



## UK Tentative List of Potential Sites for World Heritage Nomination: Application form

Please save the application to your computer, fill in and email to:  
[UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

The application form should be completed using the boxes provided under each question, and, where possible, within the word limit indicated.

Please read the [Information Sheets](#) before completing the application form. It is also essential to refer to the accompanying [Guidance Note](#) for help with each question, and to the relevant paragraphs of UNESCO's *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, (OG) available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>

Applicants should provide only the information requested at this stage. Further information may be sought in due course.

### (1) Name of Proposed World Heritage Site

Gorham's Cave Complex

### (2) Geographical Location

Name of country/region

Gibraltar (UK)/Europe-North America

Grid reference to centre of site

30STF89300008

Please enclose a map preferably A4-size, a plan of the site, and 6 photographs, preferably electronically.

### **(3) Type of Site**

Please indicate category:

Natural  Cultural  Mixed  Cultural Landscape

### **(4) Description**

Please provide a brief description of the proposed site, including the physical characteristics. 200 words

The Gorham's Cave Complex consists of four sea caves - Bennett's, Gorham's, Vanguard and Hyaena - lying at the base of the 426-metre high Rock of Gibraltar on its eastern face. The caves are situated within the youngest of five tectonic uplift blocks of the Jurassic limestone of the Rock. This lowest block, from present-day sea-level to 60 metres asl, has been securely dated by a range of techniques and represents the last 250 thousand years of the history of the western Mediterranean. Four of the five caves are filled with wind-blown sands mixed with organic material and archaeological and palaeontological deposits. The most spectacular are those of Gorham's (18-metres in depth) and Vanguard (17-metres). These deposits were formed largely during periods of lowered sea levels, when the coast was up to 4.5 kilometres away from the caves, and reveal the rich ecology of the caves' surroundings.

They represent a detailed sequence of deposition covering Marine Isotope Stages (MIS) 3 and 2. Rich in fossils, charcoal and pollen, the deposits provide a unique climatic and environmental sequence in the western Mediterranean, spanning the period from 55 to 15 thousand years ago, thus including the Last Glacial Maximum.

### **(5) History**

Please provide a short summary statement of any significant events in the history of the site. 200 words

Gorham's Cave has the most complete sequence of human occupation of the caves within the complex. The sequence is the only one of its kind anywhere in the western Mediterranean. The greater part of the sequence, from 55 to 28 thousand years ago, represents occupation by Neanderthals. This cave is the last known site of Neanderthal occupation in the world. After a period when the cave was empty, Modern Humans entered it around 20 thousand years ago. Two cultures are represented – the Solutrean and the Magdalenian. Parietal art, in the form of a painted deer and hand imprints dated to around 20 thousand years ago, were the product of the Solutrean people. The stratigraphic sequence is completed by a sporadic occupation by Neolithic fishermen and a Phoenician-Carthaginian level dated to between 800 and 400 BC. This level reveals the cave's use as a coastal shrine – situated at the base of the northern Pillar of Hercules, the end of the known world. The prehistoric levels, particularly those associated with Neanderthals, are providing a wealth of information about their behaviour - one recent discovery has revealed the, hitherto unsuspected, exploitation of fish, seals and dolphins, something hitherto unknown.

**(6) Why do you think this site should be inscribed as a World Heritage Site?**

Give reasons. 200 words

The Gorham's Cave complex is a unique and outstanding historical archive. In terms of the time span and breadth of its material culture it is second to none and has no analogue currently on the World Heritage List. When, to this, we add its spectacular location (which has been used in many important television documentaries) within sheer limestone cliffs dropping to the Mediterranean coastline, the site stands out as one of the great heritage sites of the world.

The Gorham's Cave complex should therefore be inscribed as a World Heritage Site without difficulty, because of the outstanding universal values and the significant history that it represents. It is representative of ancient peoples, cultures and civilisations that are now extinct and provides us with a special snapshot of their ways. The site is uniquely preserved and protected and clearly defined. It is, furthermore, a site of a kind that is recognised as underrepresented in the World Heritage List.

Gorham's and Vanguard Caves have been part of an important programme of

palaeontological and archaeological excavation since 1989 that has revealed a wealth of detailed information about the life of extinct kinds of human (Neanderthals), cultures (Solutrean) and civilisations (Phoenician-Carthaginian).

