2011, p. 79). Given the anticipated employment opportunities for a deprived area of north Liverpool, the then mayor staunchly supported Liverpool Waters. Belchem et al. (2021) also praise its potential to build a ‘brighter future’ for local residents. However, Jones (2015) is unconvinced by claims of enhanced job prospects for those living in close proximity to Liverpool Waters. Nevertheless, according to Joe Anderson:

Turning Peel Holdings (the developer) away doesn’t say to the world that Liverpool is a thriving modern city. It says we’re a city that is stuck in the past. You really do need to see the scale of this project to understand just how much impact it could have. This, very simply, would transform our city. It is too big an opportunity to let slip by. The city’s leading Lib-Dem, Richard Kemp, says that World Heritage Site status is more important than the Liverpool Waters Scheme. The Lib-Dems would turn away 20,000 jobs and £5bn of regeneration, all for the sake of a certificate on the wall in the Town Hall. I say that’s madness. Whatever happens in 2012, let me be absolutely clear about one thing: we will back Liverpool Waters.

(cited in Liverpool Echo, 2012)

Councillor Kemp, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats, adopted a less economically instrumental view of Liverpool Waters, arguing that retaining WHS status was crucial to the city’s tourist market:

There is hard evidence to show a lot of people come to the city because we have World Heritage Status. Tourism is one of our biggest industries and is bringing in cash now. Liverpool Waters is only a project
with no guarantee of it proceeding. I choose having tourist money in the bank now over possible investment money in the future.

(cited in Liverpool Echo, 2012)

During his tenure, Mayor Anderson also lambasted ‘Luddite’ campaigners over another proposed new development\textsuperscript{17} that might compromise WHS status. He mockingly restated that a ‘certificate on the wall’ did little to boost the area’s prospects:

We are a city that has to continue to grow or be left behind and we have to get that balance right … [you could never please people who] just want to leave things as they are. These were the same people that were the Luddites. If they’d had their way then, we wouldn’t have what we have now … [UNESCO’s request for a moratorium\textsuperscript{18} on any future development] would be suicidal for Liverpool. It would just put the pause button on the redevelopment of our city and I’m not prepared to do that, and neither are the people of the city.

(cited in Perraudin, 2016, original insets)

Such statements arguably run contrary to council planning documents. Liverpool’s Local Plan states WHS status is ‘internationally significant’ (Liverpool City Council, 2018), while the Supplementary Planning Document refers to ‘the highest international heritage designation’ (Liverpool City Council, 2009, p. 2). Councillor Steve Radford, Leader of the Liberal Democrat group on the council, offers an interesting insight into this politicking and posturing between UNESCO and the council. Although not referring to Liverpool Waters,\textsuperscript{19} he connects to the debate about heritage and development, and hints at the utility of ‘naming/shaming’:

UNESCO’s request for a moratorium was, I think, unhelpful and if anything confrontational, but the council has reacted by saying ‘we’ll do whatever we want’ and neither is very helpful. Liverpool has uniquely not suffered from over-development, but that shouldn’t be a reason why we should play catch-up. Would you put a 22-storey building right next to Westminster Central Hall?\textsuperscript{20} The answer is no. It wouldn’t even get past the radar.

(cited in Perraudin, 2016)

5.3. WHS de-listing

‘The extent of the city’s ambitions to sustain and grow its economy … [was] creating real and apparent friction with the desire to conserve and enhance the WHS’ Outstanding Universal Value’ (LOCUS Consulting, 2017, p. 36). The priority for economic growth created political tension regarding the WHS. Despite two Monitoring Missions, repeated warnings from UNESCO, frequent media stories and inclusion on the ‘in Danger’ list, Liverpool City Council approved planning permission for Liverpool Waters (Figure 3). Writing in 2015, Jones (2015, p. 470) stated, ‘[i]t is significant to note that the city’s UNESCO World Heritage Site status has been threatened in large part due to planning permission granted to Peel’s dramatic proposals’. In particular, the penchant for a plethora of tall buildings, including a (later withdrawn) 55-storey Shanghai Tower, would radically transform the city’s skyline. Sykes and Ludwig (2015) explain how the scale, density, height and design of many proposed buildings caused ‘local and international concern’ over the impact on Liverpool’s waterfront and WHS. Given this, and planning permission for the football stadium, the WHC:

[D]ecided to delete the property Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City (UK) from the World Heritage List, due to the irreversible loss of attributes conveying the outstanding universal value of the property … The project [Liverpool Waters] has since gone ahead along with other developments both inside the site
and in its buffer zone. The Committee considers that these constructions are detrimental to the site’s authenticity and integrity.

