

**Proposal for
THE ENAME CHARTER**

International Guidelines for Authenticity, Intellectual Integrity and Sustainable Development
in the Public Presentation of Archaeological and Historical Sites and Landscapes

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PREAMBLE

1. It being generally recognised that public presentation, along with multidisciplinary research and physical conservation, is an essential part of the preservation of universal and local patrimony;
2. It being also observed that governmental heritage authorities and interested scholars throughout the world are becoming increasingly aware of their responsibility to communicate the significance and meaning of heritage sites to the general public;
3. It being noted that tourist authorities, private firms and international organisations often invest in expensive and technologically advanced presentation systems as a spur to visitor development;
4. And while there are a large number of international charters, declarations and guidelines to maintain the quality of the conservation and restoration of the physical fabric of archaeological and historical monuments (*inter alia*: Athens 1931; Venice 1964), there is no generalised international oversight of the methods and standards of quality in public presentation;
5. And while relevant international charters dealing with heritage management and cultural tourism repeatedly stress the need for sensitive and effective interpretation, they do not define the standards for this quality.
6. Therefore, we, the government officials, heritage professionals and scholars assembled at the conference ‘Heritage, technology and local development’ at Ename, East Flanders, Belgium in September 2002 strongly support the formulation of an acceptable international code of practice to ensure the scientific accuracy, intellectual integrity and educational usefulness of public presentations at heritage sites, while at the same time showing respect and sensitivity for their cultural uniqueness and local significance.

BACKGROUND

The history of the preservation movement has gradually expanded from an awareness of the significance of heritage to a recognition of the responsibility to communicate it to the public, both local and universal.

- The *Manifesto* of 1877 by the British Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings noted the importance of conservation over unrestricted and unsupervised restoration.
- The 1931 Athens Conference of the International Museums office established a general code of conduct.
- The ICOMOS Venice Charter (1964) set out the standards of authenticity and good practice in physical conservation.
- The ICOMOS Florence Charter (1982) and the ICOMOS Washington Charter (1987) expanded the principles of the Venice Charter to landscape and historic town centers.
- The ICOMOS *Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage* (1990) mentioned the necessity of public presentation as ‘an essential method of promoting an understanding of the origins and development of modern societies’ (Article 7) but did not further elaborate acceptable standards or methods.
- The ICOMOS *International Cultural Tourism Charter* (1999) likewise spoke of presentation in positive but very general terms.
- With regard to the quality and sustainability of visitor experiences, the *Charter for Sustainable Tourism* (1995) and the *Agenda 21* action plan of the World Tourist Organization, World Travel & Tourism Council and the Earth Council (1996) emphasized the importance of training, education and cultural awareness in the development of visitor sites.
- In consideration of the need for an international frame of reference for the sustainable and durable development of international tourism, the World Tourist Organization established the *World Code of Ethics for Tourism*, which was unanimously approved at the thirteenth session of the General Assembly of the World Tourist Organization in Santiago, Chile, in October 1999. This Code recognises the necessity of reducing to a minimum the negative effects of tourism on the environment and cultural heritage, and, at the same time, of maximizing the benefits for the inhabitants of visitor destinations. This Code includes nine articles defining the accepted ‘rules of the game’ for destinations, governments, tour operators, developers, travel agents, workers and travellers. The tenth article involves the redress of grievances and marks the first time that a code of this type has a mechanism for enforcement. It will be based on conciliation through the creation of a World Committee on Tourism Ethics. Among the articles of this Code, Article 4, ‘Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and contributor to its enhancement’, more specifically underlines the necessary equilibrium between cultural heritage and tourism.