**(7) Please say why the site has Outstanding Universal Value and specify the main features which underpin its importance. 200 words**

The Gorham's Cave Complex has undoubted universal value on account of:

- (a) being the last known site of Neanderthal survival, around 28 thousand years ago, in the world;
- (b) providing one of the most detailed sequences in southern Europe, combining evidence of climate, sea-level and ecological change, of the critical period leading to the Last Glacial Maximum;
- (c) representing a rich archive of plant and animal fossil material which allows for a detailed reconstruction of ecological change and the subsistence ecology of Neanderthals. Among the wealth of the collections derived from the excavations is the largest collection of fossil bird species from this period anywhere in Europe;
- (d) providing an insight into the arrival of Modern Humans to their last European outpost. The presence of Solutrean parietal and mobile art adds to the site's significance; and
- (e) the rich Phoenician and Carthaginian collections, including scarabs, amulets, rings, ceramics and glassware are a unique testimony to the presence of these ancient eastern and central Mediterranean cultures at the end of their world. It is especially important given the global significance of the Pillars of Hercules, where the shrine was located, to history.

## (8) Outstanding Universal Value

Please state which of the [10 UNESCO criteria for Outstanding Universal Value](#) the proposed site meets, and describe briefly why the criteria were chosen. Please see criteria note at the end of the form.

UNESCO criterion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Why was this criterion chosen? 100 words
(i)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(ii)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The site represents one of the great inflexions in human history, marking the end of the Neanderthal world and the arrival of the world of our ancestors. It captures this change and provides a unique opportunity to understand their cultural differences and values. It additionally, provides a window to the first case of globalisation in history - the arrival of the Phoenician civilisation from the eastern Mediterranean and its contact with the native Bronze Age peoples of the western Mediterranean.
(iii)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The site is the last known site where the Neanderthals lived and it records their presence there for close to 30 thousand years. It, additionally, provides exceptional testimony of the religious beliefs and mode of worship of the ancient Phoenicians.
(iv)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Gorham's Cave Complex is a unique landscape of caves with information contained in its deposits that have formed an important international scientific research programme with publications in many of the world's top scientific journals, e.g. Nature, Proceedings National Academy of Sciences, USA. The reconstruction of the last Neanderthals' landscape, from the evidence contained in the site, illustrates a significant stage in human history.
(v)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The latest published evidence from the Gorham's Cave Complex revealed that Neanderthals were regular users of the coast and exploited marine resources, including seals and dolphins. There is no other site in the world with evidence of this type. The complex is thus an outstanding example of a traditional sea-use which is representative of the Neanderthals.
(vi)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(vii)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(viii)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>UNESCO criterion</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Why was this criterion chosen?</b> 100 words
(ix)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(x)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**(9) Authenticity (for cultural or mixed sites only)**

Authenticity concerns the current state of conservation of a cultural or mixed site; especially whether its importance, its Outstanding Universal Value, is still obvious from its physical condition. Please outline the condition of the site. 200 words

The Gorham's Cave Complex is protected and is in excellent physical condition. The only persons permitted within the site are scientists and visitors under strict supervision by Gibraltar Museum staff. The conservation of the site is undertaken by the Gibraltar Museum and careful protection of archaeological horizons is undertaken at the end of each excavation season. The contents of the site are unique and original, and therefore wholly authentic. They are what remained with the sea-level rise marking the start of the Holocene and the site is sufficiently distant from the shoreline not to suffer damage from marine erosion. The site's authenticity is amply demonstrated in numerous scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals and the site is internationally known for its values.

**(10) Integrity**

For cultural or mixed sites, please state how much original fabric is included in the proposed site, and its condition. For guidance on how the test of integrity is met for natural sites under criteria (vii) – (x), please refer to the OG 90-94. Information Sheet 6 also provides help on this point. 200 words

The caves composing the Gorham's Cave Complex are within the boundary of a single site which has not been interfered with. The complex thus reveals integrity at the highest level and retains all the key elements that make it a site of outstanding universal value.

**(11) Are there other examples of this kind of site already on the World Heritage List?**

Yes  No

If yes, please list. 100 words



**(12) What distinguishes this site from other similar sites?**

150 words

There is no World Heritage Site that can be considered similar to the Gorham's Cave Complex. The Spanish Site of Atapuerca is largely palaeontological and does not overlap in time with the Gorham's sequence. The Gorham's Complex is richer in cultural material and in ecological information. Likewise, the Vezere Valley Complex is a cluster of sites that largely represent Upper Palaeolithic cultures and not the Neanderthals that preceded them.