(UNESCO, 2021a)

The WHC highlighted ‘repeated concerns’ expressed over several years regarding the detrimental impact of Liverpool Waters on the WHS’s OUV. Liverpool Waters, and planning permission for the Bramley-Moore Dock development, ‘would irreversibly damage the attributes and conditions of integrity that warranted inscription’ (UNESCO, 2021b, p. 56). Also, returning to the UK government’s role, the committee ‘notes with deep regret … that the State Party has not fulfilled its obligations defined in the Convention with respect to protecting and conserving the OUV … of the World Heritage property’ (UNESCO, 2021b, p. 56). Interestingly, we detect further evidence of mutual ‘naming/shaming’. Belchem et al. (2021) cite ‘strong support’ from the UK Secretary of State, and accuse UNESCO officials of ignoring invitations to inspect the WHS. Similarly, ICOMOS-UK (2021) cite, ‘the best efforts of the UK Government’, and express ‘sadness’ at Liverpool’s de-listing. However, Engage Liverpool claim they brought UNESCO officials to the city, but the mayor and most of the Mayoral Task Force refused to meet them.21 Another point is that WHSs are ‘way down the list’ of UK government priorities, and ‘not even on their radar’ (Halliday, cited in The Guardian, 2021). According to Mechtild Rössler, Director of UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre, city leaders were at fault. ‘The warning was in 2012. There was no feedback in terms of complying with the request from the World Heritage Committee to stop the situation which leads to the loss of OUV. That is the problem’ (Rössler, cited in Halliday, 2021). UNESCO blame the UK government, arguing it had effectively washed its hands of Liverpool by not putting up a strong enough fight for the city to remain on the WHS list:

[T]he State Party has not complied with the repeated requests of the Committee, and has itself indicated that there are no legal and other means available in the governance of the property that would allow the State Party to comply with all of the Committee’s requests so as to ensure the protection of the property and retention of its OUV in the long-term.

(UNESCO, 2021b, p. 57)
5.4. Reactions to de-listing

The city’s ‘heritage challenge’ involves protecting the historic urban landscape, integrating the WHS into planning policies, and avoiding conflict between urban regeneration and the historic environment (Rodwell, 2008a, 2008b, 2012). For Rodwell (2014, 2015), a ‘serious oversight’ dates back to 2004 with the removal of ‘urban landscape’ to justify OUV (contained in the original nomination dossier) from the ICOMOS/WHC inscription. This indicated to the UK State Party that urban landscape was not a determining factor in monitoring the WHS. Also, in 2011 the WHC took ‘retrospective interest’ in Liverpool’s urban landscape, by which time many tall buildings had been constructed/approved. Crucially, UNESCO shifted its stance about new developments within the WHS and buffer zone. For the 2006 Monitoring Mission, it supported new projects (i.e., tall and architecturally challenging buildings) in close proximity to Pier Head and in Princes Dock. However, during the 2011 Monitoring Mission, UNESCO objected to the new developments (again tall buildings) linked to Liverpool Waters (Rodwell, 2012, 2015). For Rodwell (2014, p. 29), ‘the outcomes of the 2006 and 2011 UNESCO–ICOMOS missions are seriously inconsistent in their consideration of the key issue of safeguarding Liverpool’s urban landscape’ (see also Belchem et al., 2021). On Liverpool Waters, ‘[a]s if to compound the confusion of messages, the decision to place Liverpool on the UNESCO danger list was not related to any consideration of the merits of Liverpool Waters as a projected major new layer for the city’ (Rodwell, 2012, p. 31).

During an email exchange with the lead author, Rodwell explained, ‘[m]y main argumentation is focused on ICOMOS's moving of the goalposts in 2004, which was not admitted at this year’s session of the WHC and, to me, has been critical’ (personal communication, 27 July 2021).