The importance of the public presentation of heritage sites has therefore become an accepted norm of cultural preservation and tourism. Yet presentation has yet to become a fully professional field of endeavour. Because of the vast range of public presentation programmes currently operational at national, regional and local heritage sites and because of the wide range of presentation techniques being used (signs, live guides, audiotapes, costumed interpreters, Virtual Reality, physical reconstruction and ‘open air’ museum recreations), it now seems appropriate, in accordance with the aims and expressions of the earlier charters, to formulate a framework of general standards to maintain the quality of public heritage communications throughout the world, and to cultivate heritage presentation as a public state of mind.

AIM

ARTICLE 1. The aim of this Charter is to emphasize the essential role of public communication and education in heritage preservation. Recognising that interpretation is the key to mutual understanding it seeks to establish professional and ethical guidelines to ensure that preserved archaeological and historical sites are valuable resources for local community cultural and economic development and that they are recognised by the general public as reliable and authoritative centres of learning and reflection about the past, not mere antiquarian curiosities, fenced monuments or static works of art. It identifies heritage sites as public resources to help us learn from the past, and recognizes their role as storehouses of past experience that can help modern societies rationally and intelligently face the challenges of the present and future.

DEFINITIONS

ARTICLE 2. An archaeological or historical site embraces not only its physical structure, but also the human context and local historical conditions in which it was created, built or inhabited. The environmental setting is likewise an essential part of the heritage site.

ARTICLE 3. Heritage presentation is the carefully planned public explanation or discussion of an archaeological or historical site. Its communication medium can range from a text panel, to live guides to a complex Virtual Reality application, but it should in every case provide information about the site that would be unavailable through visual inspection alone.

ARTICLE 4. Public interpretation is the arrangement of information about a particular archaeological or historical site into a meaningful sequence or narrative. Public interpretation should strive to contextualize the significance of the site for the visitor, not merely present disconnected statistics, dates or technical terms.

SCIENTIFIC AND PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

A. PRESENTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

ARTICLE 5. The visitor facilities of a site and its presentation must be responsibly maintained and kept in good repair.

ARTICLE 6. Kiosks, walking paths and information signs must be sensitive to the character of the site and its surrounding while remaining easily identifiable. The light and sound from kiosks, screens and speakers must be restricted to the immediate area of the presentation, so as not to adversely affect the surroundings or disturb nearby residents.

ARTICLE 7. The public presentation of a monument should always make clear to the visitor the extent of the authentic physical remains and clearly identify modern recreations or restorations of missing elements.

ARTICLE 8. Buildings constructed especially for visitors' centres or other public facilities must be clearly identifiable as constructed in modern times, and, whatever their architectural style, they must respect the historic landscape and the proportions of the visible remains. It is essential that the architects of the new facility work closely with the site's scientific researchers from the initial planning phase.

ARTICLE 9. In cases where the structural stability of a monument is not in danger, non-intrusive visual reconstructions (by means of artists' reconstructions, 3D computer modeling, Virtual Reality) may be preferred to physical reconstruction.

ARTICLE 10. The physical recreation of destroyed or missing historic landscape features (canals, parks, formal gardens etc), when deemed necessary (i.e. when not accomplished by non-intrusive means such as 3D computer simulations), must be placed on their original location. The incorrect placement of such reconstructed features may offer a mistaken impression of the original character or function of the site.

ARTICLE 11. Every effort should be made to ensure that heritage presentations are accessible to the physically disabled and to visitors with other special needs.

B. INTERPRETATIVE TECHNIQUES

ARTICLE 12. The process of historical interpretation for the general public should be seen as far more complex than the mere 'simplification' of scientific reports. Its aim is to explore the significance of a monument in a multi-faceted archaeological, historical, social, political and artistic context, with a multiplicity of visions.

ARTICLE 13. Historical interpretation must be based on a multidisciplinary archaeological and/or historical study of the site and its surroundings, yet must also indicate clearly and honestly where conjecture, hypothesis or philosophical reflection begin. The goal of presentation is to show the range of meanings and stories present within a site.