**(13) How does the site contribute to meeting UNESCO's priorities for a balanced World Heritage List?**

200 words

Prehistoric sites are one of the most seriously underrepresented on the World Heritage List. An Advisory Bodies' Meeting held in the World Heritage Centre, Paris, in October 2009 aimed at dealing with this particular issue recognised three main types of properties that would help redress the balance: Human Evolution sites, Prehistoric Properties and Rock Art Sites. The Gorham's Cave Complex falls under the Prehistoric Sites category but has elements of the other two. It is a Human Evolution site because it was here that the last Neanderthals survived and the recent Solutrean rock art discoveries fit it into the third category. The site will therefore be a major contribution towards a balanced World Heritage List.

**(14) What benefits do you think World Heritage Site inscription would bring?**

Please indicate the main opportunities and benefits.

Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tourism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regeneration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Protection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other benefits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please describe. 100 words.

Currently Gorham's Cave itself is listed but the intention is to give full legal protection to the remaining caves. The main benefits would be in the intensification of the research programme and, given the high profile of World Heritage Status, there is an opportunity for the development of in situ educational programmes (the Gibraltar Museum already undertakes these programmes within its premises) and the provision of controlled access for visitors. One of the issues surrounding the site is difficulty of access and World Heritage Status will encourage the provision of improved access under strict supervision.

**(15) Are there any known threats to the proposed World Heritage Site?**

Yes  No

Please indicate any proposed developments, or other potential impacts on the site.

<b>Impact</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Please describe. 100 words for each issue.</b>
Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**(16) Legal Protection**

Please list any legal and other protections, including cultural and natural designations, which cover the whole or part of the proposed site. 200 words



Gorham's Cave has full protection under Schedule 1 of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust Act 1989. The recent discovery of the value of the other caves in the complex explains why they are not already similarly protected. A detailed management plan for the entire site is in preparation and will be completed ahead of any nomination for World Heritage Status. Extension of legal protection to the other caves will similarly be completed ahead of a nomination of the site.

**(17) Ownership**

Please list the main owners of the site, where possible.

The site is currently owned by the Ministry of Defence but it is in the process of transferring it to the Government of Gibraltar, who support the application.

Do the owners support the application? Yes  No

A statement of support from the principle owners of the proposed site should be attached to the application, preferably electronically.

**(18) Local Authority support for the site**

Please list all Local Authorities with an interest in the proposed site.

The site will be managed by the Gibraltar Museum which is part of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage of the Government of Gibraltar. There are no local authorities within Gibraltar.

Does the proposed site have local Authority support? Yes  No

Please attach a statement of support from each one in relation to the application.

Please indicate whether the site is included in the local plan/s by specific policies.

Yes  No  Partly

Please describe. 200 words.

### **(19) Stakeholders**

Please list the main parties with an interest in the site. 100 words

Government of Gibraltar  
The Gibraltar Museum  
The Gibraltar Heritage Trust

### **(20) How will the Site be managed?**

Please outline the management arrangements for the proposed World Heritage Site, including where the responsibilities lie. 200 words

The site will be managed by the Gibraltar Museum on behalf of the Government of Gibraltar. The Gibraltar Museum has been responsible for the research and conservation of the site for the past 20 years and the excavated materials are part of its collections. The collections are cared for by professional staff. The Gibraltar Museum will continue to co-ordinate the international research programme and its publications. It will also expand its existing education programme on prehistory and will liaise with the Tourist Board with a view to developing site visits, which are expected initially to be by boat which will minimise damage to the site itself. These aspects and the broader issues related to the site's management will be covered in the site's management plan which is currently being drafted. The plan will be reviewed on a five-yearly basis.

**(21) Funding: the nomination**

Please indicate how the preparation of the nomination would be funded.  
100 words

The nomination will be wholly funded by the Government of Gibraltar

**(22) Funding: management**

Please outline how the future management would be funded. 100 words

The future management would be funded as an extension to current commitments by the Government of Gibraltar towards the management of the Gibraltar Museum and its outdoor facilities.

**Name and Contact Details of Applicant**

Name	Professor Clive Finlayson
Status	Director of the Heritage Division of the Government of Gibraltar
Address	The Gibraltar Museum, 18-20 Bomb House Lane, P.O.Box 939, Gibraltar
Telephone	+(350) 200 74289
Email	

Completed applications should be forwarded, preferably in electronic format, to the World Heritage Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport at the following email address: [UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:UKTL.Application@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

Any material that cannot be sent electronically should be sent to the following address:

World Heritage Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
London  
SW1 5DH

The closing date for applications is 11th June 2010

## UNESCO's criteria for the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value (para 77 of the Operational Guidelines)

- (i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (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;
- (iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (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;
- (v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- (vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.
- (vii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (ix) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- (x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.