Elsewhere, in an online statement, he criticizes the ‘pivotal error’ committed by the ICOMOS Advisory Body in 2004. In so doing, he absolves the UK State Party and Liverpool City Council of any culpability:

I deplore even more the attempt by the World Heritage Centre to transfer responsibility for the 2004 error in the Advisory Body’s Evaluation on to the State Party (and Liverpool City Council), by promoting the Draft Decision to delete Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City from the World Heritage List. If the World Heritage Centre and Committee do not like what has happened since the 2004 inscription, the starting error should be acknowledged, and steps taken to reform the relevant procedures and avoid repetition across the system. In my opinion, to proceed with the delisting of Liverpool – Maritime Mercantile City would signal failure of the World Heritage system and jeopardise its reputation.

(Rodwell, 2021)

Connecting back to the literature, Stephan Doempke, chair of World Heritage Watch, is critical of the geopolitics in WHC decision-making, arguing that it compromises the integrity of the WHS system (see also Bertacchini et al., 2016, 2017; Liuzza & Meskell, 2021). On Liverpool, he explains:

First, it looked like this [de-listing] would be prevented, too. Only when Norway demanded a secret vote, the majorities changed. One may assume that political pressure on former colonies in the World Heritage Committee no longer worked at this moment, and that some of them didn’t hesitate to teach a lesson to the former motherland/Europe/the West.

(Doempke, 2021)

Belchem et al. (2021) also put forward a strong case against Liverpool’s de-listing. Echoing local reactions to inclusion on the ‘in Danger’ list, they question the legitimacy of the decision and,
connecting to an earlier point, indicate that losing WHS will not significantly undermine the city's heritage-based local economy:

Set against this overall achievement, we believe UNESCO's judgment was unbalanced, treated Liverpool unfairly in relation to other World Heritage cities and failed to consider Liverpool's unique urban history of development, its ethos, and characteristics. In fact, it treated Liverpool, its city centre, and its waterfront, as though it were a monument or a museum, not a living and evolving city. We believe that the city's achievements mean Liverpool had a very powerful case to remain designated. Liverpool has always been a world-class heritage city – with its fine architecture, its world-class waterfront, its cultural assets with the people at its heart – as well as a city of firsts. Liverpool values and cares deeply about its heritage and has made substantial investment in it in recent years. The city has received growing national and international acclaim for its important cultural and heritage offer. We are totally confident that despite the UNESCO decision Liverpool will continue to be a leading example of heritage-based development.

(Belchem et al., 2021, pp. 1, 4)

Developing this point, Chris Capes, Director of Development for Peel Holdings (developers of Liverpool Waters), published the statement below. The second section dovetails with the central issue of the debate raised in the literature review. This important economic actor believes that urban regeneration and heritage conservation are not mutually exclusive; rather, they can be achieved simultaneously with appropriate planning. However, the Liverpool case indicates a trade-off. The first section connects to a key question raised earlier on the potential impact of losing WHS status. For Capes, de-listing will not inflict deleterious damage to Liverpool’s positionality in the global tourism market:

UNESCO’s decision to remove Liverpool from its list of World Heritage Sites is very disappointing, particularly given the considerable investment that the city has put into protecting and improving its heritage sites in recent years. Without the World Heritage Site status, however, Liverpool’s rich history remains and Pier Head, the ‘Three Graces’ and the city’s many other fantastic historical assets will continue to attract visitors in their millions. Regeneration for this part of the city is vital and, like our partners across the city, we are focused on delivering it – creating homes, commercial space, amenities, public realm, leisure facilities and key infrastructure on previously disused brownfield land. We will show the world that regeneration and the protection of Liverpool’s heritage can happen together.