ARTICLE 14. Where the presentation of a site involves a description of a living local community and its archaeological, historical, cultural, artistic and ethnic heritage, representatives of the local community should be involved in the formulation of the basic presentation concept. Moreover, they should be involved in the various stages of production and be given the opportunity to offer comments and corrective suggestions.

ARTICLE 14a. The collaboration between outside advisors and the local community should be carefully considered with the needs of the site and its stories uppermost in mind.

ARTICLE 14b. Alternative interpretation and presentation techniques such as story-telling and songs should be considered, as should the inclusion of intangible elements of a site's heritage such as food, music, cultural traditions, and role of the natural environment.

ARTICLE 14c. Presentations should aim to encourage the visitor to reflect on their own perceptions of the past and relationship to the site, rather than being restrictively didactic.

ARTICLE 15. The contributions of all periods and groups to the historical significance of a monument should be respected and conveyed where appropriate. Although particular periods and styles can be highlighted, the recreation of a single period or event should not be the exclusive aim of a presentation. Following Article 11 of the Venice Charter, the evaluation of the relative importance of historical facets of a site, and which can be ignored, must be the result of close consultation between the site team, the local community and academic advisors.

ARTICLE 16. The history of the surrounding landscape, natural environment and the overall geographical setting should be included in the interpretation of a site.

ARTICLE 17. Every effort should be made to represent the different histories of a site, including those of minorities, women and immigrants, in addition to the familiar ruling, elite and majority groups. Special care must be taken to ensure that ‘generic’ characters are based on historical research and that the ‘voices’ of ‘historical’ characters connected to the site are based on verifiable texts and /or other convincing evidence, where it exists.

ARTICLE 18. The construction of 3D computer reconstructions and Virtual Reality environments should be based upon a detailed and systematic analysis of the remains, not only from archaeological and historical data but also from close analysis of the building materials, structural engineering criteria and architectural aspects. Together with written sources and iconography, several hypotheses should be checked against the results and data, and 3D models ‘iterated’ towards the most probable reconstructions. All aspects of the site’s interpretation should be integrated.

ARTICLE 19. Opening day is the beginning, not the end, of the interpretation process. The presentation should be constructed in a modular way so that content updating can be performed without substantial additional investment.

C. DOCUMENTATION

ARTICLE 20. Full scientific documentation of all elements in a presentation programme should be compiled and made available to visitors as well as researchers. This documentation should be in the form of an analytical and critical report, in which the archaeological or historical basis for every element of the work of presentation is included. This record of documentation should be placed in the archives of a public institution and should be published or posted on the Internet.

PLANNING, FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT

ARTICLE 21. The unique archaeological and historical heritage of local communities is threatened by global cultural homogenisation as well as by physical threats. Therefore policies for encouraging and funding the public presentation of heritage should constitute an integral component of local, regional and national antiquities legislation.

ARTICLE 21a. All new projects should be subject to an interpretive planning process, to ensure that the feasibility of projects is decided at an early stage, and should also incorporate other concerns, for example the robustness of a site and the appropriateness of its presentation. Care must be taken to focus resources where they are best fitted. Responsible bodies should also be aware that a site may be better protected from conservation risks, vandalism, commercial abuse or infrastructural inadequacy, for example, by not being publicly presented.

ARTICLE 21b. The direct and continuing involvement of countries from the developing world in actively presenting their heritage should be encouraged, to achieve balance in the interpretation of the world’s cultures. Developed countries should be encouraged to lend expertise and resources to

ensure a more equal access to techniques and breadth of coverage in interpretation across the world.

ARTICLE 22. The presentation of recent discoveries or understandings of the archaeological and historical heritage to the general public is in many cases a responsibility no less important than physical conservation. This obligation must be acknowledged through relevant legislation and the provision of funds for presentation programmes connected with every public heritage project.

ARTICLE 23. Archaeologists and developers have a responsibility to make publicly accessible the results of excavations or other scientific research, even if a public presentation scheme for the site does not follow. Legislation should in principle require some form of permanent, accessible public interpretation (publication, website, video) in cases where the destruction of an archaeological or historical site is authorised for reasons of modern development, as a condition of consent.

ARTICLE 24. The scale, expense and technological complexity of a heritage presentation should be appropriate to the location and available facilities (roads, parking, electricity, water, etc) of the site. The goal should be social, financial and environmental sustainability.

ARTICLE 24a. The structure of collaboration between outside advisors and the local community should be carefully considered and address the both the needs of the site and its significance for local heritage.

ARTICLE 25. A detailed environmental impact study of the monument and of its conservation issues should be made before the creation of any large archaeological or historical presentation site. The likely environmental, traffic and economic effects (both positive and negative) of such a project should be realistically evaluated and taken into account in the project planning.

ARTICLE 26. The efforts of government institutions, local organizations and private firms should be gauged as part of a feasibility study before a project begins, and remain closely coordinated to ensure the continued funding and maintenance of on-site public presentation programmes.

ARTICLE 27. Effective and professional management is essential for a public presentation programme at a heritage site. The local community should be closely consulted in the management and planning and should share in the tangible economic benefits.

TOURISM ASPECTS

ARTICLE 28. The raising of visitor attendance figures or increasing visitor revenue alone should not be the only criterion or goal for success. The presentation must also serve a range of educational and social objectives for the benefit of the local community.

ARTICLE 29. The design of a heritage presentation site should safeguard the social and physical structure of the location and to ensure the privacy and dignity of local residents.

ARTICLE 30. The contribution of tourism to the sustainable economic development and cultural identity of a local community should entail close cooperation between tourism operators and both

public and private groups, regarding formulation of tourism strategies and promotions, the flow of visitor traffic and use of public facilities.

ARTICLE 31. Efforts should be made to coordinate local businesses and commercial activity with the heritage site in a respectful and sustainable way. The authenticity and local origin of handicrafts, for example, should be highlighted and encouraged.

ARTICLE 32. As a local cultural resource, the heritage presentation site should be made available for fairs, concerts and public performances, with due respect for the character of the site.

HERITAGE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

ARTICLE 33. (to be discussed and formulated) The Aims of Heritage Education.

ARTICLE 33a. Every presentation programme should be seen as an educational resource and its design should take into account its possible use in the curricula of local schools.

ARTICLE 34. Local students should be encouraged to participate in the maintenance and operations of the heritage presentation site through special programmes, events and summer employment.

ARTICLE 35. The local community should be kept informed of developments and new features at the heritage presentation site through the distribution of a newsletter, website, public lecture series or other means of public education, such as specially trained local interpreters.

ARTICLE 36. The training of an adequate number of qualified professionals in the relevant fields of presentation technology, content creation, management, and education is a crucial objective. Standard curricula should be formulated for professional training.

ARTICLE 38. Postgraduate training programmes and courses should be developed with the objective of updating presentation professionals on recent developments and innovations in the field.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ARTICLE 39. International cooperation is essential to developing and maintaining standards in heritage presentation techniques and technologies.

ARTICLE 40. There is an urgent need to create an international forum for the exchange of information and experience among professionals dealing with archaeological and historical heritage presentation. As well as building on existing regional initiatives this requires the organisation of conferences, seminars and workshops at international as well as regional levels, and using modular teaching models in specialist courses, as well as the establishment of regional centres for heritage education on all levels, from primary school to postgraduate studies.

ARTICLE 41. Regular international exchanges of professional staff and cooperation on selected pilot projects should be developed as a means of refining the methodology of heritage presentation.

MODES OF COOPERATION (suggested section)

ARTICLE 42. Between nations

ARTICLE 43. Between nations and regions

ARTICLE 44. Between regions and communities

ARTICLE 45. Within communities, e.g. majority-minority, rich-poor, young-old

ARTICLE 46. Status of Charter: to be adopted by governments? Voluntary adherence by bodies, international organizations, community groups, etc?