(https://liverpoolwaters.co.uk/news-plus-updates/without-world-heritage-site-status-liverpool-s-rich-history-remains/)

This chimes with Jones’s (2015, pp. 466–467) jibe that ‘Peel frequently “speak for” Liverpool, in the process claiming responsibility for the city’s economic future’, with Liverpool Waters exemplifying the ‘elision of the developer’s interests and of those of the city of Liverpool’. Moreover, ‘fulsome support’ for Liverpool Waters was to be found amongst elite local stakeholders and those in positions of political influence. Jones comments that this entrepreneurial approach to economic development and urban regeneration is driven by the private – not public – sector. In our view, this is further evidence of the local embeddedness of neoliberal urbanism and city competitiveness in Liverpool. Furthermore, on political–economic influence, Joe Anderson is the latest example of what Cocks (2013) calls ‘key individuals’, that is, those political, economic and societal leaders who have driven forward economic development policy and practice in Liverpool.
Armistice et al. (2014, p. 38) warned, ‘the city will “sleepwalk” into a situation where UNESCO feels it is obliged to exercise its right to remove the Liverpool WHS from the World Heritage list’. They also argued that certain stakeholders did not think WHS delivered economic impact, fuelled by local businesses claiming the title failed to leverage investment or jobs. Presumably, this is why city leaders pressed ahead with spectacular regeneration projects, apparently oblivious to or unconcerned by UNESCO’s warnings. However, Liverpool did not ‘sleepwalk’ into WHS de-listing. It had been brewing since 2012 (Thorpe, 2021b, Kirby, 2021a, 2021b). Moreover, if Mayor Anderson’s comments were representative of elite stakeholders’ interpretation of the choice between WHS status and Liverpool Waters, then the consensus is clear. Liverpool Waters – an iconic project aimed at enhancing the city’s global competitiveness – was more important. A calculated move that led to Liverpool losing its WHS status. For a long period of time, UNESCO had serious concerns about the nature and scale of the development taking place along Liverpool’s waterfront. Admittedly, not couched in the same lingua franca as Jan Gehl: that is, ‘bird shit architecture’. For us, a more important framing factor that led to WHS de-listing was the ‘local politics at the site’ (after Hølleland et al., 2019). On this, and hinting at debates on neoliberalism, the exchange between Nosheen Iqbal and Josh Halliday is insightful:

Is there any truth in the idea that now that it has been stripped of this status that it does actually perversely give an opportunity for developers to run rampant now?

It’s definitely a fear. There are quite a few people who worry that the champagne corks would have been popping in the developers’ offices when the UNESCO decision came through. It does mean there will be less red tape around development.

(The Guardian, 2021)

6. CONCLUSIONS

Responding to Hølleland et al.’s (2019) call for further research into UNESCO’s WHS ‘in Danger’ list, this article adds a new dimension to the extant literature. The Liverpool case is intriguing. It does not follow the script of ‘impunity’ attributed to European countries who exert strong influence over WHC meetings (Brown et al., 2019; Liuzza & Meskell, 2021). Indeed, the UK government acknowledged to UNESCO that it was unable, possibly unwilling, to deliver what was required to protect the city’s WHS status. This article has shown that the determining factor in Liverpool’s de-listing was the powerful ‘local politics at the site’ (after Hølleland et al., 2019). On this, Sykes and Ludwig (2015, p. 21) state, ‘[t]he debate surrounding the Liverpool Waters scheme is striking in that it showcases a changing relationship between heritage and regeneration’. We go further to argue the Liverpool case epitomizes the prioritization of economic growth and city competitiveness over a tokenistic ‘certificate on the wall’. In pushing forward spectacular regeneration projects to create a ‘competitive waterfront’ (Boland, 2007, 2013), local stakeholders were prepared to risk losing WHS status in order to enhance Liverpool’s image, positionality and competitiveness in the global marketplace. In contradistinction, they were not prepared to lose Liverpool Waters.

We resist the temptation to apportion blame for Liverpool’s de-listing, as there is merit on both sides of the argument (cf. UNESCO, 2021a, 2021b; Belchem et al., 2021; Rodwell, 2021). ‘[T]he truth lies somewhere in the middle’ (Halliday, cited in The Guardian, 2021). Instead, we have unpacked the political dynamics and ideological climate ‘at the site’ to contextualize a process that evolved over several years. Elsewhere, ‘[t]he loss of WHS status has a detrimental impact on local communities and their socio-economic condition’ (Birendra, 2021, p. 1).
In Liverpool, Armitage et al. (2014, p. 34) argue, ‘the impacts of its potential loss are difficult to estimate’, for LOCUS Consulting (2017, p. 32) losing WHS status could undermine the city’s ‘competitive edge’ in important national, European and global marketplaces. It is clear that economic actors felt WHS was a price worth paying to continue the city’s neoliberal agenda of growth and competitiveness. As Hamilton (2021) notes, ‘[t]he promise of jobs, investment and a striking new addition to the city’s skyline seem to trump retaining the UNESCO tag for the majority’. Instructively, it is strange that the UK State Party did not intervene strongly enough to ameliorate the confrontational politics between UNESCO and Liverpool City Council. Moreover, the literature shows European countries influence decision-making within the WHC, yet this influence was not activated to support Liverpool. Perhaps the Conservative government felt, and not for the first time, that Liverpool – a Labour Party stronghold – was worth sacrificing as one of its 33 UNESCO WHSs.

This lack of national-level state support for the city’s continued WHS status reflects another set of interesting issues regarding what Belchem (2006b) has termed ‘Liverpool’s exceptionalism’. We argue that a legacy of strained relations between Liverpool City Council, a reflection of ‘local politics at the site’, and the central state may have influenced the city’s loss of WHS status. In 1980, a Conservative government memo from Chancellor of the Exchequer Geoffrey Howe to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher spoke of abandoning Liverpool to a ‘managed decline’. Over subsequent decades, notably 1983–87 under the Militant Tendency-led City Council, a difficult relationship evidenced by ‘political tension/ostracization’ existed between Liverpool’s body politic and successive Conservative governments (Meegan, 1990; Rodwell, 2008a, 2014; Sykes et al., 2013). Instructively, the current Prime Minister has form for labelling Liverpool. In 2004, as a Member of Parliament, Boris Johnson ghost wrote an editorial in *The Spectator* magazine accusing the city of ‘wallowing in disproportionate grief/victim status’ following Ken Bigley’s execution in Iraq (BBC News, 2004). He also made a grotesque comparison with the 1989 Hillsborough football disaster when 97 Liverpool fans lost their lives. The article was highly offensive as it chimed with broader social stereotypes of a ‘self-pity city’ (Boland, 2008). More recently, during Prime Minister’s Questions in the House of Commons, Johnson pointedly refused to apologize for the hurt his remarks had caused (Thorp, 2019). It is not an exaggeration to suggest that these contested central–local political relations were not conducive for galvanizing the required support for Liverpool’s WHS.

In conclusion, future research could usefully build upon our initial findings to provide a broader canvas of knowledge into the ‘local politics at the site’, and how this affects decisions for WHSs on the ‘in Danger’ list. As we complete this article, it is important that those dealing with the current controversy regarding construction plans surrounding Stonehenge’s WHS learn the lessons from Liverpool (Witcher, 2021). The Liverpool case raises an intriguing research question. Does it signal that the WHC is becoming more assertive towards sites that do not adhere to its recommendations, and concomitantly is it less prone to European State Party ‘ impunity’? Importantly, ‘since the news about Liverpool broke, it’s become clear that UNESCO isn’t afraid to drop sites from its list’ (Iqbal, cited in *The Guardian*, 2021). If this becomes more widespread, then it runs contrary to current understanding of the tensions operating at, and above, WHSs and thereby opens up a new trajectory for future analysis and debate on the politics of WHSs.

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

NOTES

1. On the stadium’s economic impact and green credentials, see Belchem et al. (2021).
2. In 2007, Oman’s Arabian Oryx Sanctuary was the first site to be removed from UNESCO’s WHS list. The decision was taken after the Omani authorities reduced the size of the site’s protected area by 90%, in contravention of the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention (Lee, 2009). In 2009, Dresden Elbe Valley was de-listed due to concerns over the Waldschlösschen Bridge bisecting the valley site (Gaillard & Rodwell, 2015).
3. Jan Gehl used this phrase during a conference in 2012 to describe Liverpool’s waterfront architecture (Rodwell, 2014). More generally, he refers to iconic/high-rise architecture as ‘planning from the aeroplane’ with architects ‘dropping their things down’ (The Editors, 2010). During a YouTube presentation, Gehl explained his concerns with developments in city planning and architecture:

   We’ve seen it being used all over the world … I call this type of planning ‘bird shit architecture’. The ‘starchitects’ fly in and fly out in one day and drop some buildings here and there. We don’t get a city by dropping a set of towers next to each other.

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnq1SvmZUYU)

4. Authors point to the hegemony of neoliberal ideas and policies in the contemporary city, such as market rationality, deregulation, privatization, individualism, competitiveness, entrepreneurialism and enterprise (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Jessop, 2002; Mayer & Künkelt, 2012; Peck et al., 2010).
5. UNESCO, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the UK government (UNESCO’s State Party), local government, city planners, conservation and heritage organizations, civil society, etc.
6. The Syrian Arab Republic has six sites on the list, Libya has five, the Democratic Republic of Congo has four, Yemen, Palestine, Mali and Iraq have three each, and Afghanistan has two. All other countries have only one site on the list (https://whc.unesco.org/en/danger/).
7. The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls and Chan Chan Archaeological Zone in Peru have been on the list since 1982 and 1986, respectively, while the Air and Ténéré National Nature Reserves in Niger and Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve in Côte d’Ivoire have been on the list since 1992 (https://whc.unesco.org/en/danger/).
8. Brown et al. (2019, pp. 296–300) cite three tactics to avoid inscription onto the ‘in Danger’ list: length of time ‘under consideration’ means less likelihood of being included; size of national delegations during WHC decision-making; and State Party membership of the WHC. These tactics allow powerful – European and North American State Parties – to exert influence over discussion topics (i.e., which sites are discussed and those that are not) and decisions taken on the ‘in Danger’ list.
9. There is only one site from America on the list – Everglades National Park in Florida – and only two countries from Europe appear on the list: Austria’s Historic Centre of Vienna, and Romania’s Roşia Montană Project Mining Landscape (https://whc.unesco.org/en/danger/).
10. There are currently 1154 WHSs covering 167 countries across the globe: 897 cultural heritage sites, 218 natural heritage sites and 39 mixed heritage sites (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/).
11. Examples are Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape (South Africa) with an adjacent coalmine, Virșin Komi Forests (Russia) with goldmining inside the property, and the Monuments at Hampi (India) with a collapsed bridge and demolition of homes.
12. Following the Arab Spring, the inscription of many properties on the ‘in Danger’ list was attributable to the rise of armed conflict in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Libya (Brown et al., 2019).
13. A buffer zone ‘is an area outside the principal site but providing key sensitive context for the WHS’ (Pendlebury et al., 2010, p. 351).
14. 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. Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared. Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.

15. This resulted in the creation of a tall buildings policy and the guiding hand of the WHS Supplementary Planning Document (Liverpool City Council, 2009).

16. Joe Anderson stood aside from his mayoral duties in December 2020 due to his arrest over a police investigation into inappropriate behaviour in office. He did not re-stand for mayor in the 2021 election, and was replaced by Joanne Anderson (no relation) who became the first black woman to be a directly elected mayor in the UK.

17. A proposed 22-storey student accommodation adjacent to Lime Street Train Station and the Crown Hotel, both Grade II-listed buildings, and near to the Grade I-listed St George’s Hall. UNESCO previously asked that the decision be deferred until a report into how the city could protect its WHS was submitted in December. The council ignored this request.

18. Belchem et al. (2021, p. 4) argue, ‘Liverpool … argued the moratorium that UNESCO was asking for was simply not legally enforceable under UK planning law. Neither the government nor the city could impose such a moratorium.’

19. In 2016, he moved an amendment to reject planning permission for a significant student housing project.

20. This connects to wider arguments that Liverpool was treated very differently to other UK cities with WHSs (Belchem et al., 2021; Rodwell, 2014, 2015, 2021).


22. ‘World Heritage Watch ensures that the world heritage is not sacrificed to political compromises and economic interests. We support UNESCO in getting complete and correct information about the situation of the sites’ (https://world-heritage-watch.org/content/).

23. Bertacchini et al. (2016, p. 124) state, ‘being a former colony reduces the likelihood of Committee members in supporting through verbal statements the nomination of the past colonizer, or even increases the probability of claiming for a downgrade of the initial advisory body’s recommendation.’

24. Since the 1980s, examples include Michael Heseltine, Bishop Derek Worlock, Bishop David Shepard, Harry Rimmer, Alan Chape, Mike Storey and David Henshaw.

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